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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 01, 2005

Is This Disaster Natural Or Man-Made?

by Michael in New York on [9/01/2005 07:17:00 PM](#)

The Independent in UK juxtaposes the tragedy in Iraq and the devastation in the Gulf states and uses the headlines "[In Iraq, a Man-Made Disaster](#)" and "[In America, a natural Disaster.](#)"

Certainly the hurricane is natural. But the plans to prepare for this hurricane, the indifference to the death and destruction by Bush even AFTER the hurricane struck and the incompetence in reacting to it are all man-made. The Guardian in the UK gets it and spells it out with "[Why City's Defences Were Down.](#)"

It points out that the American Society of Civil Engineers made clear how vulnerable New Orleans was because of man-made engineering, the possible diversion of funds to shore up the levees towards Iraq and the indifference of Bush towards poor people. Most significantly, Bush has had FOUR YEARS to try and develop plans for evacuating cities -- plans that HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR since 9-11 changed everything and the possibility of a terrorist attack meant evacuating a city was now a distinct possibility the president must plan for. Whether it's a dirty bomb, some other chemical attack or a natural disaster, Bush had to be prepared to evacuate a major American city. Clearly he has failed miserably. If this were a terrorist attack, the anger over his incompetence would be ten-fold. It still should be.

Lloyd Dumas, professor of political economy and economics at the University of Texas at Dallas, criticised the government's failure to oversee a more efficient evacuation. **"It's remarkable that with the massive restructuring of the federal government that took place with the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, they don't have more well thought-out plans to evacuate a city** like New Orleans," he said....

Professor Dumas added that **not enough provision seemed to have been made for poor people.** "There doesn't seem to have been much attention paid to people who didn't have private automobiles," he said. "I didn't hear anything about school buses or city buses being used to aim people out of town...."

In fact, Greyhound buses stopped running on SATURDAY, according to one report. I've heard NO reports of school buses or other public transportation being made available. So poor people who wanted to get out were trapped.

The war in Iraq was also being seen as playing a part in the federal response to the crisis. **Many members of the National Guard who would normally have been swiftly mobilised to help in evacuation are on duty in Iraq.** Although US air force, navy and army units were deployed to assist, the locally-based National Guard is depleted by the demands of the war.

So the hurricane is natural. But the preparations for it and the

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