

## The Golden 72 Hours

Posted by

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**PEJ News** - C. L. Cook - It seems now to many, the "Plan" worked out by the myriad minions working at the Department of Homeland Security for disaster relief in America can most charitably be described as benign neglect. Much as the Bush administration has starved the very agencies that could and would have averted the current disaster in New Orleans, the reaction of the multi-billion dollar entities created in the wake of 9/11 instructs all citizens: "In case of disaster: You are on your own!"

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**C. L. Cook**

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Well known to any familiar with disaster relief, the "Golden 72 Hours" refers to the timeline where catastrophe becomes desolation. Over the first 72 hours of the unprecedented natural destruction reaped against the continental U.S., the federal infrastructure did nothing.

While the leader of the nation strummed guitar in San Diego, sneaking in a round of golf on Wednesday, the message to "Outre" Americans was: "You're on Your Own."

This lame abandonment comes after the billions of dollars diverted in recent years to the military and Homeland Defense, and drastic cuts to budgets requested for the shoring up of New Orleans' defensive network of levees.

Now, with roving gangs, reportedly heavily armed thanks to the easy availability of firearms at such family centered vendors as WalMart, and tough talk coming from governing figures in the form of deployments of "Shoot-to-Kill" National Guard troops to curb looting and lawlessness, it reveals an impression of impending calamity none of the "punditocracy" wish to examine; it discloses a race/class war in America, poised to leap wild-fire across the country.

New Orleans is one of America's ["majority black" cities](#) . Wealth disparity and high unemployment levels make the tourist Mecca a poster child of all that's worst about the emerging economic order of America in the 21st century. But, the disaster unfolding in Louisiana cannot be looked at solely through an economics lens.

Just across the waters in Cuba, a country economically ravaged by serial illegalities on the part of the United States, was too hit by the Katrina, with more than a million Cubans being safely evacuated beforehand. There, in a nation driven to its economic knees for decades, they still managed to care for the people.

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But, this is really an expression of intent.

The Cubans, unlike those ruling today's America, believed it the duty of government to pursue the well-being of the people. Clearly this is a concept the illegitimate leadership currently ensconced in Washington, D.C. today do not share. The ragged and off-colour survivors of Katrina, not provided an avenue for escape before the fact, denigrated by the press for their shiftless determination to disobey evac. orders, are now threatened with a Fallujah-like assault. One politico apologist even managed to recycle the language uttered by U.S. military flacks prior to one of the horrendous "shoot-to-kill" assaults on the Iraqi city of Fallujah saying those remaining in the city are criminals, "the worst of the worst." It sounded like an "Open Season" declaration.

So, is an 'American Fallujah' to be expected next?

The situation in New Orleans, so hauntingly familiar when viewed from the comfortable distance created by the media and the television glass separating it from we fortunates far away, reminds of the effects of the "Bush Doctrine." Now, as the scenes once reserved to those far-flung places are being burned into America's self-consciousness, it begs the question:

"Will this horror serve as catalyst for further examinations of America's policies at home, and abroad?"

**Chris Cook** hosts [Gorilla Radio](#) , broad/webcast from the University of Victoria, Canada. He also serves as a contributing editor at PEJ News. You can check out the [GR Blog here. &nbsp;](#)