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MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 05, 2005

Miami Herald: Terror War Hurt Storm Response

by Michael in New York on [9/05/2005 02:17:00 AM](#)

No debate here:

The chaotic government response to Hurricane Katrina, which even President Bush said was "not acceptable," was **the inevitable result of federal policies emphasizing protection from terrorist attacks at the expense of preparing for far more common natural disasters**, state emergency officials and other experts said Friday.

As hurricane survivors died along roadsides and at shelters where they were told to take refuge, or pleaded for food and water or a ride to an overcrowded shelter, members of Congress called for hearings to find out how the response to this disaster could have failed so badly when the nation has spent unprecedented billions of dollars in the name of homeland security.

But the answer may not be much of a mystery.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, once a powerful independent agency focused solely on responding to earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and other natural disasters that occur on average about four times a month, was placed within the huge Department of Homeland Security after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Homeland Security sends \$1.1 billion each year to states to combat terrorism, but \$180 million to help prepare for such disasters as Katrina. **Much of the terrorism grant money is given under conditions that specifically exclude spending it on items or personnel that would be used in responding to hazards other than terrorism.**

MAJOR DISASTERS

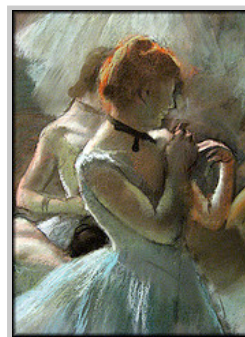
Since 1995, the federal government has declared 562 major disasters. All were natural disasters except two terrorist attacks: Oklahoma City in 1995 and the 9/11 attacks.



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