

The "Disaster" President

Posted by

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thiscantbehappening - Dave Lindorff - The destruction of New Orleans--a catastrophe far worse than anything Osama Bin Laden could hope to wreak, considering the number of deaths, the closing down of a major U.S. port city for months, the destruction of an urban environment that will take years to repair, and the devastating disruption of one-fourth of the nation's oil production, which is likely to initiate a national recession--gives final proof of the stupidity and criminality of the Bush Administration's invasion of Iraq and of the bankruptcy of the Democratic so-called oppositon.

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Bush and the Democrats:

[The Real Disaster](#)

Dave Lindorff

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First there is the [diversion of economic resources](#) that saw New Orleans shortchanged on programs designed to harden the city for the inevitable arrival of super-strong, global-warming-fed hurricanes. The demands of the \$200-billion+ war in Iraq caused already-budgeted funds for levy strengthening and raising to be withdrawn and diverted.

Then too, there is the gutting of the National Guard, which is mostly over in Iraq, leaving Louisiana and Mississippi, the two hardest-hit states, scrambling for first-response personnel--a problem that is compounded by the common practice of having police, fire and emergency rescue personnel supplement their salaries by joining the Guard.

How stupid is it that we are spending hundreds of billions of dollars on programs that are supposedly designed to deter or interdict terrorists--a nearly hopeless endeavour, given the ease with which terrorists can just figure out new ways around each new program.

The most a terrorist attack can hope to do is bring down a few buildings and kill a few hundred people, while natural disasters can do tens of billions in damage, wreck a national economy, displace hundreds of thousands, and kill thousands. And unlike with terrorism, there are things that can actually be done to guard against or mitigate natural disasters.

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Not, however, if all the government's resources are being diverted to war.

It is high time that the American public recognize that even if they don't have a relative at risk in Iraq, even if they don't personally feel the impact of that war in any obvious way, the whole nation is being put at risk by Bush's Iraq folly.

The best way to protect America and its people would be for the U.S. to become aggressively involved in combating the global warming that ensures that hurricanes like Katrina will become not the exception but the norm. The best way to defend American interests is to end the hollowing out of the economy that inevitably accompanies a war costing a fifth of a trillion dollars, and to invest in infrastructure improvement, education and the general welfare.

The National Guard, which was meant to serve as a state-run militia, and to be available for national emergencies like this one, should be called home immediately from Iraq and put back on duty here, where it belongs. Those who are supposed to be cops, firefighters and EMT personnel should be furloughed and sent back to their real jobs. Cuts in the military should not be made in Guard units, as is happening in the current round of base closings, but in the regular uniformed services, whose only real function seems to be to give the president a chance to mess around in other countries' affairs.

The Democrats should be all over this one, but don't hold your breath. That sorry bunch of moral cowards--Hillary Clinton, John Kerry and Joe Lieberman among them-- voted for the Iraq War and they have uttered scarcely a peep at the gutting of the domestic Guard units, instead calling for more troops to be sent over to Iraq. (Louisianans and Mississippians should be grateful their words were not heeded or there'd be nobody home to help!)

The only answer is for the public to demand that the National Guard be recalled for domestic duties, where they belong, and for the war to be ended, immediately.

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Bad as it is, New Orleans is just a warning of future disasters sure to come. Heck, the hurricane season isn't even half over, and the ocean that produces them is getting hotter and hotter.

For my money, Osama couldn't have wished for a better ally in his campaign against the U.S. than President George "Bring `Em On" Bush.

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