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# **Leadership, Administrative Evil and the Ethics of Incompetence: Lessons from Katrina and Iraq**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Are acts of incompetence unethical? And, do they fit within the definition of administrative evil, where one is acting within role as others would expect them to from an organizational or policy perspective? More broadly, what is the relationship between incompetence and ethical behavior for leaders? We examine the moral shortfalls of both professional and public service ethics, and show why both fail as safeguards against unethical behavior, incompetence, and even in the end, administrative evil. We examine two case studies: the largely failed response to Hurricane Katrina, and here, we focus on the considerable and rather rapid deskilling of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The second case study is the occupation and reconstruction of Iraq, in which we examine closely the misplaced efforts of the Coalition Provisional Authority. Finally, we assess the role of ethical failures in acts of incompetence by leaders, and ask whether and when those might constitute administrative evil.

## **Leadership, Administrative Evil and the Ethics of Incompetence: Lessons from Katrina and Iraq**

“[Hurricane Katrina] ...is a public administration case study in failure of gigantic proportions.” Dwight Ink (2006, 800).

“In planning for the Iraq occupation, the Bush administration drew on virtually none of the existing institutional knowledge about postconflict reconstruction that existed within the U.S. government. It started organizing for the postwar reconstruction very late and devoted far too little authority or resources to the task.” Frances Fukuyama (2005, 85).

In 2004, we concluded *Unmasking Administrative Evil* with the following: “Our argument in this book thus offers no easy or sentimental solutions; offers no promise of making anything better; but only offers an inevitably small and fragile bulwark against things going really wrong...” (Adams and Balfour, 2004, 163). We did not make a more expansive claim because of the most fundamental ethical challenge within a technical-rational culture: that is, one can be a "good" or responsible leader and at the same time commit or contribute to acts of administrative evil. Subsequent events, especially the moral debacles of the occupation and reconstruction in Iraq and the response to Hurricane Katrina, have led us to consider the problem from another angle: Are acts of incompetence unethical? And, do they fit within the definition of administrative evil, where one is acting within role as others would expect them to from an organizational or policy perspective? More broadly, what is the relationship between incompetence and ethical behavior for leaders? To what extent do ethical failures underlie, or exacerbate, acts of administrative incompetence? These are important questions because, as our case studies illustrate, the combination of ethical failure and incompetence appear to enhance the likelihood of leadership failures.

In addressing these questions, we first offer characterizations of evil and administrative evil, and then explain the role of technical rationality as an enabler of administrative evil. We briefly revisit the touchstone of administrative evil, the Holocaust of World War II. Next, we examine the moral shortfalls of both professional and public service ethics, and show why both fail as safeguards against unethical behavior, incompetence, and even in the end, administrative evil. We highlight the special role of incompetence because it is the key theme in our two case studies. The largely failed response to Hurricane Katrina is our first case example, and here, we focus on the considerable and rather rapid deskilling of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The second case study is the occupation and reconstruction of Iraq, in which we examine closely the misplaced efforts of the Coalition Provisional Authority to reconstruct Iraq's civil infrastructure in the wake of the U.S. invasion and occupation of that country. Finally, we assess the role of ethical failures in acts of incompetence by leaders, and ask whether and when those might constitute administrative evil.

### **Administrative Evil**

The Oxford English Dictionary defines evil as the antithesis of good in all its principle senses. Elias Staub (1992, 25) offers a more expansive characterization: “Evil is not a scientific concept with an agreed meaning, but the idea of evil is part of a broadly shared human cultural heritage. The essence of evil is the destruction of human beings...By evil I mean *actions* that have such consequences.” And Fred Katz (1993, 5) provides a useful, behavioral definition of

evil as, "...behavior that deprives innocent people of their humanity, from small scale assaults on a person's dignity to outright murder... (this definition) focuses on how people behave toward one another -- where the behavior of one person, or an aggregate of persons is destructive to others." These definitions, while helpful, can be further refined. Rather than a continuum of evil as suggested in Katz' definition, we propose a continuum of evil and wrongdoing, with horrible, mass eruptions of evil, such as the Holocaust and other instances of mass murder at one extreme, and the "small" transgression, such as a white lie at the other (Staub, 1992, xi). Somewhere along this continuum, wrongdoing turns into evil.

Over the last century and a half in particular, the modern age has had as its hallmark what we call *technical rationality*. We believe that the ethical failures of leadership in modern organizations are rooted in significant part in the unquestioned dominance of *technical rationality* (Adams and Balfour, 2004, pp. 29-36). Technical rationality is a culture (that is, a way of thinking and living) that emphasizes the scientific-analytic mindset and the belief in technological progress (Adams, 1992). The culture of technical rationality has enabled a new and often confusing form of evil that we call *administrative evil*. What is different about administrative evil is that its appearance is *masked*. Administrative evil may be masked in many different ways, but the common characteristic is that people can engage in acts of evil without being aware that they are in fact doing anything at all wrong. Indeed, ordinary people may simply be acting appropriately in their organizational role— just doing what those around them would agree they should be doing— and at the same time, participating in what a critical and reasonable observer, usually well after the fact, would call evil. Even worse, under conditions of what we call *moral inversion*, in which something evil has been redefined convincingly as good, ordinary people can all too easily engage in acts of administrative evil while believing that what they are doing is not only correct, but in fact, good.

The basic difference between evil as it has appeared throughout human history, and administrative evil, which is a fundamentally modern phenomenon, is that the latter is less easily recognized as evil. People have always been able to delude themselves into thinking that their evil acts are not really so bad, and we have certainly had moral inversions in times past. There are, however, three very important differences in administrative evil. First is our modern inclination to *un-name* evil, an old concept that does not lend itself well to the scientific-analytic mindset (Bernstein, 2002, Neiman, 2002). The second difference is found in the structure of the modern, complex organization, which diffuses individual responsibility and requires the compartmentalized accomplishment of role expectations in order to perform work on a daily basis (Staub, 1992, p. 84). The third difference is the way in which the culture of technical rationality has narrowed analytically the processes by which public policy is formulated and implemented, so that moral inversions now appear more likely.

Our understanding of administrative evil has its roots in the genocide perpetrated by Nazi Germany during World War II. While the evil-- the pain and suffering and death-- that was inflicted on millions of "others" in the Holocaust (Glass, 1997) almost defies our comprehension, we can now see it clearly as the signal exemplar of administrative evil. The Holocaust occurred in modern times in a culture suffused with technical rationality, and its activity was largely accomplished within organizational roles and within legitimated public policy and leadership. While the results of the Holocaust were horrific and arguably without precedent in human history, ordinary Germans fulfilling ordinary roles carried out extraordinary destruction in ways that had been successfully packaged as socially normal and appropriate—a classic moral

inversion (Arendt, 1963). While it is clear that the moral failures in our two case studies—the response to Hurricane Katrina, and the occupation and reconstruction of Iraq—as bad as both have been—pale in comparison to the Holocaust, the question we raise here is the degree to which they illuminate connections between leadership failures, incompetence and administrative evil.

### **The Moral Failures of Professional Ethics**

Both public service and professional ethics in the technical-rational tradition draw upon both teleological and deontological ethics, and focus on the individual's decision-making process in the modern organization and as a member of a profession. In the public sphere, deontological ethics are meant to safeguard the integrity of the organization by helping individuals conform to professional norms, avoid mistakes and misdeeds that violate the public trust (corruption, nepotism, etc.), and assure that public officials in a constitutional republic are accountable to the people through their elected representatives. At the same time, public servants are encouraged to pursue the greater good by using discretion in the application of rules and regulations and creativity in the face of changing conditions (teleological ethics). The “good” public servant should avoid both the extremes of rule-bound behavior and undermining the rule of law with individual judgments and interests. It is fairly self-evident that public (and private) organizations depend on at least this level of ethical judgment in order to function efficiently and effectively, and to maintain public confidence in government (and business). At the same time, it is important to recognize that these ethical standards of an organization or profession are not adequate in and of themselves to insure ethical behavior or even, we argue, competent behavior.

#### *The Challenge of Administrative Evil*

Despite the extensive literature on public service ethics, there is little recognition of the most fundamental ethical challenge to the professional and leader within a technical-rational culture: that is, one can be a “good” or responsible professional or leader and at the same time commit or contribute to acts of administrative evil. As Harmon (1995) has argued, technical-rational ethics has difficulty dealing with what Milgram (1974) termed the “agentic shift,” where the professional or leader acts responsibly towards the hierarchy of authority, public policy, and the requirements of the job or profession, while abdicating any personal, much less social, responsibility for the content or effects of decisions or actions. In the technical-rational conception of public service ethics, the personal conscience (that is, one’s moral compass) is always subordinate to the structures of authority. The former is “subjective” and “personal,” while the latter is characterized as “objective,” and “public.”

The ethical framework within a technical rational system thus posits the primacy of an abstract, utility-maximizing individual, while binding leaders and professionals to organizations in ways that make them into reliable conduits for the dictates of legitimate authority, which is no less legitimate when it happens to be pursuing an unethical or even evil policy. An ethical system that allows an individual to be a good leader or professional while committing acts of evil is, by definition, devoid of moral content, or even morally perverse. Given the reality of administrative evil, no one in public service should be able to rest easy with the notion that ethical behavior is defined by doing things the right way. Norms of legality, efficiency, and effectiveness—however “professional” they may be—do not necessarily promote or protect the well being of humans, especially that of “surplus populations”-- society’s most vulnerable and superfluous members whose numbers are growing in the early years of this century.

## **Public Service Ethics and Incompetence**

Incompetence refers to the inability to properly and effectively perform a given function (Farazmand, 2002). What we propose is that otherwise technically competent leaders and managers often produce unacceptable and even tragic outcomes when they fail at an ethical level. As with administrative evil, ethical failures occur along a continuum, from hiding minor mistakes and taking home offices supplies at one end, to acts of omission or commission that endanger the well being and lives of innocent citizens at the other. Ethical failure at this far end of the continuum literally renders managers and leaders incompetent-- unable or unwilling to act on behalf of people in need of their help and, in the worst case scenarios, actively causing harm, even loss of life. In at least some situations, the ability to competently perform a function is not just about having the requisite skill level or knowledge, but is also a matter of personal conscience, requiring the use of one's moral compass. The unethical leader or professional, no matter how technically skilled, risks failure at a functional level as well.

How does this happen? As we have already noted, professionalism and administrative norms tend to narrow the scope of responsibility so that individuals do not feel accountable for organizational and policy outcomes, especially those that affect "surplus or marginalized populations," those who for whatever reason – including ethnic identity, economic status, or national origin – "can find no viable role in the society in which they are domiciled" (Rubenstein, 1983), or at least live at the margins of viability without the same access to the benefits and protections of civil society and the professions that deliver its services. We suggest that when such populations are excluded from consideration in the planning and execution of public policies, the stage is set for either creating or exacerbating both ethical and functional failures.

Because efficient and legitimate institutions can be used for constructive or destructive purposes, both leaders and professionals need to develop and nurture a critical, reflexive attitude toward public institutions, the exercise of authority, and the culture at large. In this view, public policy and administration certainly encompasses, but is not centered on, the use of sophisticated organizational and management techniques in the implementation of public policy. Public leadership must also, and primarily, be informed by an historical consciousness, which is aware of the potential for ethical failure by the state and its agents, and by a societal role and identity infused with not just personal and professional ethics, but also with a social and political consciousness—a public ethics—that can recognize the need to transcend conventional ethics and professional practice, when needed. It was needed in the public service response to Hurricane Katrina, to which we now turn.

### **The Response to Hurricane Katrina**

Government response to emergencies, particularly natural disasters, has been analyzed and written about at some length in public policy and administration (See May, 1985, Schneider, 1995 and more recently, Kettl, 2004). Emergency management is by now a rather well established subfield within public administration, and even has the status of an organized section within the American Society for Public Administration. It includes at least the following areas: planning, mitigation, disaster relief/response, and long term rebuilding. More recently, it has focused on an "all hazards" approach, which emphasizes the four dimensions just noted and applies them to national disasters of all kinds as well as to human-caused disasters, such as terrorism, and which emphasizes the flexible coordination of all first responders. The idea is develop a nimble, simultaneously loose-tight network functionality that can effectively respond

both according to plan and to the unexpected events and dynamics that are always present in the chaos of disaster.

Among the many aspects of American society and government that were impacted by the events of 9/11, emergency management, which was beginning to include terrorism in its mission, experienced a tsunami-like wave of “homeland security” that flooded throughout its mission (Kettl, 2006). The network of local and state first responders that has always been the front lines of response to natural disasters, now have to be prepared to respond to acts of terrorism as well. Nowhere have these dynamics played out in a more problematic way than at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

*FEMA: Its Background and History*

The Federal Emergency Management Agency was begun by an executive order under President Jimmy Carter in 1979, although these functions have a longer history within the federal government. During the Reagan years, FEMA became over time much more of a national security or civil defense agency with a significant “black” budget, a considerable portion of which was devoted to Mt. Weather (a secure bunker city to ensure the continuation of government in nuclear attack). The national security orientation began to ease under the first President Bush. The importance, and especially the political importance, of disaster relief became graphically clear with Hurricanes Hugo (affecting South Carolina) and Andrew (affecting south Florida). Both events were politically costly to the first President Bush.

Shortly after, perhaps reacting to avert future political fallout, Clinton appointed James Lee Witt as FEMA director, who had served in a similar capacity in Arkansas. By all accounts, his tenure was one in which FEMA was transformed into a functional-- if not, indeed, high performing-- organization (Khademian, 2002). He moved FEMA very strongly into the emergency management business, and downplayed the national security mission, which by now—even before 9/11—was beginning to focus more and more on terrorism. Witt worried about whether FEMA could successfully marry those two missions. His worries now seem prescient.

By 2000, FEMA was successfully managing the tension between its political mission and its professional mission. The political mission was famously captured by James Lee Witt’s comment, “All disasters are political events.” Handled well, disaster responses make politicians look good, and provide needed and substantial help for citizens. This perspective pushes resources toward response and recovery efforts. At the same time, the 1990s saw a dramatic increase in the professionalization of emergency management. Over time, this professional perspective shifted attention toward mitigation and planning efforts. Mitigation ameliorates the eventual severity of an event before it occurs, and the role of planning is obvious. Under Witt, FEMA was a disaster relief and first response agency, but it was also a political tool that sent cash first and asked questions later-- disaster declarations were rather easily obtained.

The George W. Bush administration brought immediate change, even before 9/11. Bush’s first appointment as FEMA director was Joe Allbaugh, a long time political advisor from Texas days, and campaign director in the 2000 election. Although he had excellent access to the White House, he brought no emergency management credentials to his new position. Allbaugh thought of FEMA as an activist government organization, and his response was in line with his party’s ideology (Cooper and Block, 2006, 71): “...federal disaster assistance had evolved into both an oversized entitlement program and a disincentive to effective state and local risk management.” Meanwhile, at the same time, the mission creep toward terrorism accelerated.

The agency was headed back to the national security mindset of the 80s, reconstructed as anti-terrorism, even before 9/11. Allbaugh left in the wake of 9/11, when the Department of Homeland Security was formed, and during that transition time, resisted taking away FEMA's cabinet level status in the White House.

The now infamous Michael Brown became FEMA's next director. He was originally hired to be FEMA's general counsel. He was an attorney, but one with no emergency management experience and no Washington experience. He had been Joe Allbaugh's college roommate, which was perhaps the connection he followed to the job. He was known to be both personable and patronizing. Brown was also not very effective in promoting FEMA's interests during the reorganizations which formed the new Department of Homeland Security. For example, FEMA did not get the Justice Department's Office of Domestic Preparedness, which distributed antiterrorism grants to police agencies. This effectively doomed the "all hazards" approach (or any other unified approach to anti-terrorism melded with disaster response).

The first Homeland Security director, former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge ultimately took away all the preparedness grants from FEMA and gave the whole package to the Office of Domestic Preparedness. Ridge and Brown did not work well together, by all accounts (Cooper and Block, 2006). The FEMA budget was constantly eroded, because the new Department had been given control over all of its unit's budgets (these came to be called "Homeland taxes" within FEMA). With a \$550 million budget, when FEMA was "taxed" by DHS for as much as \$80 million, the effects were quite consequential. By the end of 2002, 22 senior staffers had left. The replacements were not encouraging—5 of 8 new senior managers had no emergency management experience. Gillies (2006, 5) refers to FEMA's situation in the new Department of Homeland Security as "amalgamation dysfunction." Roberts (2006) notes that FEMA was handling neither of its mission elements very well by 2005. Two separate surveys of federal employees during the post 9/11 period showed FEMA at the bottom and then, next to last, as good places to work in the federal government (Morris, 2006, 288). According to the House Select Committee report (2006), 500 of FEMA's 2,500 positions were vacant when Katrina hit, and 8 out of 10 regional directors were 'acting.'

When James Lee Witt spoke to the April 2004 National Hurricane Conference in Orlando, he was introduced by Brown as someone who (Cooper and Block, 2006, 91): "...can say things that I can't." Witt's criticism was scorching, 'I am extremely concerned that the ability of our nation to prepare for and respond to disasters has been sharply eroded.'" In March, 2005, Brown commissioned a Mitre Corporation report, which concluded that FEMA (Cooper and Block, 2006, 91), "...lacked leadership, a properly sized staff and a sufficient budget." The Mitre Report went on to say that (Cooper and Block, 2006, 91):

"...FEMA was incapable of carrying out its core mission, in part because it operated blindly, unable to develop a clear picture of disasters as they unfolded and incapable of moving information from the ground up. The report noted that FEMA had no ability to track supplies once they left government warehouses and no ability to tell whether they were ever distributed."

The Homeland Security Department contracted out the National Response Plan (NRP) to the Rand Corporation (not known for its work in emergency management), and they came up with a plan that many found confusing, with distinctions between "incidents of national significance" and "catastrophes." It also created a Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC), which eventually performed poorly both before and after Katrina's landfall. FEMA

made it through the 2004 hurricanes in Florida (four storms), perhaps because Florida's state emergency management system was exceptionally strong, perhaps because the state's governor and the president were brothers, or perhaps because the president's political team was well aware of the state's importance in the 2004 election, just weeks away. Ridge's successor as Homeland Security director, Michael Chertoff, continued on the same path, to the point that (Cooper and Block, 2006, 88-89):

“On July 27, 2005, Dave Liebersbach, head of the National Emergency Management Association, an organization of state and local emergency managers, warned in a letter to Congress that Chertoff's disassembly of FEMA was a disaster in the making, ‘The proposed reorganization increases the separation between preparedness, response and recovery functions.’”

The Federal Emergency Management Agency that attempted to respond to the disaster of Hurricane Katrina was an agency with its capacities seriously eroded at best, and at worst, dangerously incompetent (Perrow, 2005).

#### *Before Landfall*

While it is open to debate whether a city the size of New Orleans should ever have been located in such a vulnerable, below-sea level place as the one it occupies, the factors which raised the vulnerability of New Orleans to potentially catastrophic levels were well known in advance of Hurricane Katrina. Perhaps the most important of these was the New Orleans system of levees and floodwalls, which were built largely in the 1920s and 1930s. Neither the levee districts nor the Corps of Engineers adequately maintained them. Moreover, the initial assessment of the soil structure on which the system was built was substandard (Drew and Schwartz, 2005), which meant that the assessments of the degree to which the levees might be overtopped in a Category 3 storm were overly optimistic. Multiple breaches in several waterways and from Lake Pontchartrain provided obvious evidence of this failure of adequate protection, and of inadequate risk assessment.

Both Louisiana state government and New Orleans city government had rather poorly developed capacities for emergency response compared to other governments. Both made key mistakes (House Select Committee, 2006), “Despite adequate warning 56 hours before landfall, Governor Blanco and Mayor Nagin delayed ordering a mandatory evacuation until 19 hours before landfall.” While both individuals had good moments during and after the disaster, it is fair to say that neither had sufficient response capacity to work with. This was a failed leadership response by local and state government as well.

On Thursday, August 25, Katrina made its first landfall just north of Miami as a Category I hurricane; it took 8 hours to make its way across Florida and exited into the Gulf of Mexico (Cooper and Block, Chapter Six). The National Hurricane Center was gradually altering its forecasts for the second landfall from the Florida panhandle progressively westward. By Friday, August 26, genuine alarm was being expressed by experienced personnel such as Max Mayfield in the National Hurricane Center. On Saturday morning, August 27, FEMA staff were warning about a Category 4 or 5 hurricane hitting New Orleans; they had considerable detail on what the implications would be from the well known “Hurricane Pam” exercise. Indeed, the Department of Homeland Security had developed a “top fifteen” list of the worst disaster scenarios that could hit the U.S. Reflecting that Department's *raison d'être*, twelve of the fifteen were terrorist events. However, making the list at number ten was a Category 4 or 5 hurricane making a direct

hit on New Orleans. Katrina made landfall just east of New Orleans at 7 AM on Monday morning, August 29, as a large Category 3 hurricane with 125 mile per hour winds.

#### *After Landfall*

The federal, state and local response to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina is very well known, and played out on television for America and the world to see (Waugh, 2006). For some days, it was clear that news organizations had better communications and a better picture of conditions on the ground than FEMA did. Looking back, the House Select Committee concluded in a considerable understatement (2006): “Federal, state and local officials’ failure to anticipate the post-landfall conditions delayed post-landfall evacuation and support.”

The Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC) was the new, state of the art disaster response command and control center, and was designed to develop reliable and accurate information about any disasters in real time. However, the HSOC was not only slow to react, but mischaracterized crucial situations—at least initially (Cooper and Block, Chapter 6). Under the National Response Plan (NRP), an important distinction is made between a “normal” disaster and a catastrophe. The breakpoint for this decision in the case of Hurricane Katrina was whether the New Orleans levees and floodwalls were overtopped (that is, water flowed over the top of them—most likely from a storm surge), or whether they were breached (that is, failed structurally, allowing massive amounts of floodwater into the city).

Among the most egregious mistakes made by the federal government was the failure to recognize that levees and floodwalls had been breached, rather than simply overtopped. Secretary Chertoff, President Bush and other federal officials continued to maintain in the days following the hurricane that the levees and floodwalls did not breach until a day after the storm. There were in fact multiple breaches in three separate waterways as the storm passed through (Cooper and Block, 2006, 133), and HSOC did not figure this out for a very long time—all day Monday and into Tuesday. HSOC simply failed to provide timely enough or accurate enough information on the question of breaches. The result was a less aggressive initial response and a failure to escalate the relief effort, which further exacerbated the human disaster that was unfolding.

The evacuation of New Orleans, even though it was ordered much later than it should have been and even though it was chaotic (as all such evacuations are), was very successful by comparison to other hurricane-related evacuations in that some 1.2 million people found their way out of the city and its immediate suburbs. Meanwhile, some of the 100,000-200,000 people left in greater New Orleans were looking for higher ground, and making their way first to the Superdome, and then later, to the Convention Center. Both Louisiana officials and FEMA officials were very slow to comprehend the situation, and even slower to act effectively to alleviate the situation. FEMA was not moving food and water into the region quickly, and really did not have enough of a tracking system to know when anything would arrive or even where it was along the way.

The communications failures in the aftermath of Katrina were actually far worse than those apparent during 9/11 (Townsend, 2006). Flooding took out the power stations and cell phone bases, and virtually all communication was disabled. Once again, radio frequencies were not the same, and interoperability remained a rhetorical goal. There were no backup plans in place to fix communication systems. Four days after the storm, communications came back on line to some degree. News organizations had better and more timely information than emergency response agencies during the critical first hours and days.

During this time, lack of communication was critical (Kweit and Kweit, 2006). It was assumed that certain locations could not be reached by vehicles because of the flooding. FEMA's state of the art mobile communications truck remained—uselessly—for days in Baton Rouge. Media crews, on the other hand, looked for land routes to drive vehicles to the Convention Center, for example, and found them. FEMA relied on fragmentary reports, and simply did not even attempt to send buses in for needed evacuations, assuming incorrectly that they would be unable to get there. Finally, on Tuesday, Aug. 30 at 8:22 PM, more than a day and a half after landfall, Secretary Chertoff declared the Katrina disaster an “incident of national significance” (next best to “catastrophe”, which seemed to be reserved for terrorist attacks) and designated Michael Brown as the “principle federal official” (PFO). This triggered the National Response Plan (NRP) for the first time (Cooper and Block, 2006, 177):

As Wednesday, August 31, dawned on the ruined city of New Orleans, this much was clear: Washington was receiving rafts of accurate information about what was happening on the streets of the city, but the information wasn't getting to the people who needed it.

The White House and Chertoff were flying blind. Most of FEMA's staff was sequestered in Baton Rouge, 85 miles away.

By noon on the Thursday after the storm, the entire FEMA presence in the city had actually itself evacuated from New Orleans, although they eventually would have a considerable presence in the days and weeks to follow.

During all this time, Michael Brown, the FEMA director, was cut out of the loop and bypassed, and was not getting real time information in Baton Rouge. On the other hand, Secretary Chertoff and HSOC were not giving the White House useful information, and the entire response became inept in multiple ways. HSOC was behind and wrong on the levee and floodwall breaches, on the Superdome crowd and situation, on whether buses were en route and when, and on the convention center crowd and situation (Cooper and Block, 2006, 209). The President himself seemed oddly out of touch as well (in stark contrast to his bullhorn address and arm around the fireman scene at ground zero in the wake of 9/11). On the ground in Mississippi, he focused on the loss of Senator Trent Lott's vacation home, promising it would be rebuilt. And that was the same occasion when he uttered the famous line, “Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job.” The House Select Committee Report (2006, 2) said: “It does not appear the President received adequate advice and counsel from a senior disaster professional... Earlier presidential involvement might have resulted in a more effective response.” Dwight Ink (2006, 800) commented: “I regard these two criticisms as major understatements.”

### *Summing up*

Hurricane Katrina was a natural disaster that would have cost many lives and great property damage even with better mitigation (e.g., levees and floodwalls up to standards), better planning (e.g., how might, say, nursing home residents have been evacuated), better response (e.g., just delivering on time what FEMA publicly said was on the way), and better reconstruction (e.g., not purchasing thousands of mobile homes—FEMA trailers—that were unusable in flood prone areas). It is thus difficult to assess how much worse a disaster it was because of the leadership and administrative incompetence of FEMA and state and local emergency management and because of the political leadership failures of the White House, and to a lesser extent, the Louisiana governor and New Orleans mayor.

The role of politics in this case is, as always, somewhat ambiguous. The FEMA response in 2004 when four hurricanes made landfall in Florida was not without its problems, but it was so

far and away superior to the Katrina response, that other considerations may well have played a role. Florida, a state governed by the President's brother and a state with a far superior emergency management infrastructure to Louisiana, was also crucial in the 2004 reelection campaign. The White House was clearly more dialed in. By contrast, the White House response to Katrina was late and meager. Louisiana was a state with a democratic governor, and New Orleans a city with a democratic mayor. The response in Mississippi in the wake of Katrina was better in that Republican state, but still not very good. Political factors may well have played some role, but it does seem clear that the erosion of competence within FEMA and Homeland Security was a very important factor (U.S. GAO, 2006a and 2006b). The comments of two well known public administration scholars are both instructive. First, Louis Comfort (2005, 2) states:

...the demands of Hurricane Katrina represented the first major test of the leadership of DHS and the policies adopted by the agency since the 9/11 attacks. That the policies proved ineffective in practice is no surprise to hazards researchers, who watched in dismay as DHS was designed to implement a hierarchical, centralized emergency response system in disaster environments that are inevitably uncertain, complex and dynamic.

And second, Don Kettl (2005, 2) notes:

...when faced with Katrina, government, at all levels, failed. In fact, the bungled response ranks as perhaps the biggest administrative failure in American history. September 11 thus was a major lost opportunity. Government could have—and should have—learned from that awful day about how to make homeland security work. When put to the test, it failed.

The reconstruction of Iraq offers another case study in incompetence—one that bears both similarities and differences to the Katrina response.

### **Reconstructing Iraq, or Was It Deconstructing Iraq?**

A discussion of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq offers multiple opportunities for addressing issues of leadership failures and ethical incompetence (Diamond, 2005; Packer, 2005; Phillip, 2005; Ricks, 2006; Woodward, 2006). Certainly, the intelligence leading up to the decision to invade Iraq, which linked that country mistakenly to Al Qaeda terrorism and offered “convincing” evidence that Iraq had stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), is one candidate. In other research, we have examined the torture and abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib and other U.S. military facilities in Afghanistan and Cuba (Adams, Balfour, and Reed, 2006). Here, we examine the U.S. effort to rebuild and reconstitute Iraq's political and civil society, from its government to its infrastructure, with a focus on the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) which oversaw this process from April, 2003 to June, 2004.

John Agresto is the former President of St. John's College in New Mexico. Like so many others in the CPA, he appears to have been chosen for his role because of his political connections: Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's wife was on his Board of Trustees at St. John's, and he had worked with Lynne Cheney, the vice president's wife at the National Endowment for the Humanities. In reflecting on his experience trying to rebuild Iraq's higher education system from the rubble to which it had been reduced, Agresto said (Chandrasekaran, 2007, 5), “I'm a neoconservative who's been mugged by reality.”

The CPA had over 1,500 employees at its height in Baghdad. Its headquarters were in the Republican Palace inside the so-called Green Zone in central Baghdad. Most support activities were completely or partially outsourced to private contractors (Special Inspector

General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2006a). For example, private guards from Blackwater provided security to Paul Bremer, who was the head of the CPA. The security guards each earned over a \$1,000 a day. Haliburton provided all the logistical support for the CPA. Somewhere around half of the CPA employees got their first passport in order to travel to Iraq. While there were some seasoned diplomats and others with at least some Middle East experience, it is fair to say that most CPA employees either had no specific expertise in the area they worked in, or had expertise in the area, but no knowledge of Iraq (Chandrasekaran, 2007). It was very difficult to learn anything meaningful about this unfamiliar culture, because even before the insurgency took hold, Baghdad was a fairly dangerous place for Americans to travel around, and for most of its existence, most CPA employees rarely, if ever, ventured outside the Green Zone.

#### *Post-War Reconstruction*

Planning for post-war reconstruction would normally be done in the State Department, but in the case of Iraq, it was handled by a small office attached to the Office of the Secretary of Defense in the Defense Department. This small office, the Office of Special Plans, was headed by Douglas Feith, whose chief task before the war was building the case that Iraq possessed WMD and was in close collaboration with Al-Qaeda. It was this office that was enamored with Ahmed Chalabi, an Iraqi expatriate, whose Iraqi National Congress was promoted by many influentials within the administration to lead a post-War Iraq. OSP did what post-war planning it actually accomplished, which was apparently not much, with minimal contact or help from either the State Department or the CIA (Chandrasekaran, 2007, 29): “Feith’s team viewed the mission as a war of liberation that would require only modest postwar assistance. They assumed that Iraqis would quickly undertake responsibility for running their country and rebuilding their infrastructure.” Moreover, they assumed that the rebuilding would be largely or completely paid for from revenue from the sale of Iraqi oil. Larry Diamond (2004, 34) has characterized these assumptions about Operation Iraqi Freedom and its aftermath as emanating from hubris and ideology.

For this short-term, post-war effort, OSP appointed Jay Garner, a retired lieutenant general who had spent time in Northern Iraq working with the Kurds in the aftermath of Desert Storm in the 1990s. It was thought that Garner’s mission would take only three months after the conflict was over, at which time the Iraqis would be ready to take over all operations. The plan that Garner took to Iraq, developed by Feith’s Office, was twenty five pages long. Garner’s operation was called the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). This group came to be known, even by some of its own employees, as the Organization of Really Hapless Americans.

There were extensive postwar reconstruction plans that had been worked on by the State Department, by the CIA, and by the National Defense University. For example, the State Department’s Future of Iraq Project developed extensive reconstruction plans that totaled some 2500 pages. These plans were not made available to Garner. Apparently, this was strategic on Feith’s part. The secret hope was that, in the absence of any plans, Garner would be forced to turn to Chalabi and the Iraqi National Congress, giving them early entry into an eventual Iraqi government (Chandrasekaran, 2007, 31). The State Department actually tried to get as many of its people as possible onto Garner’s team, hoping that people with some expertise in post-conflict situations or at least some diplomatic experience and knowledge of the region, might be able to slow down Chalabi, or better yet, derail his group altogether. Their thought was that any Iraqi government that entirely shut out Iraqis who were in Iraq was unlikely to succeed.

One of these State Department people, retired ambassador Timothy Carney, was placed in charge of the Ministry of Industry and Minerals, an area in which he had no background or expertise. Carney was given one deputy to help him “run” this ministry, which had over 100,000 employees. Another State Department person, Tom Warrick, who had worked on State’s Future of Iraq project, was accidentally discovered by Garner at an early meeting in Washington, and hired on the spot. Warrick never made it to Iraq, because his appointment was personally vetoed by Vice President Cheney. Garner never did see any of the Future of Iraq material (Chandrasekaran, 2007, 37).

More or less flying blind, Garner divided OHRA into three groups, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and civil administration. This third group was to be headed by Michael Mobbs, who was Doug Feith’s former law partner, but had no other obvious qualifications to be in Iraq, much less to oversee the restoration of civil administration. He was so lost in this role, that Garner sent him back to Washington after one week.

The first critical problem in postwar Iraq was almost immediately evident as the conflict wound down, and that was the widespread looting. The operational assumption going in was that the Iraqi regime and its major institutions would be decapitated, and that all that would be needed would be to place others in charge (Americans for a brief period, and then Iraqis without Baathist connections). However, in the vacuum that followed the collapse of Saddam Hussein’s regime, no one provided basic security.

It was not in the plans for the U.S. Military to secure the various public buildings; there were not enough troops in country to accomplish this mission if it had been tried (although every facility secured would have been one less building to be rebuilt). Prior to the war, the professional military simply stopped developing postwar plans (Fella, 2004), because they knew they would need many more troops (somewhere between 300,000 and 500,000, as opposed to the 120,000 initially sent in) to provide security in a postwar environment.

Schools, colleges, hospitals, power stations, virtually all public buildings of any kind were looted, and stripped bare down to the wiring, switches and plumbing (Clark, 2004). There were very few public buildings that did not receive this treatment. It is difficult to overstate the degree to which this almost overnight and complete destruction of infrastructure escalated the scope and scale of the Iraq recovery and reconstruction project. As Diamond (2004, 37) notes:

In postconflict situations in which the state has collapsed, security trumps everything else: it is the central pedestal that supports all else. Without some minimum level of security, people cannot engage in trade and commerce, organize to rebuild their communities, or participate meaningfully in politics. Without security, a country has nothing but disorder, distrust and desperation—an utterly Hobbesian situation in which fear pervades and raw force dominates.

The climate of this time was nicely captured by Rajiv Chandrasekaran’s driver who before the war was a careful and law-abiding driver, but after the fall of Saddam, blithely drove on the wrong side of the street to avoid the traffic jams that were a trademark of the American occupation. When asked about this remarkable change in behavior, he said (Chandrasekaran, 2007, 46), “...democracy is wonderful. Now, we can do whatever we want.” Jay Garner’s OHRA really never had a chance, because it was built on false premises (Chandrasekaran, 2007, 51): “Had there been no looting, had the police stayed on the streets, had Iraq’s infrastructure not been whittled to incapacitation by Saddam’s government, then perhaps an outfit such as OHRA, with no plan, no money and a skeletal staff would have been appropriate.”

### *Coalition Provisional Authority*

The Coalition Provisional Authority was the Bush administration's answer to the unexpected (to them) reality on the ground in Iraq. L. Paul Bremer III, known as Jerry, was suggested by Vice President Cheney to head the CPA. Bremer had extensive diplomatic experience within several past Republican administrations. He had many good ideas, but he too was hamstrung by an insufficient number of troops in Iraq to maintain security. Bremer had a three step plan for economic reform. First was the obvious need to restore basic services, such as electricity and water. The second was to get the financial sector back up and running—getting banks open and making loans, making sure payrolls were met. The third was to privatize Iraq's hugely inefficient, socialized economy. Bremer was not simple minded enough to think that a free market constituted a democracy, but he did think that it was a necessary part of mature and functional Western-style democracy, which was his aspiration for Iraq.

### *Debaathification*

One important question that needed to be addressed in the Iraq reconstruction was how deep Debaathification would go. There was no question that Saddam's top leadership—all Baath party members-- had to be removed. In the prewar planning, the State Department had advocated Desaddamification—a purging of those who had committed crimes (in the name of the regime) and the very top of the command structure. On the other hand, Doug Feith's Office in the OSD had accepted the argument provided by Ahmed Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress that Debaathification should go much deeper. In this battle too, Feith and the Pentagon won out; the problem was that operationally no one in this group knew the Baath party structure well enough to specify exactly who should go and who should stay. Chalabi's position paper advocated purging Baath party members down through the level of “udu firka” or group member. The only people below that level were ordinary members and cadets (or provisional members). Bremer issued a Debaathification order mirroring that framework. The net effect was that many of the Ministries now not only had no functional buildings, but they also had no functional leadership, and in some cases, many fewer employees. Between ten and fifteen thousand teachers were fired as a result of this decree, which left some schools in Sunni dominated areas with only one or two teachers.

### *The Iraqi Armed Forces*

The other early, disastrous decision made by Bremer was the elimination of the Iraqi armed forces. Before the war, there was consensus that the Republican Guard, the Special Republican Guard and the Fedayeen Saddam paramilitary, along with the Intelligences service would need to be disbanded. It was thought that the regular army of some 400,000 troops could be vetted, and perhaps largely retained. Bremer's second executive order disbanded the entire Iraqi military apparatus, and added the 400,000 conscript members of the regular Army to the legions of unemployed Iraqis, estimated at 40 percent. Large numbers of those purged in Debaathification and those demobilized from the Iraqi military found their way into the insurgency and into the many militias that mushroomed in the security vacuum.

### *CPA Personnel*

Both senior and junior staff were selected for appointments with the Coalition Provisional Authority because of their Republican political connections, with little to no concern for their competence (Chandrasekaran, 2007). Appointments because of political affiliation is commonplace for both political parties, however, professional competence is usually also a part of the selection process—at least to some degree. Well connected Republicans made phone calls

on behalf of friends or colleagues. Most of the senior level appointments went through Rumsfeld or Cheney. Most of the others went through the office of James O’Beirne, the White House liaison in the Pentagon. He sent out a blanket call for resumes to Republican congressmen and conservative think tanks. One candidate’s “ideal” qualification was that he had worked for the Republican Party in Florida during the presidential election recount in 2000. Two CPA staffers reported that they had been asked in their interviews what their position on abortion was, and whether they had voted for the current President in the last election.

When Bremer’s budget chief asked for ten additional, entry level staffers, among those provided were (Chandrasekaran, 2007, 94): “...Simone Ledeen, the daughter of neoconservative commentator Michael Ledeen; Casey Wasson, a recent graduate from an evangelical university for home-schooled children and Todd Baldwin, a legislative aide for Republican senator, Rick Santorum.” What all ten had in common was that they had sent resumes to the Heritage Foundation. Six of these staffers were assigned to manage Iraq’s 13 billion dollar budget; they had no budgeting or financial management experience (Chandrasekaran, 2007, 94).

### *Iraq’s Economy*

Through the 1970s and into the 1980s, Iraqis enjoyed a rather affluent existence, especially for a Middle Eastern country. This was all financed by revenue from oil exports, and included major infrastructure developments, from superhighways to modern power plants. Over time, most goods and services were produced by state-owned companies; Iraq had only a very small private sector. Jobs in state-run factories and enterprises provided lifetime employment. Wages were low, but most goods and services were heavily subsidized. Gasoline, for example, cost about a nickel per gallon. Education and health care were free, and provided by the government.

This relatively rosy picture began to erode with Iraq’s eight year war with Iran in the 1980s. And then, Iraq’s ill-fated invasion of Kuwait, which brought devastating economic sanctions for most of the 1990s, sent the Iraqi economy into a death spiral. By the time of the U.S. invasion, almost every sector of the Iraqi economy was limping along and had very serious deferred maintenance. The economic situation was indeed bleak, but the CPA added a new dimension (Yousif, 2006). Iraq was going to be transformed into a free market economy (Chandrasekaran, 2007, 115):

The neoconservative architects of the war—Wolfowitz, Feith, Rumsfeld and Cheney—regarded wholesale economic change in Iraq as an integral part of the American mission to remake the country. To them, a free economy and a free society went hand in hand. If the United States were serious about having democracy flourish in Iraq, it would have to teach the Iraqis a whole new way of doing business—the American way.

These widespread efforts, including as just two examples, the development of a modern stock exchange with state of the art electronics and an extensive formulary for pharmaceuticals, never got off the ground, but diverted a great deal of time and resources—which were in short enough supply already—away from getting both bare necessities and jobs to ordinary Iraqis.

Electricity is a case in point (Brookings, 2007). Before the war, the U.N. estimated that Iraq’s electricity demand was about 6,200 megawatts, but that it was generating only about 4,400 megawatts. The State Department’s Future of Iraq project estimated that about \$18 billion in repairs and reconstruction would be needed to revive Iraq’s power grid. In March, 2003, the White House claimed that Iraq was producing 5,500 megawatts of power, and they set aside \$230 million to fix Iraq’s power problems. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Iraq was only

able to generate 3,500 megawatts. Saddam had developed a practice of diverting power so that Baghdad had uninterrupted electricity (for the most part), and southern regions in particular received less and had daily power interruptions. Bremer decided that everyone would receive an equal amount of electricity, which had the effect of giving southern regions a few more hours of power, but introduced the residents of Baghdad to about twelve hours of power a day. Because electricity runs the pumps for water and also for pumping gasoline, these services were impacted as well.

The high water mark for postwar electricity generation was 4,700 megawatts, reached during August, 2004. Electricity generation has been over 4,000 megawatts for seven months in 2004, but only four months in 2005 and six months in 2006. In January, 2007, generation was back down to 3,575 megawatts. Iraqis wonder why Americans cannot get the lights on, and conclude that they must not care.

Similarly well intentioned but inept efforts were made in other parts of Iraq's infrastructure: education, higher education, health care, oil and so on (Dodge, 2005). The problems in health care—to take just one additional sector—can be illustrated by just a few brute statistics. It is estimated that there were 34,000 medical doctors in Iraq before the war. About 12,000 are thought to have left the country since March, 2003. About 2,000 have been murdered since that time, and another 250 kidnapped. The attrition level from emigration across other professional classes in Iraq is estimated at forty percent since 2003.

#### *Human Crisis*

Approximately one million Iraqis were internally displaced prior to the war, meaning that they had been forced to leave or opted to leave their home of choice. Since the war, another 650,000 Iraqis have been internally displaced, and the pace appears to be escalating as sectarian civil war intensifies. Migration out of Iraq has also increased dramatically. More than two million passports have been issued to Iraqis since August, 2005. There are now estimated to be 1.8 million Iraqi refugees, with most of these in Syria and Jordan, and smaller numbers in Egypt, Lebanon and Iran. Fewer than 500 Iraqis have been settled in the U.S. Those that remain in Iraq are spiraling deeper and deeper into a civil war that threatens to descend into the ethnic cleansing of Bosnia or Kosovo, or worse, into the genocide of Rwanda.

#### *Summing Up*

The reconstruction of Iraq may have been effectively doomed from the moment the assumption was adopted that this would be a war of liberation with a minimal transition between the beheading of the Baathist regime and the installation of the new Iraqi democratic government (Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2006b). Still, there were a number of incompetent decisions which clearly made the situation worse—the Debaathification edict and the demobilization of the regular Iraqi Army were arguably the two worst examples.

History certainly suggests that any war and subsequent occupation and reconstruction effort is likely to involve privation—perhaps even serious privation-- for the people in the occupied country. Moreover, it would be difficult to argue that the Iraqi people would have been better off remaining under the thumb of Saddam Hussein, even though from a purely material and economic perspective, they may well have been better off—at least based on the abysmal record of the past four years. In this case, as in the Katrina case, there is considerable difficulty in ascertaining the degree to which political leadership failures and management leadership failures exacerbated a situation that was never going to be easy.

In the case of Iraq, there was no question about the erosion of capacity in a federal agency, rather the question was the failure to use the capacities which existed throughout the U.S. government. For the reconstruction of Iraq, arrogant and ideological assumptions were made about the ability of only a relatively few people within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to perform a set of complicated and problematic tasks with minimal effort and resources. When the assumptions were given an abrupt and unwelcome reality check, there was a compounding failure to respond adequately which made matters worse. This was exacerbated by the severely strained working relationship between Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Powell, to the point that neither man would make eye contact with the other during Presidential briefings. The President's response, or lack of response until Secretary Powell left the administration in January 2005, is a matter of speculation.

In both cases, we see the egregious misuse of political appointments, with multiple appointments of people who simply had no visible qualifications for the positions they assumed, and who went on to act incompetently (Gilman, 2003). One question that arises is whether the explanation for these appointments was simple corruption (seeing these appointments as the "spoils" of winning political office) or ideology (in this case, the conviction that government is simply not able to do anything well, so that whoever is in any given government position really does not much matter; consider President Bush's commitment in the wake of Katrina (White House, September 6, 2005): "...to make sure that we remove any obstacles, bureaucratic obstacles that may be preventing us from achieving our goals. In other words, bureaucracy is not going to stand in the way of getting the job done for the people."). It may of course be some of both. However, one important difference with the earlier version of the "spoils system" is that in both of our cases people were appointed to leadership and management positions which were actually expected to produce some important results. In Iraq, these were not positions from which nothing was expected (indeed, in many instances far too much was expected). And in emergency and disaster response leadership and management, at least the potential political consequences of such obvious incompetence might have provided sufficient reason to consider merit—at least to some degree-- in making appointments.

But by the time each of these cases unfolded, there were few leaders or managers in place who would be likely to advocate for policies and procedures different from those that were expected of them. The 'agentic shift' had taken place well beforehand, making a more competent and broadly ethical response highly unlikely. All that was needed for a disaster to ensue (or get much worse) was for leaders and managers to perform according to expectations. No one was responsible; no one to blame. Michael Brown's resignation had little effect on how FEMA operates. Those responsible for some of the worst failures in Iraq were given Presidential Medals of Freedom. Many of those who were directly involved remain unable to perceive their own contribution to things going really wrong.

### **Are We Talking About Administrative Evil?**

Despite its enormous scale and tragic result, it took more than 25 years for the Holocaust to emerge as the major topic of study and public discussion that we know it as today. But neither discussion nor study of the Holocaust necessarily means that we really understand it or that future genocides will be prevented (Power, 2002). In cases such as the reconstruction of Iraq and the response to Katrina that have occurred within our own culture and time, the dynamics of administrative evil become progressively more subtle and opaque. Here we refer to

administrative evil as masked. This is one of the central points of our argument, that administrative evil is not easily identified as such, because its appearance is masked.

A “good” leader within a technical rational system need not necessarily be ethical. Our admiration and praise of ethical leadership mask the essential moral failings of modern, technical-rational organizations. Codes of ethics, rules and regulations are not sufficient to prevent or punish unethical behavior. Leaders and managers who take an ethical stand are too often cast off by society (even as they are being praised), while the unethical – in the rare instances that they are made to account for their actions - are often rewarded with golden parachutes and soft landings back into positions similar to the ones they disgraced. Ethics is too often relegated to the sidelines as an afterthought, invoked only as an antidote to the worst, most visible practices and then put aside as impediments to efficiency and effectiveness until the next abuse is uncovered. In the culture of technical rationality, the ethical leader can quickly fall from favor and become feared and even reviled as unreliable (a human among the rhinoceroses), a non-team player who undermines the organization by not working within the system.

These two cases suggest that leaders and professionals in public life would do well to reflect on the possibility that their systems and actions can contribute to the worst kinds of human behavior, and that our ethical standards and professional training do not adequately address the potential for administrative evil. There is no easy way out of the social and organizational dynamics that foster administrative evil. Rarely is one confronted with an obvious up or down decision on an ethical issues, Instead, it is more common to follow a pathway of smaller, ambiguous choices until a series of commitments and habit drive out ethics in favor of a comfortable mask. Only a conceptual framework for ethics that goes beyond the narrow vision of technical rationality and recognizes the interactive, relational foundation of ethics and its public context can help us better understand and perhaps ameliorate—even if we cannot fully resolve—these moral paradoxes of ethical leadership in modern organizations.

Certain aspects of the Katrina and Iraq cases suggest that both may be instances of administrative evil, although it may not be entirely clear for some years to come. We have to consider the possibility that a lack of historical consciousness and callousness towards certain marginalized populations contributed to both ethical and technical leadership and management failures in our two cases (Giroux, 2006). FEMA administrators and CPA officials in Iraq did not set out fail; they did what was expected of them, and in some cases, made heroic efforts. Yet there were massive failures well beyond the serious difficulties that one would expect from such complicated situations. Some people and problems were simply overlooked or their fates taken for granted, and not made part of the policy equation.

In both cases, the failures arguably would have been less serious had leaders and managers recognized the limitations of their technical rational and/or ideological solutions and explored more modest, yet achievable goals. Yet as we pointed out earlier, most were not in a position to perceive their foreshortened perspective. They had jobs to do and they did them, maybe even to the best of their abilities. Tragically, that is not nearly enough for those who perished in the attics of New Orleans or were blown to pieces by car bombs in Iraq.

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