

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?

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Bob McMillan/ FEMA Photo



The Gulf Coast has had several catastrophic hurricanes in the last seven years. Few recall that while Katrina was a disaster, it was only a Category 3 storm, and it was only New Orleans that suffered complete chaos. The even poorer State of Mississippi quietly got back to work.



Marty Bahamonde/FEMA Photo

The reason for the worst of the disaster was that levees failed because of substandard design and construction. Why would a flood insurance company with a settlement at stake tolerate that? Well, they didn't. The City is under Federal flood insurance, so if it doesn't work, everybody pays, perforce. That is socialized risk, which greatly increased the size of the loss.



Ed Edahi/FEMA Photo

So, who was accountable for the mess? Was it the people who got out of town? Not for themselves, but... Did they take their less fortunate brethren with them? No way; that would be way too hazardous. Why? Well, New Orleans is well known for a high crime rate, so they wouldn't know whether strangers could be trusted. They had no relationships. Instead, they think "the Government" is supposed to take care of emergencies.





Liz Roll/FEMA Photo

The City of New Orleans did have the means to evacuate people, but it didn't get done. Why?

Since the days of Huey Long, Louisiana has operated on patronage. Accordingly, those in charge had no personal stake in assuring that the systems worked, except to those contributors who put them in office.

Katrina also represented an opportunity to establish new powers if those systems failed.

The politicians believed, if they could blame somebody else for the disaster and hand out relief on cue, they would be re-elected.

Which for the most part, they were.



Marty Bahamonde/FEMA Photo

After the storm, much of the city was uninhabitable, with water, sewer, and power systems totally dysfunctional.



Bob McMillan/ FEMA Photo

To that was the added hazard of overflows from the chemical processing industry.



Communications were down, or should one say, “up”?
Had the people made advance arrangements, this would be totally unnecessary.
The key to having them is to make it a regular activity.

I AM HERE

I HAVE A GUN



Many of the people who stayed behind were small business owners with everything to lose and every reason to have little faith that the police would maintain order. The Sheriff's Department raided the homes of even old women with plenty of provisions. These were American citizens, violating the rights of other American citizens, "Just doing our jobs." The looters still had their guns.



Some folks hired their own armed security, which is fine. The fellow on the right is from Blackwater Worldwide. Private security agents should be especially careful to cooperate with law enforcement. No problem there either. But when “cooperation” invests private interests with what is effectively police power, that is crossing the line.



Worse, with national agencies in charge of managing disasters comes national police power, which is “CHANGE” writ large indeed.

In New Orleans, stragglers and the “rousted” alike were ordered to the Superdome, waiting in line to obtain food, water, and shelter.

Some of these people were folks who had been forced to leave homes that were high and dry, and with plenty of food and water.

They were to get into line anyway, if they weren’t beaten and sent to jail for protesting the searches and firearms confiscations.

If police will beat up a little old lady like **Patricia Konie** while taking her weapons, what will they do to shop owners or farmers defending their property?

If the government was so inclined, what kind of concessions do you think its agents would be capable of extracting in return for survival?

Unless adequate numbers of people make preparations, there will be no outcry sufficient to preclude such behavior upon the part of public officials. Equipped with this precedent, the next might well be worse.

So, how far are we, really, between this,



Marty Bahamonde/FEMA Photo



National Archives Photo 238-NT-282

And this





Ed Edahl/FEMA Photo



Do you want to be this helpless, with public officials having everything to gain out of your misfortune?
Or would you rather have the comfort of someone more familiar, with a personal stake in your well-being?
For those who did escape with no place to go, the people of Houston were ready, especially the Salvation Army, which has the lowest overhead and highest fraction of its receipts going to those in need of any major charity.



Ed Edahl/FEMA Photo

So, charity, or dependency upon a government with the power to imprison you?





Ed Edahl/FEMA Photo

With the latter you surrender access to your files, your history, and knowledge of your beliefs.





Andrea Booher/FEMA Photo

Police are just people, capable of doing good things and bad. Most of them are decent and caring, Unfortunately, all but a very few of us can too easily be coerced into “just doing our jobs,” While few understand the necessity to subordinate police power to individual civil and property rights.



When people expect an armed monopoly to save them, they forget that individuals in said monopoly have an inherent tendency to protect themselves by protecting and obeying their financial patrons. Such is reality, as it always has been.

We have a unique opportunity to turn it around with whatever we have left, starting with obedience to our faith.

G-d gave us a system designed with the power in the hands of a people dedicated to Him, living in such a way as to minimize the need for police power.

In every nation in human history, except for this one, "our way" ended up pretty much the same, in tyranny, poverty, and destruction. We're losing what is left, and fast.

This nation started out with a model dedicated to His way. Despite its failings, it has had a record for charity, self-sacrifice, and decency unique in human history. But now we are straying into a moral trajectory dedicated to its undoing.

His way has never been fully attempted, but at least now we will finally understand why it works. The good news is, nothing is stopping us from getting started.





General David McKiernan once described Afghanistan as "a far more complex environment than I ever found in Iraq." The country's mountainous terrain, rural population, poverty, illiteracy, 400 major tribal networks and history of civil war all made for unique challenges, he said... **He argued that the military alone could not win the war** and there is a need to build up the civilian infrastructure, particularly along the Afghan-Pakistan border. [Atlantic Council Transcript: General David McKiernan Speaks at Council's Commanders Series](#)

Let's see if we can recast those "complexities": rural population, dispersed resources and stores, common language and beliefs despite numerous and wildly diverse social arrangements, decentralized control of information, knowledge of terrain, established and rugged communications networks, deep unit loyalty, regular practice with weapons...

If neither the United States Military, the most sophisticated in the world, nor the Russian Army (perhaps the most ruthless) can control an impoverished, backward, thuggish, uncooperative, and illiterate enemy like the Taliban...

LOOK AT WHAT HAPPENED IN NEW ORLEANS. Why was it so easy to subjugate a technically sophisticated American population with superior tools, education, and far more money?

It was the lack of a community culture of individual preparation.



The propagation of mutual dependency at the expense of cooperation is a policy, not just a “trend.” It is time to recognize and acknowledge that the resulting systemic weakness we see are our own, individually.

Without a dispersed and redundant rural infrastructure, a culture of both independence and charity for the penitent, familial and social integrity, adequate supplies, preparation for evacuation, and regular skills development, we are sunk, sitting ducks for the enemies of liberty, covert or witless; we will be at the mercy of “events”, natural or man-made.

Instead of wasting energy “fighting back” we can proceed to make the nation more “complex,” frustrating any potential dictator regardless of ideology; preparing for disaster, natural or man-made.

With this rediscovery of **Shemitta**, with its amazing layered civil defense system, structured charity, and regular preparation for living in and caring for the land, we have a unique opportunity to go against the flow with what we have left: a faith that starts with repentance.

Let us hope and pray that upon turning to His way of doing things, making the choice to prepare both ourselves and the land for our mutual survival, His grace will make up the difference. Such is His reality, as it always has been.



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Quick Reads

Range Management

Zion National Park

Canyonlands National Park

Deseret Ranch

Fuels Management, Succession Run Amok

The Cone Fire (the benefits of active forestry)

The Warm Fire (what happens without it)

Fire Aftermath: Mesa Verde National Park (weeds)

The Croy and Summit Fires (community builds prevention)

Socio-Ecological Paradigms

Environmental Consequences

Meadow Encroachment in Yosemite Valley

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Why we need a culture of animal husbandry

Death by Natural Causes: Yellowstone National Park

Predation management is not an option

Sustained Development

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Katrina: What Did You Expect?

Bureaucracy can be deadly

MEATY, BUT MORE REWARDING

WILDERGARTEN

This is 30 chapters introducing the 28-year native plant restoration project on our property. Here you will learn what was discovered, what I did about it, and how. It also presents newly discovered ecological principles underlying why I chose to do what I did. This gets technical. This book will explain why restoration land management should be a major industry, one that could transform our society and possibly save our country both militarily, socially, and economically. Here you will learn how environmental “protection” is inducing the mass-extinction of the native seed bank. Here you will read the most intensive biological history of coastal California you will ever find, anywhere. Here you will learn newly discovered principles of soils management, that may be widely applicable.



OTHER WRITINGS BY MARK EDWARD VANDE POL:

Natural Process: That Environmental Laws May Serve the Laws of Nature,

©Wildergarten Press, 2001, 454pp, ISBN: 0-9711793-0-1, LOC Control #2001092201.
<http://www.naturalprocess.net>

Shemitta: For the Land is Mine,

©Wildergarten Press, 2009. Contains: 217pp text, 980pp overall, 14 picture books, 2 tables, 963 photographs, 9 maps, 2 drawings, 2 charts, 145 footnotes, 358 citations, and 216 other source references, not including external Internet links. ISBN 978-0-9711793-1-8. <http://www.shemitta.com>

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