

The Massive Destruction Brought By Hurricane Katrina In Mississippi And Louisiana In 2005

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National Guidance

Introduction

Hurricane Katrina reverted the ways in which the United States conducts domestic disaster relief, especially with the expanded role of the United States military. On August 29, 2005, it hit the Louisiana and Mississippi border and left twenty-thousand New Orleans residents stranded. Thousands sought refuge on rooftops without food and water as they struggled to avoid the floods. Federal and local governments worked tirelessly to rescue the distressed residents.

Thesis Statement

The massive destruction brought by Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi and Louisiana in 2005 resulted in destroyed communities. Lack of proper communication among federal officials, residents and law enforcers led to panic and chaos, endangering life and property. Delayed response to this disaster suggests the need to expand existing presidential power to use military force to secure disaster-prone areas and save lives quickly. Below is a discussion on how Congress can give authority to the president and the military to implement internal law enforcement in cases requiring rapid response, such as Hurricane Katrina.

Training Military Forces on Domestic Law Enforcement.

Posse Comitatus Bill of 1878 limited the application of the military in enforcing domestic policies in the United States. In an argument to support this bill, one critic argues that the modern military is incredibly fast in making life-and-death choices, and troops are trained to use extra force. Military forces approach tactical and law enforcement situations differently, and this can cause the soldiers to misunderstand or misread situations and apply the wrong kind of force.

Soldiers are trained to efficiently and violently destroy the enemy, and their training excludes the use

of reasonable force. It is risky to send military troops into hostile environments for which they lack training, but this can be resolved. Special response units should receive essential training with National Guard units for domestic emergency situations. Such training would enable Special Forces to coordinate communication and equipment with local police, which was a significant problem experienced by early responders after Hurricane Katrina (Bookmiller, 2016).

The President's Authority

The authority granted by Congress to the president allows him to act to its full extent. In 1979, the Supreme Court highlighted this after it upheld President Carter's decision to hold Iranian assets when the American Embassy in Tehran was held hostage. It found the need to broaden the scope of the president's authority in hostile situations and civil wars. The president is expected to use all available resources to respond to natural disasters. He is accountable to all Americans in case of failure. It is the president's responsibility to represent the federal government in cases such as hurricanes. When a significant disaster occurs, such as Hurricane Katrina, Congress should work with the president and the federal government to achieve success. Congress should acknowledge and learn from mistakes made after Hurricane Katrina and align the president's statutory power to respond when need be. To meet the expectations of all Americans, the president needs all available resources to provide leadership, especially during natural calamities (Lansford, Covarrubias & Miller, 2016).

Using Military Forces in Domestic Affairs to Protect Human Rights. Military involvement in domestic law enforcement is argued against due to the disintegration of American civil freedoms in the hands of the troops. However, history indicates that military intervention in internal affairs may be used to protect civil freedoms. Posse Comitatus bill assented as a result of the military's contribution to enforcing civil liberties (Rizer, 2015). It prevented the military from enforcing the reconstruction laws. To do away with concerns about the military abrogating public freedoms, Congress can reduce the duration of military engagement and provide special training to the troops. A limited-duration force with specially trained soldiers may be well equipped to safely handle internal disturbance situations, such as in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. A police force that is undermanned and overly concerned with having control more than restoring order may be more dangerous than helpful. In such cases, residents in need of rescue and emergency services would suffer most since local law enforcers would choose between restoring order and helping affected citizens. It is a choice that should not be considered (Noel, 2014).

Conclusion

Tragic events after Hurricane Katrina showed the country's unpreparedness in handling natural disasters. Changes in the Posse Comitatus Act should be made to prevent local and federal governments from controlling an already chaotic situation. A devoted, active-duty team should be formed to respond to such cases. A specially trained unit in domestic law enforcement meant to

ensure the military response is sufficient needs to be established. Appropriate checks and balances can be placed on presidential powers to issue directives in short durations, such as ten days, to allow troops to provide stability in affected areas. In as much as the military has been excluded from enforcing domestic laws, cases such as Hurricane Katrina show the need to involve the military. Catastrophic disasters cannot be anticipated, but there is a need to prepare adequately. The proposed changes will allow the federal government to act appropriately if and when disaster strikes again.

References

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