Hurricane Katrina and Human Behavior

Description

Lots of thoughts have boiled up over the last week as the aftermath of Katrina is the just about singular discussion on talk raido, which is my usual fare in the car and while at work.

I reflect on the times of Hurricane Hugo. One incident where a looter caught some salt rock as he left the area of his crime was publicized. For the most part, there was never a whipser of looting the rest of the time Charleston and the rest of the impacted SE region recovered. I donâ€™t recall hearing about looting as an issue in the aftermath of Andrew in Homestead. I donâ€™t recall looters running rampant in New York City on 9/11 and the days afterwards. The same was true for the Earthquake in LA back in 89â€¦. Even today, there seems to be a lack of news reports of looting on a grand scale other than in New Orleans proper. There obviously is an inherent issue with New Orleans, and not people in general.

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Leadership. Not enough going around at the top levels. I suspect there is plenty happening all over the southeast, and some of the most mild mannered people, and some of the biggest slackers are propbably showing a positive side of themselves that they may never have known was in them. Some to the â€œpeople in chargeâ€• have deserted their posts, but this is not unheard of in the war zones, now and across time in the human experience. I think the leadership skills taught to almost everyone who has served in the military will serve us well. Basic premise: Look around, assess who is currently at the party and find out what they bring to the table. Make a plan and execute, and do it now. As more people come to the party, add to your capability in new skills, or more people power, If someone with more experience than you happens to arrive, brief them on the staus and step down to where you can be most effective. The â€œafter action reportâ€• is just that: After the action, not during.

On gassing up my car when I pass a gas station: Years ago, a few central american fishermen became adrift in the Pacific, and ended up being found near Hawaii about 30 days later. They had been dismantling their boat, very carefully, to get wood to make a cooking fore for when they could catch sea birds, or fish. I read an interview in People Magazine with one of them a few years later. He said he, and his fellow fishermen had become obese, as they couldnâ€™t pass up food, as it had become ingrained in them during their ordeal at sea is you eat when you find food, for the next meal isnâ€™t guaranteed. Even over 1/2 a tank, Iâ€™ll pull in if it looks like there is gas to be had at a reasonable price.

Logistics. He who has the better logistics wins. Logistics take planning, and time to flow. Yes, the 82nd has a ready brigade, but those boys are laoded out with food for themselves, and lots of firepower. It takes a significant amount of time to pack up all that equipment for air drops. Then itâ€™s staged where it can be combat loaded quickly. While the 82nd could have taken off right away, they would have arrived in New Orleans without the necessary medial supplies and food stores to hand them out. To replace their warfighting load with humnitarian aid supplies takes a little bit of time, but you can bet the troops worked far longer than their work days to get the changes in place for load outs. That happaned in all units, reseves, National Guard, and active duty. The fact that the Coast Guard could jump in the game so quickly is that type of work is one of their primary mission areas (Search and

Rescue), so they are fitted out for that effort, hence the rapid response from that service.

The Nintendo, cell phone, XBox instant gratification culture response from the people. Great. We have become spoiled by technology to the point we have no patience when thens are off th tracks. Grow up, and get with the program. Youâ€™ll be happier when you can accept that life isnâ€™t always delivered to you 1) your way and 2) when you want it.

Decision making. All forms of communications evaporated. When was the last time â€œweâ€• exercised without the â€œstuffâ€• we think will always be there? I suggest just a handfull of people even could project their voice to a crowd or unit for longer than a few minutes without going hoarse. The â€œartâ€• of pushing your voice out to a large area, and still be intelligible is pretty much gone. It will be a useful method for the next few days, before amplificed systems can once more make us lazy. Oh, back to decision making. I canâ€™t recall who was posting it, it seems to me it was either Yankee Sailor of CDR Salamander, both still active Navy guys, but the discussion was wrapped around the fact that they had so many ways to keep in contact with the â€œbossâ€• that they never really had to/got to make decisions. When you donâ€™t â€œgo thereâ€• as a result of not so good decisions, sometimes you end up never developing the skills needed to make tough, fast, and effective decisions. The NOPD and Fire Department were in that fix. Not only could they no call to ask how to handle things, and therefore had to decide themselves, the â€œsystemâ€• relies on being able to communicate and call in help, such as police backup or more firefighting capacity when the situation gets too big to handle. So, the local authorities are kinda overwhelmed, and in an environment they never envisioned. Some people folded, other rose to the occassion.

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On the concept of practicing without, I once graded a â€œselected exerciseâ€• (meaning it was the one for the books for the readiness guys) for a cruiser. The drill was a an exercise in how to handle a nuclear attack. One of the things the Damage Control Assistant had to do was calculate the radiation values. Once the simulated bomb burst had occurred and geiger counter reading being passed to Damage Control Central, he reached in his drawer and picked up his little creidt card sized calculator. I told him to put it away, that the electomagnetic pulse of the blast had fried the electronic brains. The look of horror crossed his face, part for my directing him, part because he knew that would be the case. He hadnâ€™t practiced â€œpunching the pubs,â€• so he felt lost. He regained his composure, and got to work. He did fine, but may have done better later

Following â€œThe Plan.â€• We Americans are great at making plans, but we so much more prefer â€œwinging itâ€• when the barbarians are at the gate. I think one reason is that unless youâ€™re the poor person who got strapped with typing up â€œThe Planâ€• (hereinafter referred to as â€œTPâ€•), no one knows it well enough to carry it out. Now, since the TP is so ominous looking in volumes I through V, no one else will pick it up and read it, except for us few â€œby the Bookâ€• typesâ€¦

So much for drifting along in the stream of consciousness today. Typos and gramatical things are placed within this post for you reading pleasureâ€¦.

Category

1. Political

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