

Subject: Re: Fwd: "Lessons From Katrina" - New VTPI Paper

Date: Wed, 21 Sep 2005 02:02:46 -0700

From: Carolanne Reynolds <Carolanne.Reynolds@Faximum.com>

To: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>, Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

CC: Carolanne Reynolds <EditorWVM@WestVan.org>, Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>, "James Ridge, CAO" <james_ridge@dnv.org>, FONVCA <fonvca@fonvca.org>

At 5:13 PM -0700 9/20/05, Brian Platts wrote:

Hi Liz,

I too saw the "offer" of Cuban doctors but never took it seriously. It was clearly done for political purposes in an attempt to embarrass the US. There they were in their white coats standing before the cameras on what looked like a military parade ground. There never really was a lack of doctors, the problem was one of logistics -- getting those stranded people (and hospital patients) out of the city and into proper facilities elsewhere. Besides, how would those Cuban doctors (and all their necessary supplies and equipment) have gotten into New Orleans and what would they have done when they got there and how many speak English?

Haven't seen the Hispanic figures for New Orleans but probably substantial. Besides, a lot of educated Cubans speak English.

In other devastated areas of Louisiana and Mississippi, it seemed more a matter of rescue and recovery.

Surely doctors wd help and the host/receiving country shd be only too eager to provide the transportation.

The contrast with what happened in the tsunami in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Aceh was striking as the rest of the world watched. Squalid poverty vs luxurious hotels with tourists and locals helping each other. Chaos vs cooperation. The most powerful and richest country had its mask removed and its fancy clothes ripped off showing a defenceless underbelly of the body politic most Americans rarely acknowledge.

We lived in Washington DC for a couple of years in the 80s. It's roughly a square and the whites live in the NW quarter. The rest is no-go. They're sitting on a timebomb. And they have the gall and arrogance to feel they're superior and can teach the rest of the world how to live and govern.

Don't get me wrong. It's tragic and I'm glad Canadians went to help. My hope is that the goodwill in the rebuilding will cause a paradigm shift in their attitude and lead to more inclusion and cohesiveness rather than ignored ghettos.

The report that Carolanne raised of Jamaica having better emergency preparedness rings a little hollow. Wasn't it just last hurricane season or the one before when thousands of poor Jamaicans were killed or left standing in waist deep water for weeks on end while the US and other countries rushed in aid? If I recall, Jamaica's destructive logging practices where entire landscapes are stripped clean and left vulnerable to the torrential rainwater from hurricanes, resulted in muddy torrents roaring into the cities.

In a subsequent message Brian says he was referring to Haiti, not Jamaica, so my newspaper account stands. As for Haiti, I've been to both Haiti and the Dominican Republic several times. As you know, there's a line that divides Haiti (west) from the DR (east) on the island of Hispaniola. As described above, the trees are on the right and the clearcut on the left with the resultant erosion. BC is not much better. Brazil of the North. The Amazon however hasn't mountains that result in debris torrents.

but we digress

This disaster down south has once again made me consider our situation here in Vancouver. In New Orleans alone there were over 350 military and coast guard helicopters in action. In this Great Nation we have just 15 modern rescue choppers from coast to coast. Of course there are a few 45 year-old Sea King helicopters that can still get off the ground (I hope) while our nearest ground based military is in Edmonton with a handful of Griffin choppers.

Not only that, they closed the military base in Chilliwack.

God help us if the BIG ONE hits in our lifetimes.

-Brian

Be glad you're not in Richmond where the land will liquefy and swallow everything up. Perched on rock is much safer.

We never know what's going to happen but obviously we have to try to anticipate and be prepared. If prepared it doesn't matter if nothing happens. Geotechnical and hydrology studies must be done to identify areas at risk.

Furthermore, West Van should at least have a First Aid Centre. Maybe the Coastal Health Authority taking up a floor in the new cmnty ctr.

Carolanne

Elizabeth James wrote:

Thx to you, too. I did see reference to those items, both in the Sun and on the never-ending CNN coverage. What astounded me was that Bush would reject Cuba's offer, no matter that the people of an entire state were suffering. I also got a charge out of Mexico sending in their doctors to "save the day" for the greatest nation ever known to the world - if not the Universe.

As to West Vancouver, I have thought about that - even though it is predicted that I'd end up on the shores of Stanley Park! The good thing about the North Shore is that, so far as I know, we still have the heli-pad available. Question is, would a West Van pick-up be possible? Knowing Tim Jones and his network, my guess is that the answer would be, "Yes - if no other way, at least on a long-line."

I'm working on the theory that if we really, *really* prepare ourselves, nothing will happen.

Cheers,

Liz

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best regards

.c.

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