

ing crucial components that would be in a system that would make New Orleans functional in the aftermath of a Category 4 or 5 hurricane. First, the maximum levee height in New Orleans is 23 feet, and the height of most levees is in the range of 16-18 feet. The levee height would be elevated. Second, Lake Pontchartrain sits immediately north and above New Orleans, and directly connects by a water passage to the Gulf, so that when the ocean swells in a storm, Pontchartrain's water swells. This proposal calls for driving a large seagate down into the lake on its eastern end, which could be opened and closed, thus severing the lake's connection to the ocean, immediately before, during, and after a hurricane.

Were these all implemented, they would have to be done in an integrated, coordinated plan. However, scientists and engineers may have more scientifically based plans, which they can work out in discussions with each other, and international colleagues.

But, here a scathing indictment comes to the surface. The Army Corps, which is charged with this responsibility, has had its funding even for feasibility studies kept to less than \$4 million, and the Bush Administration killed that. The Sept. 2, 2005 *National Geographic News* reported ironically, "Until the day before Katrina's arrival, New Orleans' 350 miles (580 kilometers) of levees were undergoing a feasibility study to examine the possibility of upgrading them to withstand a Category Four or Five storm." Yet, this study was started in 2000, and has never had the money to get beyond an elementary phase. Very likely, some American scientists were thinking of this in the 1980s, but there was no organized forum to pursue this matter.

Examples of Reconstruction

Some cynics have stated that New Orleans cannot be protected against a Category 5 hurricane. This would seem to be the public rhetoric for what Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) said more bluntly: New Orleans should not be rebuilt. This brings up the scandal of what other countries did in the same period of the last half century.

In the Winter of 1953, the Netherlands suffered a terrifying storm, as dikes and seawalls along its western coast gave way, and the North Sea flood killed nearly 2,000 people, destroying whole villages. Half of the Netherlands is below sea level, including Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Then, over the course of a quarter century, at the cost of \$8 billion, the Netherlands "erected a futuristic system of coastal defenses that is admired around the world today," reported the Sept. 6 *New York Times*. As well, the government increased the height of dikes to nearly 40 feet, nearly twice the height of New Orleans levees. The system was deliberately built to *withstand the kind of storm that occurs once in 10,000 years*.

In England, where a 1953 storm-induced flood killed hundreds along the raging Thames River, central London barely escaped destruction. The British then designed a system in the Thames: "Its semicircular gates lie flush to the riverbed in concrete supporting sills, creating no obstacle to river traffic.

When the need arises, the gates pivot up, rising as high as a five-story building to block rising waters," the *Times* reported. At least two decades ago, in the same spirit, the United States could have started building the appropriate, efficient system for New Orleans. An overriding issue is that the entire array of interconnected flood-control system projects for southern Louisiana and New Orleans has been put on a starvation diet for decades, relative to what it needs.

George W. Bush has intensified the crisis. The Sept. 4 *Los Angeles Times* reported that since Bush took office in 2001, Louisiana local officials, and U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA) have asked for just short of \$500 million for flood protection. During this period, the Bush Administration's yearly budgets have only offered \$166 million, two-thirds less than the bare minimum needed. The Congress approved about \$250 million. The July 2004 *Riverside*, the monthly publication of the Army Corps New Orleans District, reported, "Funding for Corps projects has decreased to the point that some completion dates have been pushed back three or more years."

Katrina struck a New Orleans and southern Louisiana eviscerated by decades of underfunding or blocked programs. LaRouche's mobilization, with an awakened Senate, opens the door to build on a crash mobilization these and other long-overdue infrastructure programs.

Use Military Bases To House Storm-Displaced

by Carl Osgood

Although large numbers of people have been moved out of the storm-stricken area, little consideration has been given to using regional military bases in the manner that Lyndon LaRouche has called for. Instead, evacuees are being scattered all over the country in shelters, like the Houston Astro-dome, and National Guard armories, like the one in Washington, D.C, which currently hosts about 400 people from New Orleans. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has not asked the military to provide housing for large numbers of displaced people, nor will the military provide it unless asked by FEMA.

During a video-teleconference with reporters at the Pentagon on Sept. 7, Lt. Gen. Joseph Inge, the deputy commander of the U.S. Northern Command, could not even say to what degree military bases were being considered for housing evacuees. This characterizes the piecemeal approach to the problem across-the-board.

In fact, while LaRouche is placing such importance on military infrastructure as part of the recovery process from this disaster, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has been

Make Use of Military/National Guard Bases To House Those Displaced by Katrina



Source: U.S. Department of Defense, EIR

Thousands of persons who lost their homes in Hurricane Katrina could be housed nearby in the region in active military or National Guard facilities, or housing set up there by the military.

1. England Air Force Base, Alexandria, La. Closed in 1992 by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC). Now the home of an industrial park, and port of embarkation for Army troops from Fort Polk.
2. Fort Polk, north of Lake Charles, La. Home of the Army's Joint Readiness Training Center, it comprises 198,000 acres.
3. Barksdale Air Force Base, in northwest Louisiana, near Bossier City. Home of a B-52 wing and an Air Force Reserve A-10 wing. It comprises 22,000 acres.
4. Columbus Air Force Base, Miss., in the northeast part of the state, near the Alabama border. This installation is used for basic and advanced pilot training.
5. Fort Rucker, Ala., 80 miles south of Montgomery. Home of the Army Aviation Center, it comprises 64,500 acres.
6. Fort McClellan, Anniston, Ala. Closed as an Army post by the 1995 BRAC round. Its 45,000 acres were turned over to the Alabama National Guard for use as a training facility.
7. Fort Chaffee, Ark. Closed in the 1995 BRAC, its 66,000 acres were turned over to the Arkansas National Guard for use as a training facility.
8. Eglin Air Force Base, near Fort Walton Beach in the Florida panhandle. It is used as a base for testing and evaluating aircraft, munitions, and electronic warfare systems. It comprises 724 square miles of ranges.
9. Meridian Naval Air Station, Miss.
10. Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

This list excludes the two Gulf Coast region military installations which were directly and severely damaged by Hurricane Katrina: New Orleans Naval Air Station, La., and Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss.

trying to shed what he considers “excess” military infrastructure, as indicated by the regional hearings over the past three months on what bases are to be down-scaled or closed altogether.

Rather than the defense of the common good, Rumsfeld's strategy is premised on real estate scams and cost-cutting. If allowed to prevail now, his mentality will mean immediate harm to hundreds of thousands, and will ensure that the “surge” capacity required will not be there to deal with future emergencies.

There are nine major military facilities in the immediate vicinity of the disaster zone, including two that were closed by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) rounds in the 1990s, some of which are providing support for rescue and recovery operations, including to FEMA. These include Barksdale Air Force Base, England Air Force Base, and Fort Polk in Louisiana; Fort McClellan, Fort Rucker, and Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama; Columbus Air Force Base and Naval Air Station Meridian in Mississippi; and Eglin Air Force Base in the Florida panhandle.

Fort McClellan and England AFB were both closed in the 1990s; Fort McClellan was turned over to the Alabama National Guard, and England AFB was turned into an indus-

trial park, with the Army retaining access to it as a port of embarkation for troops at Fort Polk. Another base closed by BRAC in the 1990s is Fort Chaffee, in Arkansas. During the early 1980s, Fort Chaffee was, in fact, used to house Cuban refugees. The Army turned over 66,000 acres of that facility to the Arkansas National Guard in 1999. The scale and scope of the Katrina disaster is such, however, that many bases outside the immediate vicinity, including in Texas, Georgia, and other states are also providing support.

So far, only three bases are providing, in very small degree, some of the kind of support LaRouche is calling for. The 4,000 Louisiana National Guard troops that will be returning from Iraq over the next couple of weeks will be put up temporarily at Fort Polk. Maxwell AFB is housing some small number of people. Eglin and other bases are also supporting field hospitals, which are being staffed by the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Associated Press reported on Sept. 2 that FEMA had approved the use of empty dormitories at Fort McClellan for housing evacuees, which, according to Alabama's Governor, Bob Riley, have space for up to 10,000 people. Also being used to support relief and recovery efforts is Keesler AFB in Biloxi, Miss., although that base was devastated by the storm,