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HURRICANE KATRINA: LESSONS STILL TO BE LEARNED

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Media Reaction reporting conveys the spectrum of foreign press sentiment. Posts select commentary to provide a representative picture of local editorial opinion. Some commentary is taken directly from the Internet. This report summarizes and interprets foreign editorial opinion and does not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Government. This analysis was based on 42 reports from 27 countries from September 6-12, 2005. Editorial excerpts are listed from the most recent date.

KEY FINDINGS

- Critics attribute the disaster's scope to the Bush Administration's not learning from 9/11.



- Observers see hurricane coverage as revealing America's "largely hidden" social problems.
- Some writers say their colleagues are using the tragedy to "take a crack at" President Bush.
- Scattered editorials convey the impression that the U.S. has refused foreign assistance.

MAJOR THEMES

'How is it possible that the country is so ill prepared?' -- Many writers linked their Katrina observations to the 9/11 anniversary, expressing surprise at "how poorly the U.S. government reacted to the catastrophe four years after 9/11." Belgium's financial De Tijd declared that four years after hijackers showed the nation was "vulnerable" to foreign threats, "today it is clear that the nation is also vulnerable internally." Croatia's left-of-center Dnevnik contended that Americans "should legitimately expect that mechanisms, which failed four years ago, have been improved since then." Administration critics asserted that the post-9/11 security system has focused on terrorism, not disasters, per sé. "Katrina, the first test of the system, has demonstrated that it is a complete failure."

'Americans can no longer turn a blind eye to social and racial inequalities' -- Tokyo's liberal Asahi was one of many outlets to claim that Katrina "showed the world the seriousness and the sorrow of this social problem [racial income disparities] facing the U.S." A Polish weekly observed, "Even...Condoleezza Rice...is not able to lower the level of the pointed attacks aimed at her unfortunate boss." While a racial divide was most often mentioned, writers contended that other "deep cracks in U.S. society have now been disclosed." Contrasting Katrina's aftermath to post-9/11 America, Germany's left-of-center Frankfurter Rundschau declared, "Despite great individual solidarity, we can no longer speak of a united nation." Remarking on "system failures that have been neglected for years," a Romanian writer emphasized how an American metropolis "crashed back into the Middle Ages, in only a couple of hours."

'Derision and demonizing are definitely out of order' -- Some columnists blasted the "simple-minded anti-Americanism" of their colleagues. France's right-of-center Le Figaro contended that Bush's critics couldn't "pass up" a chance to "underscore President Bush's negligence" and the supposed effects of "Yankee liberalism." Sweden's liberal Expressen dubbed reflexive editorial condemnation of American social policies as "malicious and conceited speculation.... What one thinks of President Bush with regards to Katrina seems to depend on his or her political affiliation in the same way as they regard other deeds of the President." Prague's center-right Lidove noviny contrasted Bush's media critics with "columnists in local dailies (in Idaho, Kansas, New Mexico etc.) [who] describe him as...doing a very

good job."

'Apparently, the Americans see no possibility to effectively use foreign aid' -- Several outlets conveyed the erroneous message that President Bush had made a "categorical refusal to accept humanitarian aid."

EUROPE

BRITAIN: "Why Did Bush Flunk The New Orleans Test?"

Assistant editor Alec Russell commented in the conservative Daily Telegraph (9/12): "With his Iraq policy in disarray it had long been clear he was on the look-out for a chance to prove himself again. Instead, he issued little more than a shopping list of aid items. It may not have been one of his worst speeches, as the New York Times claimed, but you have only to recall Ronald Reagan addressing the nation after the Challenger Shuttle exploded or Bill Clinton after the Oklahoma City bombing to realise how far he fell short of the challenge. What the situation required was for him to dig deep into history and look the nation in the eye. Instead, he stood in the Rose Garden flanked by his cabinet as if making a political appointment -- and thus set the tone."

FRANCE: "Simple-Minded Anti-Americanism"

Yves Threard opined in right-of-center Le Figaro (9/12): "September 2001, September 2005. In between these two tragedies America found itself at the center of numerous controversies and the target of every type of accusation and criticism from Europe, and mostly from France.... In 2001, the world's most powerful nation appeared vulnerable and decided to take its revenge, first in Afghanistan and later in Iraq. The world discovered a new Bush, arrogant and shortsighted.... In 2005, word was out that the American model was faulty: poverty and racial hate were singled out. The opportunity was too good to pass to underscore President Bush's negligence and the effects of 'Yankee liberalism.' The accusations against the U.S. serve to hide our incoherence and our own faults.... To gloat over the decline of the American empire is easy. Some see even the hand of God in Katrina, as if the U.S. had to pay for not signing the Kyoto protocol. Others, more credible, point that the U.S. lives on credit.... While it is true that America is not in a position to give anyone lessons, it is also absurd to claim to discover today that America is not perfect. With or without Bush.... Katrina, no more than Bin Laden, has brought America to its knees.... Derision and demonizing are definitely out of order."

"Bush in the Eye of the Cyclone"

Sacha Vanderbrouck contended in right-of-center France Soir (9/12): "After the popularity that followed the aftermath of 9/11, President Bush's popularity has dropped to its lowest.... America does not look ready to forgive, in spite of the President having recalled Michael Brown to Washington.... This loss of support is fueled by a series of controversies, from the intervention in Iraq to the misappropriated funds earmarked for repair work of the levees in New Orleans.... Now President Bush must face the new scandal of contracts assigned for the rebuilding of America's South to friends of the Republicans, including Halliburton.... The President's decision to overnight in Louisiana is a strong gesture counterbalancing his two previous visits. It shows that the President wants to once again be in control although he is being accused from all sides. This determination was also apparent on Friday with the nomination of Karen Hughes to lead America's Public Diplomacy and try to improve America's image in the world. What looks very much like mission impossible."

ITALY: "Threats Over September 11"

Paolo Mastrolilli observed from New York in centrist, influential La Stampa (9/12): "As al-Qaida was launching its latest threat, that past tragedy [9/11] got mingled with current tragedy, during ceremonies held throughout the United States to remember September 11, by evoking the pains of the people hit by [the] hurricane. Katrina.... In his Saturday radio address, President Bush tried to correlate September 11 and Katrina, in order to rebut detractors and then re-launch his leadership, by recalling he had unified the country following al-Qaida's attacks. However, something has broken in his relationship with people, which can only be mended by good reconstruction results."

"Bush, September 11 Among Flood Victims"

Alberto Flores D'Arcais reported from New York in left-leaning, influential La Repubblica (9/12): "The U.S. President is trying to regain his lost popularity by playing what has been a winning hand on previous occasions: [the role of] the Commander in Chief. And he does it by asking for more power and a new law that would allow the White House to use and direct the military also within the U.S. territory in cases of serious natural catastrophe.... The hurricane showed that in disasters of this type, local emergency services cannot easily intervene with the efficiency necessary, and, even at the cost of a clash within his own Republican party (traditionally unwilling to increase federal powers) President Bush

decided that it is time to change policy. Within the next weeks and months we shall see whether or not the White House strategists are correct."

"New Orleans As Ground Zero"

Ennio Caretto editorialized from Washington in centrist, top-circulation *Corriere della Sera* (9/11): "Yesterday, on the fourth anniversary of the Twin Towers attack, George W. Bush talked to America, which is on its knees once again because of hurricane Katrina, with a moving, supporting, encouraging message.... The White House hoped this anniversary would mark a U-turn in the political crisis caused by Katrina, which directed attacks on the President for being indifferent to the suffering of black and poor people. But, two weeks after the catastrophe, Bush's image is quite different from the leader who recovered the nation from Ground Zero."

GERMANY: "Between Baghdad And New Orleans"

Washington correspondent Torsten Krauel filed the following editorial for right-of-center *Die Welt* of Berlin (9/12): "It will take a long time before the U.S. administration has a clear picture of the reasons for the Katrina chaos. Thus far, it is clear that the Homeland Security Department did not do justice to its tasks and that the authorities in Louisiana were not appropriately prepared for the events. All sides involved are now arguing why this happened.... It will become a classic U.S. debate: domestic against foreign policy; America first, or America in the world. George W. Bush indicated that he foresees such a debate. The opposition accused him of deficiencies when it comes to the protection of his homeland in favor of the Iraq war in the 2004 election year but failed. But now Katrina happened and its effect could be considered an attack committed by nature, not terrorists, at the United States. It is not a comfortable situation to be caught in the Iraqi sand and the mud of Louisiana at the same time. Bush's remark how little the United States was ready for an attack with WMD showed that he has exactly recognized the sore point."

"Deep Cracks"

Dietmar Ostermann stated in left-of-center *Frankfurter Rundschau* (9/12): "While 9/11 revealed a new quality of terrorist threats, Katrina has created the awareness of different dangers. Since a palpable enemy is not visible, the feeling of helplessness remains. Instead of looking to the outside, the Americans are now looking to the inside. Katrina did not cause a wave of patriotism, but a wave of

mutual accusations. Instead of closing ranks as always in times of emergency, Washington is witnessing political trench warfare in a way it hardly experienced before immediately after a national trauma. The opposition strongly attacks the president, and the American people no longer gather behind Bush. Despite great individual solidarity, we can no longer speak of a united nation. Instead of uniting the nation in mourning, political centrifugal forces are showing their effect. The deep cracks in the U.S. society have now been disclosed. This new 'anti-9/11' has in common with 9/11 only that it could put its imprint for years to come on the United States."

RUSSIA: "Cracks In Facade"

Aleksandr Krasulin wrote in official *Parlamentskaya Gazeta* (9/9): "People around the world could not believe their eyes, following reports from the scene. New Orleans looked like Haiti, Baghdad, Sudan, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka. Pictures of garbage, dead bodies, and survivors' empty eyes made the place look like anything but the United States. The world's reaction changed from shock to sympathy to mounting criticism of the Bush Administration's inaction. The opinion in different countries was that the chaos sweeping much of the Mexican Gulf coast was due to incompetence, at best, or racism, at worst. Bush's emphasis on the use of the army explains why Washington did not give the go-ahead to the Russian rescue teams ready to fly to the United States. Apparently, the Americans see no possibility to effectively use foreign aid, with the task of maintaining order prevailing over that of carrying out rescue operations. All of the authorities' errors surfaced along with dead bodies in New Orleans. Even journalists from the Presidential pool have had to ask Bush tough questions, wondering what the U.S. troops are doing in Iraq when they are badly needed at home."

AUSTRIA: "George W. Bush's Dream Is Over"

Martin Stricker declared in independent *Salzburger Nachrichten* (9/12): "Katrina caused a shock which calls for answers to a single fundamental question being posed by journalists, Democrats, and Bush's own Republicans alike. If, four years after September 11, the administration and the authorities are incapable of reacting quickly and professionally to a long-expected crisis, what would America's situation be after a surprise terrorist attack with biological weapons or dirty bombs? And: How is it possible that the country is so ill prepared? America is demanding answers. Criticism of the White House is no longer considered unpatriotic. The political landscape has changed. The consequences of this collateral damage can hardly be foreseen. The nation will look inward for some time to come. Too much homework has remained undone or was done wrongly. The time of grand words, deeds and missions of this President

seem to be over."

"No Lessons Learned From 9/11"

Washington correspondent Karin Reber-Ammann commented in independent Salzburger Nachrichten (9/8): "No government likes having to admit it has made a mistake, but for the Bush administration it seems to be particularly difficult.... However, what's really alarming about the natural disaster brought about by Katrina is how poorly the U.S. government reacted to the catastrophe four years after 9/11. For four years, as the White House is always happy to point out, the nation has been at war, and during that time, the Homeland Security Department should have prepared for a quick and effective response to such events. In reality, it has taken a week for relief measures to actually start up. This grave error is made worse by the fact that unlike a terrorist attack, Katrina did not hit the country out of the blue. But FEMA worst-case scenarios...have apparently failed to impress the government. The days before Katrina were not used for genuine preparation. The dwindling confidence of a majority of U.S. citizens will continue to plummet, unless Washington launches a serious investigation, which must not be limited to the all-too slow relief efforts. It will also have to ask the question of what happened to those billions of dollars that have been spent since 2001 in order to be prepared for disaster."

BELGIUM: "From New York To New Orleans"

Foreign editor Jean Vanempten commented in financial daily De Tijd (9/12): "The images from New Orleans caused a turnabout in the U.S. media. After 9/11 patriotism became the highest good. Criticism of anti-terror actions or even the war in Iraq became unpatriotic behavior. So, there was barely any criticism -- and certainly not from the major media. That changed after Katrina: reporters compared the situation in the ravaged areas with infernal situations in developing countries. The corpses in the streets of New Orleans are evidence of that. The horrible accommodation of the victims reminds one more of an African refugee camp than of a rescue operation by the world's most powerful nation. The criticism is immense, also from the supporters of the President. After Katrina it became clear that the United States is weak at home and that the fight against disasters is a failure. That blame -- in front of the rest of the world -- weighs heavily on the 9/11 commemorations this year. Four years ago it became clear that the United States was vulnerable to foreign aggression. Today it is clear that the nation is also vulnerable internally.... New York rapidly recovered from the 9/11 shock. New Orleans's fate is uncertain. It is not sure that the Big Easy will become a swinging city again. The question is whether Bush will survive Katrina or that he will always be the president who left his own people to their fate at a crucial

moment."

"Bush's Powerless And Unfair America"

U.S. correspondent Nathalie Mattheiem editorialized in left-of-center *Le Soir* (9/12): "After Katrina, Americans can no longer turn a blind eye to social and racial inequalities, which have been regularly denied and even more overshadowed by a propaganda on security that is operating at full steam. Before Katrina, it was very easy for George Bush: indeed, two thirds of the Americans admitted that they at least once a week thought about 9/11, which they consider the century's most important event. Hurricane Katrina has just shed some light on the price that Americans, the poor in particular, are paying for this 'war on terror.'... One of the lessons of 9/11 was the urgent need to coordinate the various national services among themselves and with local partners. Katrina, the first test of the system, has demonstrated that it is a complete failure."

CROATIA: "Victims From Second Row"

Andrej Brstovsek commented in left-of-center, independent *Dnevnik* (9/12): "It is not possible to answer with certainty the question whether Americans are more secure today than four years ago.... However the citizens should legitimately expect that mechanisms, which failed four years ago, have been improved since then. Crisis management, for example.... In place of effective operations, the political capital of the American President was drowning in the poisoned waters of New Orleans in the last two weeks. Hurricane Katrina has more in common with 9/11 than it seems at first sight. It reveals that big holes in responding to catastrophes are still present after four years,...that more attention has been paid to prevention of attacks...than to the response in case an attack happens. However, an answer to the question of how to feed several hundreds of thousands of evacuated people saves lives as effectively as a new model of metal detector or transistor radio."

CZECH REPUBLIC: "Captivation By Bush Disappearing"

Pavel Masa noted in center-right *Lidove Noviny* (9/12): "George W. Bush was laid to rest by the tidal wave after the hurricane Katrina. It is too early to condemn him and his influence. The fact that the government neglected prevention is for the majority of people an abstract issue.... Pictures of Bush cursed by suffering people is spread primarily thanks to the media giants, lead by the *New York Times*.... Columnists in local dailies (for example, in Idaho, Kansa, New Mexico etc.) describe him as a

president who is doing a very good job. The failure of the federal government is a part of the problem, caused by the bureaucracy. It is not surprising that -- despite the negative campaign -- less than a one fifth of the Americans consider Bush's reaction to Katrina a failure. The reaction to the rising oil prices could be much worse. In the future, the raising of energy prices and the falling of trust in Bush's leadership pose a real danger to the Republican Party. It is for the first time, that less than a half of the Americans trust his leadership abilities."

HUNGARY: "Katrina And The Racial Question"

University lecturer Tamas Magyarics stated in liberal-leaning Magyar Hirlap (9/10): "In a paradoxical way, Afro-Americans may even benefit from the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. Congressman John Lewis suggested that the government launch a program similar to the Marshall Plan to eliminate the evil conditions existing in neighborhoods populated mainly by minorities. For this, the reconstruction of New Orleans could serve as a model. In theory, for such a large-scale program, the political conditions are given. A picture of America, previously largely hidden, emerged before the eyes of people all over the world, and in the United States, and a responsible American politician contemplating next year's congressional and the 2008 presidential elections cannot avoid addressing the problems, and he/she will have to answer the embarrassing questions. The real answer would be the elimination of the 'third world' in the only hyper power of the world."

LITHUANIA: "Follow The Weather Forecasts!"

Ms. Ruta Grineviciute wrote in the 4th largest Lithuanian daily Vakarų Ekspresas (9/12): "When 'Katrina' subsided after having unleashed her energy, somewhere silent talks were renewed about the Kyoto protocol which was signed by the whole world, even Russia, and which was arrogantly rejected by the U.S.... George Bush, the president of the oilmen, instead of reading the history of the oil industry should at least have subscribed to the National Geographic, which explains where the consumer society of Western civilization -- incapable of defending itself -- is leading.... The present, everyday life of New Orleans indicates what is left of the nation most protective of human rights when they are left without shelter, electricity, and drainage for several days... Katrina descended on the Mississippi delta at a time when America was preparing to commemorate the anniversary of another tragedy -- September 11. What is common between these two occurrences? That such a powerful population of folk did not manage to defend itself. The first time they were unable to defend against the attack of aggressive and fanatic barbarians. The second time they were swept by nature."

"All American Superheroes Are Plastic"

Ms. Renata Serelyte commented in Lietuvos Zinios (9/12): "Even in a democratic regime, class principles, the division of society into those groups which are worthy and those which are not, and the separation between public declarations and real action are not surpassed.... But what is to be done, if all American superheroes are plastic? None of them extended a helping hand to a dying newborn or an old man because of one simple reason -- they never really existed. And it seems that the Bush Administration does not embody the omnipotence of its national heroes.... Seeing poor inhabitants of New Orleans, huddled together on rafts and roofs with children and dogs, I was obsessed with the feeling that instantly Schwarzenegger would land like thunder from the sky and save them all... The fact that even the poorest countries of the world offered aid to the U.S. only provides evidence that super-states, like superheroes, do not exist."

POLAND: "Moral Decay"

Editor Stanislaw Lem wrote in leftist weekly Przegląd (9/12): "Bush in a sad, consistent way is not able to face up to his position as the leader of the largest power in the World. He is burdened with the fateful decision of sending a large part of the National Guard to Iraq...listening with total deafness to repeated warnings about the approaching hurricane.... The racist tendencies towards Afro-Americans which were clearly seen in the first stage of the inefficient rescue operation are embarrassing. Even black skinned Condoleezza Rice...is not able to lower the level of the pointed attacks aimed at her unfortunate boss. Mr. President was unfortunate his imagination did not foresee how the World would receive his categorical refusal to accept humanitarian aid."

ROMANIA: "The Katrina Lesson"

Ioana Lupea commented in independent Evenimentul Zilei (9/10): "Katrina was more than a devastating hurricane for the U.S.: 'Professor Katrina', 'a name for global warming' or for social differences, 'the failure of President Bush's security politics' or of the policies on racial integration.... Katrina may change America's priorities.... How did the only world power manage to crash back into the Middle Ages, in only a couple of hours?... Post-Katrina New Orleans seems to be the American version of the apocalypse.... The lessons of the hurricane that devastated the American south are that, between democracy and chaos, between civilization and ruin, there can only be one second, no matter how high you may be on

the scale of progress. In an extreme situation, the system failures that have been neglected for years will take their revenge."

"America's Questions"

Andrei Postelnicu opined in independent Evenimentul Zilei (9/11): "In this context, it's tempting to turn the current situation in the U.S. into an opportunity to condemn everything that America stands for. It's just as tempting to thus proclaim the superiority of the European social model, perceived as being the alternative of civic solidarity and cohesion, which is not to be found in the Anglo-Saxon jungle... The lessons of Katrina are much more complex. America seems to have abandoned the premise that its citizens have an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness -- those which caused it to break from the English Monarchy. In the misery left by Katrina, what we see is the lesser known side of the U.S. Constitution: that a black person was, in the 18th century, the equivalent of three fifths of a white person.... Apart from the anger and criticism created by Hurricane Katrina, America's bitter experience and the way in which it will decide to re-think its priorities provide the world with an opportunity for self-evaluation of its own weaknesses, in such a way that history does not repeat."

SWEDEN: "Political Fantasies"

Political editor Niklas Ekdal observed in independent, liberal Dagens Nyheter (9/11): "To me it seems that reactions following the hurricane emanate from political fantasies about the U.S. One sees what one learnt to see. George W. Bush is making war in Iraq instead of helping poor at home. The U.S. is inclined to violence, uncivilized, and omnipotent at the same time. The greenhouse effect has hit home. 'We are never as Americanized as in our anti-Americanism. It is shameful of such a rich country to leave the most vulnerable in the lurch, but each sulfurous lecture (we hear) over this deceit could be picked from a Baptist Church in the South; Biblical morality on sin and shame...so peculiarly American, and so typical of us to use the same narrative technique to reinforce our light or -- more often -- dark picture of the U.S."

"While Water is Being Pumped Up"

Conservative Svenska Dagbladet opined (9/10): "While New Orleans is being drained of water, the debate over political responsibility continues. It seems as if many have taken the opportunity to spontaneously take a crack at President Bush.... However, many of the greatest mistakes have been

done at the local and regional levels. Yet it is natural that the President, who made homeland security into a central concept, will receive critical questions when shortcomings in internal security are brought to light. When thousands of Americans become victims, it is reflected in the U.S. image abroad....and taking into consideration the U.S. world role, much depends on it being re-established."

"Objective Judgment Lacking"

Political editor PM Nilsson who commented in independent, liberal tabloid Expressen (9/11): "The same contributors in the debate who felt it was high treason to criticize the Swedish government in the wake of the tsunami, now resolutely condemned the U.S. government and American society. They claim that the tragedy depends on greenhouse effects, on the dark underbelly of the American economic system, on the Iraq war, and on the President's disregard of the poor African-American population in Louisiana.... But these are just malicious and conceited speculations.... It is clear that President Bush did not handle the situation perfectly, but an objective judgment in the wake of Hurricane Katrina will likely lay primary responsibility on state and local authorities.... What one thinks of President Bush with regards to Katrina seems to depend on his or her political affiliation in the same way as they regard other deeds of the President.... It may be a naïve wish, but it would be a decent thing of people, in this moment, regard the U.S. as what it is: A country that is now trying to cope with one of the largest flooding disasters in history, doing it in its own way, following its own regulation, with democratically elected leaders, and with a surprisingly low number of victims."

TURKEY: "The American Dream"

Ali Sirmen commented in leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet (9/8): "Certain wars or disasters in the past have created strong bonds among the American people and enhanced solidarity in the U.S. WW II and the events of 9/11 are good examples of this. But there have been polarizing events as well, such as the Vietnam war, which damaged American solidarity and forced many people to question the political values of the country. Hurricane Katrina is another example of this kind of reaction. The hurricane damaged the 'American Dream' and has left an ugly picture marred by racism. The U.S. witnessed the biggest shock in its history on September 11. But the Bush Administration managed to manipulate that disaster to strengthen solidarity in the country. Unfortunately, this time the solidarity of the American people has taken a big hit. Just like Vietnam, which affected the whole country -- not only those who were involved in the war -- the facts that have surfaced with hurricane Katrina will affect all Americans. There is no doubt that President Bush will take the biggest share of the damage."

MIDDLE EAST

ISRAEL: "After Bush -- the Deluge"

Yahad-Meretz Knesset Member Yossi Sarid wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (9/12): "George Bush is without a doubt the most terrifying president America has ever had.... When there is a messianic vision composed of faith-based pie-in-the-sky, the earth seems to be jolted off its axis and begins to spin out of control.... Instead of running the world and its inhabitants, as one may expect of the leader of the free world, Bush acts as someone who is reinventing the world on a mission from God.... What [does] Bush...care if the ozone layer is disintegrating, the greenhouse effect is intensifying, the oceans are warming up, the desert is expanding not only in Africa and Asia but also in Europe, and the number of hungry is growing by the hundreds of millions?... It may very well be that the warming of the oceans contributed to Katrina, but who is going to tell a shepherd what is good for his flock while it is drowning in a flood?"

"Unbelievable"

Editor-in-Chief Lutfi Mashour wrote in independent, moderate Arabic-language Assennara (9/9): "All of this happens in the great United States -- the most powerful entity in the world! Could that be?? The central authorities abandoned an entire major city as if it wasn't an American city, and we don't want to get into...reasons related to the skin color of its inhabitants and their economic condition. It's unbelievable! What shocks us most is the childish and stupid response to such a disaster and the fact that the city is destined to vanish! What's really a shock, furthermore, is that the 'greatest and most powerful' country is to receive huge donations of basic products from poor counties.... Without comparing, this reminds us of the fall of the Berlin Wall or the collapse of the Soviet Union, which revealed back then that the Soviet Union's shiney pomegranate was rotten from the inside."

WEST BANK: "The 'Darfurian' States"

Hafez Barghuthi commented in official Al-Hayat Al-Jadida (9/12): "The natural disaster in the southern U.S. states is equal to the American involvement in Iraq. If only American politicians would have more political awareness, they would be able to end the war in Iraq within few months for the sake of stability in the region.... Yet, the U.S. still has the chance to reconsider its lust for massive war and the destruction of itself and others, bearing in mind that signs of its collapse have begun to appear, since it

[the U.S.] looked like Darfur following the hurricane."

"The American Hurricane And George Bush's Mentality"

Faisal Abu Khadra opined in independent Al-Quds (9/10): "President Bush has personally witnessed how the civilized, educated rich American could turn into a wild monster after only spending four days under the hurricane, and how this high-class American can embody violence and terror after being abandoned for only four days. Can President Bush understand the feelings of those Palestinians living in refugee camps...for almost 60 years deprived of a land and a home and the merest basics of decent living?"

LEBANON: "From The U.S. September 11 To The Lebanese One,"

Rafiq Khoury editorialized in centrist Al-Anwar (9/11): "The debate in the U.S. over September 11 is taking place in the shadow of Hurricane Katrina. September 11 revealed three things: a big gap in U.S. internal security; a defect in the U.S. strategic direction, and the extent of Bush's leadership ability to take the situation in hand. Hurricane Katrina revealed the following: A big gap in the U.S. social situation; poverty and racism; and President's Bush's leadership crippled capabilities and inability to deal with the crisis."

MOROCCO: "Will U.S. Review Its Policy Towards The Arab/Islamic World?"

Driss Guenburi wrote on the front page of Islamic Attajdid (9/12): "Following the Katrina hurricane catastrophe, Arabs have immediately responded in an unprecedented way to offer assistance to the U.S. people; which means that there are big opportunities to explore positive relationships based on mutual understanding and respect and on exchange of interests and gains. At the same time, U.S. foreign policy should stop seeing the Arab world with only one eye while closing the other, focusing on governments and regimes while forgetting about 200 million Arabs and more than one billion Muslims around the world who are dissatisfied by U.S. foreign policy. The correction of the (U.S.) image in the eyes of a broad range of Arab public opinion should start primarily from correcting practical policies on the ground".

EAST ASIA/PACIFIC

CHINA: "The Hurricane Of The Century Brings Introspection"

Li Wenyun commented in the official Communist Party Global Times (Huanqiu Shibao) (9/7): "Faced with disaster, Americans realize that this is the result of not dealing well with the relationship between economic development and environmental security. In addition, it shows that the U.S. should make adjust its emphasis on homeland security policy and investments into national resources. Due to 9/11, the U.S. government's procedures for handling emergencies have been marginalized. After the hurricane, the U.S. is expected to invest more in domestic natural disaster prevention. However, the strategic position of homeland security over natural disaster will not change. Besides economic and political problems, the hurricane also exposes social problems. The hurricane made people see the horrible side of poverty again. New Orleans is one of the U.S. cities with the highest percentage of its population living in poverty."

CHINA (HONG KONG SAR): "Economy Will Not Be Blown Off"

Independent Chinese-language Hong Kong Economic Journal noted (9/10): "Will the U.S. political situation experience earth-shaking changes due to the calamity of the century? It is too early to make the judgment. For investors, the focus is, however, not on politics, but on the economy. The Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors Ben Bernanke, one of the people 'competing' to be Greenspan's successor, thought that as long as the hurricane did not do any permanent destruction to the oil facilities in the Gulf of Mexico, the oil market would only undergo some short-term fluctuations. The impact on the U.S. overall economy would be insignificant."

JAPAN: "Social And Racial Problems In The U.S.A."

The liberal Asahi editorialized (9/9): "At this point, it is impossible to estimate the extent of the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina.... It is said that most of the hurricane's victims were black Americans, many of whom reportedly had no means of fleeing to safety and no place to seek shelter. The reality is that poverty and racial inequality may exist. The hurricane disaster again showed the world the seriousness and the sorrow of this social problem facing the U.S. Amid the post-Katrina chaos, the U.S. will soon observe the fourth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks that claimed the lives of about 3,000 people. Terrorism and a natural disaster -- two incidents with different causes -- brought American prosperity and poverty into relief.... The U.S., who started the war on Iraq, defying international opinion, lost much of the sympathy it received from the international community after 9/11.... It is necessary for the U.S. to positively resolve 'south-north' problems in order to regain

respect as a free nation and as an international leader."

MALAYSIA: "No Country Can Overcome Power Of The Creator"

Siti Mariam Md Zain commented in government-influenced, Malay-language Utusan Malaysia commented (9/11): "It turns out that the United States is confused. The internal problems which the country is now facing have put it in a difficult situation in continuing to find strategies to improve its position. Hurricane Katrina ought to make the U.S. realize that there is no single country which can overcome the 'power' of the Creator."

"Bush Administration's Lame Excuses"

Government-influenced, Malay language Berita Harian had the following editorial (9/9): "Since the New York 9/11 terrorists attacks four years ago, the U.S. media have generally been inclined to speak for the Bush Administration. However, just after the onslaught of hurricane Katrina, U.S. media have lost their respect for their country's leader. The media have been pressing for straightforward answers and not lame excuses. The Bush Administration was harshly criticized for procrastinating on sending help to the thousands of hurricane-stricken victims, especially in New Orleans. To the U.S. media, the delayed reaction by the Bush Administration was worse than those of under-developed countries -- there should be a standard government response to an emergency -- sending supplies of food and water, deploying medical teams and providing transportation for evacuation. The troops who were eventually sent to New Orleans, seemed prepared for some kind of warfare. Instead of covering the heroism of the rescue workers, the media had to cover news of rapes, murders and looting. The people of America were shocked and angry. Columnist Paul Krugman wrote that the America of old was known for its can-do attitude but now the government was incapable of providing anything but excuses."

THAILAND: "Katrina May Prove A Catalyst For Long-Delayed Change"

Normita Thongtham commented in the top-circulation, moderately conservative, English language Bangkok Post (9/12): "George W. Bush, so powerful he will send troops to any country he regards as the enemy, killing an untold number of people, and so arrogant that he refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, undermining the efforts of other countries to lessen the use of fossil fuels and chemicals destructive to the environment, is in fact powerless when it comes to defending his own people from natural disasters. For the truth is that a wrathful Nature fears no one and respects no borders."

Hopefully, Hurricane Katrina will serve as a catalyst, persuading Mr. Bush to cooperate with other world leaders in the effort to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse-gas emissions from 1990 levels, a goal to be achieved between the years 2008 and 2012, in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol. Ratifying the Protocol will not dissipate the harmful gases in the atmosphere immediately, but in 50 years' time the world may be a better place for our grandchildren, and their children, to live in. Meanwhile, brace yourselves for the worst drought or floods, the hottest summer, and the strongest storm you have ever experienced. And this is not a matter of if, but of when."

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: "Katrina Defames America"

The Chennai-based independent Tamil-language Dinamalar remarked (9/9): "Though America faced the challenge of 9/11 attack with courage and unity, Katrina exposed its inability to handle the situation after the disaster. Rape and looting in the New Orleans damaged America's reputation as the country of law abiding citizens. The comment by Time magazine tells the whole story: 'though the American government is helping the tsunami victims in other countries, it failed to safeguard the people in New Orleans.' This is a National Shame."

PAKISTAN: "Bush's Storm"

Karachi's center-left independent English-language Dawn observed (9/11): "President Bush's response to Hurricane Katrina has been, to put it kindly, faltering. He has fallen short both rhetorically and substantively.... A natural disaster may pose a tougher test for a president; there is, after all, no enemy or evildoer to rail against. Even so, Mr. Bush's tone and demeanor have been off, sometimes jarringly, since Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast 10 days ago.... Among the sound bites of his presidency that Mr. Bush will most regret, one will surely be "Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job." That was Mr. Bush's valentine last week to his hapless FEMA Director, Michael D. Brown. Many Americans are already frustrated -- justifiably so -- by the administration's unwillingness to candidly acknowledge the difficulties it is facing in Iraq, and the degree to which its own misjudgments contributed to them."

KAZAKHSTAN: "Hurricane In The Mill Of Capitalism"

Anel Davetgaliyeva wrote in pro-government Liter (9/6): "The dollar is dropping again, and this time not for microeconomic reasons. Leading brokerage companies are reconsidering their forecasts regarding

the pace of U.S. economic growth. Now the strength of dollar will depend on how quickly the damaged economy recovers. The U.S. is facing a difficult time. First, the reputation of the 'unsinkable' state has greatly suffered. It turned out that the authorities were not capable of dealing independently with the consequences of the destruction and Americans' well-being has no influence over the quality or quantity of looters, at whom police are shooting."

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

CANADA: "New Orleans By The Numbers"

Columnist Janet Bagnall wrote in the conservative Gazette (9/9): "Most insensitive reaction to the plight of refugees from New Orleans: 'Everyone is so overwhelmed by the hospitality. And so many people in the arena here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this, this is working very well for them' -- Barbara Bush, whose own Houston accommodation is a multi-million-dollar home. About 16,000 people were living in the Houston Astrodome, the stadium Mrs. Bush visited on Sept. 5. Second most insensitive reaction: 'Out of the rubble of Trent Lott's house -- he's lost his entire house -- there's going to be a fantastic house. And I'm looking forward to sitting on the porch' -- George W. Bush, president and Barbara's son.... Third most insensitive reaction: 'The Lord is going to come on time, if we just wait' Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, defending the Bush administration against charges that its response to the devastation was slow."

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For the latest news on Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, visit www.safetyissues.org/katrina.

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