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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 04, 2005

### NY Times: Bush Severely Damaged National Guard

by Michael in New York on 9/04/2005 06:45:00 PM

Echoing our posting "Is This Disaster Natural Or Man-Made?," the New York Times in an editorial called "Man-Made Disaster" makes clear what many of us have been saying for years: that Bush has cavalierly damaged our nation's security with his backdoor draft of the National Guard and Army Reserve. Because Bush abused their trust and went back on the compact between this country and those brave volunteers, many fewer retiring soldiers will sign up for these groups in the future (Louisiana is at about 45% short of its goal this year in signing up new recruits). That's going to weaken our nation's security and ability to respond in case of terrorist attack or natural disaster for DECADES to come.

Here's the NYT, which adds that obviously ALL the available Guards should have been activated before the storm struck:

Things would have been even worse if a comparable domestic disaster had struck **last year, when an even greater percentage of National Guard units were deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some states had more than two-thirds of their Guard forces overseas. After several governors protested, the Pentagon agreed to adjust its force rotations** so no state would be stripped of more than half of its guardsmen at any one time. That promise has been kept so far. But honoring it in the months ahead will be extremely difficult with active-duty forces so badly overstretched in Iraq, and prospects for any significant early withdrawals looking bleak.

One lasting lesson that has to be drawn from the Gulf Coast's misery is that from now on, **the National Guard must be treated as America's most essential homeland security force, not as some kind of military piggy bank for the Pentagon to raid for long-term overseas missions.** America clearly needs a larger active-duty Army. It just as clearly needs a homeland-based National Guard that's fully prepared and ready for any domestic emergency.



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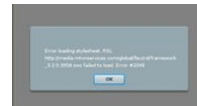
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