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Changing Homeland Security: An Opportunity for Competence

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Changing Homeland Security: An Opportunity for Competence

Christopher Bellavita

Abstract

Hurricane Katrina shattered belief that the nation's homeland security system was ready for a major terrorist attack. Public administrators staff that system. Katrina provides an opportunity to review the central normative premise of public administration: competence. This article briefly reviews the changing competence frameworks that have guided public administration since the 1880s. Over the last one hundred years, administrators have been seen as artisans, scientists, social reformers, and managers. The ineptness of the public sector's response to Katrina reminds us – however briefly – that for the last 30 years, government has been seen as the enemy, the problem to be solved – not the partner in finding solutions. The result is a demoralized and dysfunctional public workforce. The American homeland can never be secure until the public workforce recreates the spirit of competent service so glaringly absent in the wake of Katrina.

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***What has happened down here is the winds have changed.
Clouds roll in from the north and it started to rain.***

“It’s absolutely horrible,” says one of the women. “Babies aren’t getting food.”

“And they’re all black babies,” says the second woman.

“Old people are dying in wheelchairs. And they’re just leaving them to die,” says the first one.

“People can’t get out of the city,” says the second.

The scene is a metropolitan airport. It is early September. The nation is watching Katrina on television. The two women are in their early twenties. They are on break from their job at an airport coffee kiosk.

A man, waiting for his plane, hears the conversation.

“What are you guys going to do to make sure that never happens again?” he asks.

“What do you mean?” says the first one.

“What’s happening is horrible. You’re right. So what are you going to do about it? What are you going to do to make sure Americans never have to go through anything like this again?”

“What can we do?” shrugs the second one.

The man says nothing.

“Besides,” says the first one, “no one’s going to listen to anything people our age say.”

The man mumbles something unintelligible and walks toward his gate.

The woman is right. What is she going to say? “Y’all need to do a better job implementing the National Response Plan.” Or, “We need more of those communities to be NIMS compliant.” And even if she does have something to say, to whom is she going to say it? Whose job is it to fix the preparedness mess unmasked by Katrina?

***Rained real hard and it rained for a real long time.
Six feet of water in the streets of Evangeline.***

There is one profession responsible for making sure Americans are not systematically ignored the next time catastrophe strikes: public administrators. It is ultimately their job to prevent terrorism, respond to disaster, and lead the tedious and often thankless task of recovering from catastrophe.

All the talk over the past four years about the perniciousness of “stovepipes” obscures the foundation that connects those pipes: public service.¹

Public administrators, at least in theory, are responsible for conducting the public’s business, acting in the public’s interest, and conscientiously balancing formal requirements with the wisdom to do the right thing.

That is theory. The reality of public administration is considerably less Panglossian.

State, local and the national governments performed incompetently preparing for Katrina and responding to Katrina.² Strategies were ignored. Plans were not executed. Resources were wasted. We spent four years preparing for the unthinkable. The thinkable happened and we were not ready.

The entire preparedness system – staffed essentially by public administrators – failed to perform government’s primary job: to secure the unalienable right to life. With a few notable exceptions,³ individuals and agencies were unable to bring together the knowledge, skills, abilities, or resources to do what the unraveling situation required. How could this incompetence be? How could this incompetence have happened?

Katrina provides an opportunity to think about what historically has been the normative bedrock of public service: competence.

***The river rose all day.
The river rose all night.***

The history of public administration in the United States is a story of the changing relationships between public servants and their polity. The Founding Fathers paid some attention to the administrative problems associated with running a nation, but during the initial century of the American empire, there was a general aversion to the idea of a permanent group of civil servants.

In 1887, Woodrow Wilson – then a professor at Bryn Mawr College – made the first serious claim that administering the public’s business should be a professional discipline. Wilson wrote that the discipline’s central focus should be effectiveness and efficiency.

It is the object of administrative study to discover, first, what government can properly and successfully do, and secondly, how it can do these proper things with the utmost possible efficiency and at the least possible cost either of money or of energy.⁴

Wilson’s effort to bring competence into public work was motivated by a desire to remedy what he termed “a civil service which was rotten full fifty years ago.”⁵ In words that read like they were prepared for testimony to the U.S. House Select Committee on Hurricane Katrina, Wilson wrote (in 1887):

The poisonous atmosphere of city government, the crooked secrets of state administration, the confusion, sinecurism, and corruption ever and again discovered in the bureaux at Washington forbid us to believe that any clear conceptions of what constitutes good administration are as yet very widely current in the United States.⁶

The corruption and incompetence in the public sector of the 19th and early 20th century contributed to the growth of the progressive movement.⁷ In time, that led to civil service reform and to the demand, in Robert Biller’s phrase, “that the public’s business be conducted with competence, efficiency and care.”⁸

***Some people got lost in the flood.
Some people got away alright.***

In the first few decades of the 1900s, the “public’s business” remained an inconsequential part of the America enterprise. The nation was under the normative sway of the “rugged individualist” and the economic direction of corporate interests. Herbert Hoover spoke of government as an umpire, not a player in economic life. He believed that government involvement in the private sector would threaten democracy and individual freedom.⁹

By 1932, twenty five percent of the U.S. workforce did not have a job. The Great Depression drained the ruggedness from the individualist mythos and forced a reconsideration of government’s role in American life. Franklin Roosevelt’s election accelerated an expansion of government that lasted for fifty years.¹⁰ For people who grew up during the Great Depression, getting a government job, with its reliable paycheck and steady tenure, was a good career move.

From the 1900s until the late 1940s, public administration’s competence framework was constructed by practitioners who were guided by what Wilson called “stable principle.” People learned to do their work as apprentices. Elders who relied on experienced-based principles – what in today’s homeland security world might be called “doctrine” – tutored the new workers. In many respects, public administration was a guild.

***The river has busted through clear down to Plaquemines.
Six feet of water in the streets of Evangeline.***

In 1946, Herbert Simon challenged the prevailing competence frame by arguing that a true science of administration could not be built on those stable principles, or what he called “proverbs.” Administration had to be based on the products of operational definitions of concepts and empirical theory – i.e., normal science.¹¹ Simon and other intellectual leaders transformed public administration from a domain where competent practitioners were guided by heuristics, to a realm where competence was defined by an “administrative science” that provided objective guidance about the right things to do and the right ways to do them. Government service became another – although somewhat second-class – home for the archetypical Organization Man.¹²

The socially chaotic 1960s and the early 1970s brought renewed attention to the role government could play in improving people’s lives. The normative premise of what came to be called the New Public Administration was captured by Todd LaPorte’s vision that “the purpose of public organization is the reduction of economic, social and psychic suffering, and the enhancement of life opportunities for those inside and outside the organization.”¹³

Public service attracted people who wanted to end economic and social inequality, both in the United States and in other countries. Competence was defined largely by having good intentions and the skills to turn those intentions into programs that improved people’s lives.

Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society marked the twilight years of public administration as an activity to enhance “life opportunities” for Americans. People started getting elected by arguing that government was the problem. Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan,

Bush, and Clinton sought to end – at least semantically – the “era of big government.”¹⁴ From the time Johnson decided not to run for a second term through the 2001 terror attacks, government programs and rules became anathema to the economy, the good life, and individual liberty.¹⁵

The waxing distrust of government, and the growing economic opportunities in the private sector contributed to the considerable decline in the desirability of government jobs.¹⁶ In the 1980s and 1990s, public service was frequently perceived as an organizational sanctuary for the unambitious, for people who could not succeed in the competitive, entrepreneurial, and unforgiving world of the private sector. It was a place for drones.¹⁷

***President Coolidge came down in a railroad train,
With a little fat man with a note-pad in his hand.***

Woodrow Wilson’s 118-year-old dictum that “the field of administration is a field of business” is today’s dogma. The private sector – even in the face of Enron, WorldCom, Tyco, ImClone, Adelphia, Global Crossing and other examples of incompetence and corruption – remains the primary normative framework for public sector administrative aspirations. The language of business has suffused the public sector in ways too numerous to recount. Agencies have business plans and supply chains; they use benchmarks to identify best practices and industry standards. Public administrators are public managers. Citizens morphed into clients and customers. The DHS Secretary talks about his desire to “re-engineer” preparedness and “re-tool” FEMA.¹⁸

The comparatively few remaining administrators who entered government in the 1970s will be leaving public service within the next few years. Fifty percent of federal workers are eligible to retire in the next four years. Three quarters of those people are senior executives.¹⁹ These administrators depart with their substantive and tacit knowledge, and with memories of a time when government and business operations were not synonymous.

Government service continues to be uninviting. As a February 2005 report from the Partnership for Public Services described the dilemma, “Many Americans view government careers as uninteresting or unappealing, or believe the federal workplace is in need of reform, making it difficult to attract and retain talent.”²⁰ Have you ever heard a child say, “When I grow up, I want to be a public administrator?”²¹

***The president say, "Little fat man isn't it a shame
What the river has done to this poor cracker's land."***

Public administrators have taken a beating for over thirty years. What once was a domain of service is a fallow of despair.²² Homeland security – with its myriad agencies defiled by the mediocrity of its Katrina response – symbolizes the status of much of the public sector.

A 2005 survey of people who work for the national government found “only 12 percent of the more than 10,000 DHS employees who returned a government questionnaire said they felt strongly that they were ‘encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things’.”²³ It is difficult for imagination or initiative to flourish in

an organization where only 3 percent of the workers are confident personnel decisions are "based on merit," only 18 percent feel strongly that they are "held accountable for achieving results," and only 4 percent are certain "creativity and innovation are rewarded."²⁴

One could argue – based on the Katrina, Rita and Wilma headlines about response – that public sector incompetence is chiefly the result of unqualified leaders. But that explanation is too narrow. Followers are as critical to the competence equation as the men and women who carry the title of leader.²⁵ Incompetence is the result of government workers who accept less than an impassioned best from elected officials, appointed leaders, co-workers, and themselves. Incompetence is the result of a governance philosophy that belittles governance.

So what to do?

Mechanistically-minded reformers have already noted a need for structural and functional corrections to our preparedness system. DHS will be re-organized on the basis of its Second Stage Review – an analysis conducted before the Hurricanes. There are calls for competency-based hiring and for more concerted effort to promote people based on merit.²⁶

The mechanical prescription to “find the problem and fix it” may be too powerful to allow consideration of an alternative strategy.²⁷ The machine metaphor has guided a century of reform efforts.

The public sector has been organizing, reorganizing, searching for excellence, downsizing, reinventing itself, outsourcing, and hiring competence for years.²⁸ The Katrina cataclysm offers yet another opportunity for what one government executive called the “Troika of Doom” to move into action: think tanks will sell ideas about improving preparedness to substantively inexperienced political leaders, who then award contracts to favored Washington Beltway companies.²⁹ What comes out of this largely unexamined churn will be more paper producing, acronym generating, PowerPoint numbing programs for “improving” the nation’s preparedness.

There is another approach to reinvigorating public sector competence and preparedness. It looks first to the spirit of public service rather than the sterility of standards.

Louisiana, Louisiana.
They're tryin' to wash us away.
They're tryin' to wash us away.

Americans disagree about the rightness of involving American troops in the Terrorism Wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. But practically every American “supports our troops.” There is an admiration, compassion and appreciation for what these warriors have volunteered to do. The military’s warrior ethos does not come solely or even most directly from standards-based training. It comes from an inner belief – reinforced by their leaders and by each other – that what they are doing is right for their nation.³⁰

To be effective, the ethos of public sector has to come from a similar source. It cannot be mandated by law, “incentivized” by bonuses, or built in to a program. The

competence of the public administrator is more organic than mechanical. It has to be grown and nourished.

For the next catastrophe – whether hurricane, terrorist attack, or pandemic – Americans are told to be ready to take care of themselves for 72 hours to several weeks before the cavalry arrives. Self-reliance is good counsel for the public sector as well. The responsibility for returning competence to the core of public work rests with individual administrators.

Steven Covey writes about the “circle of influence and the circle of concern.”³¹ Public workers have been slimed by the abysmal Katrina response. Those who care about that should be *concerned* about competence in the public sector. But each person has a different *circle of influence*; a different way to contribute to eliminating what Woodrow Wilson called “the poisonous atmosphere..., the crooked secrets..., the confusion, sinecurism, and corruption.”

For a few emergency managers with many years’ experience it might mean a willingness to disrupt their lives and finances to rebuild a federal system that died from neglect. For someone just starting government service, it could be no longer tolerating the co-worker who spends hours everyday checking email and surfing websites. For another person, it could be taking the responsibility to eliminate unproductive meetings. It could be refusing to notionalize the difficult parts of a preparedness exercise, and instead insisting that participants “exercise in the red zone.” It could be creating new ways to work effectively with other agencies, contractors, and the private sector.

***Louisiana, Louisiana.
They're tryin' to wash us away.
They're tryin' to wash us away.***

A dominant metaphor characterizes each era of public administration’s evolution as a discipline. At first, administrators were artisans, skilled at the public’s business. Next, the competent ones aspired to become scientists, guided by the truth of empirical reality. In the 1960s and 70s, administrators struggled to enact the metaphor of social reformer, looking to improve life. The present era depicts public administrators as managers.

All metaphors eventually lose their power. Katrina convincingly demonstrated the sedentary emptiness of the “public administrator as manager” metaphor. But it is not clear what will replace it.

For a brief time, Katrina had the potential to transform the nation’s expectations about government and the public sector. That time may be gone. In less than four months, the attention of unaffected publics has moved on to other matters.³² Organizational curtains have veiled the dispirited chaos of the preparedness world. The public sector risks descending further into denial.

Ten years before Wilson wrote his generative public administration essay, Japan’s Tokugawa period came to an end and with it that nation’s feudal society. The social turmoil brought forth *ronin*, samurai who no longer had a master. *Ronin* were forced by their circumstances to think freely, to develop structural independence, and to lead the way to Japan’s new social system.³³

Public administrators who care about their calling are in an analogous state. Like *ronin*, they too work in a realm that has lost its masters and principled center. Individual

administrators have an opportunity to develop a new ethos of competence by breaking the tradition of psychic feudalism that is the public sector. It requires acting from personal courage instead of personal fear. It requires personal adaptability, autonomy and an insistent excellence.³⁴ It requires – in Gandhi's phrase – being the change you want to see.

*They're tryin' to wash us away.
They're tryin' to wash us away.*³⁵

The unthinkable is still out there: detonation of a nuclear device, biological attacks, terrorist assaults on schools. Thinkable catastrophes are also visible: a major earthquake in San Francisco, a chemical plant explosion in New Jersey, and Avian flu everywhere. The public sector has a second chance to get better prepared.

Spirit does not return easily. It will take years to return the ethos of competence. It is not obvious that we have that much time. But no one is going to bring competence back except the people who care about the *service* part of public service.

In 1776, Thomas Jefferson wrote:

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

Jefferson and the fifty-five other men who signed the Declaration of Independence asserted that whenever any form of government fails to accomplish its basic purposes,

...it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

What happened after Katrina struck was the insufferable sadness of systemic incompetence. The American people deserve a government and a public service that does not allow that to happen again.

¹ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *9/11 Commission Report* (New York: Barnes & Noble Publishing, Inc., 2004), 403, 418.

² For some examples, see U.S. Congress House Committee on Government Reform, *A First Look at Lessons Learned from Katrina*, September 15, 2005; Bob Herbert, "A Failure of Leadership," *New York Times*, September 5, 2005; Susan B. Glasser and Josh White, "Storm Exposed Disarray at the Top," *Washington Post*, September 4, 2005, A1; Tim Naftali, "Department of Homeland Screw-Up," *Slate*, September 6, 2005.; "Miscommunication Cited In Katrina Response," Associated Press, <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/national/AP-Katrina-Military.html> (accessed October 12, 2005); Donald F. Kettl, "The Worst Is Yet to Come: Lessons from September 11 and Hurricane Katrina," *Fels Government Research Service Report 05-01* (September 2005); and Pew Research Center, "Two-In-Three Critical Of Bush's Relief Efforts. Huge Racial Divide Over Katrina and Its Consequences," September 8, 2005. The accusations of incompetence continued beyond September 2005: "FEMA still does not know any more about what it was doing last week than it was a month ago," Representative David R. Obey of Wisconsin, the ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, said. "It is still, as far as I am concerned, an incompetent agency," quoted in Eric Lipton, "Number Overstated for Storm Evacuees in Hotels," *New York Times*, October 19, 2005. <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/19/national/nationalspecial/19housing.html> (accessed October 20, 2005).

³ Initial exceptions include the United States Coast Guard and several responder agencies in Alabama and Mississippi. As response and recovery activities stabilized, individual and agency performance improved.

⁴ Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration," *Political Science Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (June 1887), in Jay Shafritz and Albert C. Hyde, *Classics of Public Administration* (Wadsworth Publishing, 1978), 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷ Waldo, Dwight, *The Administrative State*, 2nd ed. (Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1983), Chapter 1; Richard Hofstadter, *Age Of Reform* (Knopf, 1955). The Pendleton Act, adopted in 1883, was the first significant national reform of civil service. Ari Hoogenboom, *Outlawing the Spoils: A History Of The Civil Service Reform Movement, 1865-1883* (University of Illinois Press, 2000).

⁸ Robert Biller, "Some Implications of Adaptation Capacity for Organizational and Political Development," in Frank Marini (ed.), *Toward A New Public Administration: The Minnowbrook Perspective* (Scranton: Chandler Pub. Co, 1971), 94

⁹ Contrast Hoover's views with those attributed to Mike Brown, former FEMA director, in 2001: "The general idea -- that the business of government is not to provide services, but to make sure that they are provided -- seems self-evident to me." (Jon Elliston, "Disaster in the making," *Independent Weekly*, September 22, 2004, <http://www.indyweek.com/durham/2004-09-22/cover.html>; cited by Charles Perrow, in "Using Organizations: the Case of FEMA," *Homeland Security Affairs* 1, no. 2, (Fall 2005).

¹⁰ See, for example, the four volume work by Arthur M Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959). It has been suggested that Roosevelt only continued the trend of expanding the size of government that began before the Progressive era. See Randall G. Holcombe, "Federal Government Growth Before the New Deal," September 1, 1997 <http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=360> (accessed October 25, 2006).

¹¹ Herbert Simon, "The Proverbs of Administration," originally published in 1947, reprinted in Jay M. Shafritz and Albert C. Hyde, eds., *Classics of Public Administration*, 4th ed. (Harcourt Brace, 1997), 127-41. Simon's concerns are echoed in contemporary calls for homeland security metrics.

¹² William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (Doubleday, 1956).

¹³ Todd La Porte, "The Recovery of Relevance in the Study of Public Organization," in Frank Marini, (ed.), *Toward A New Public Administration: The Minnowbrook Perspective* (Chandler Pub. Co, 1971), 32.

¹⁴ George W. Bush, as David Brooks argues, has not been part of this legacy – either forced by circumstances or directed by philosophy. Brooks quotes Bush that "Government should help people improve their lives, not run their lives," and observes that "This is not the Government-Is-the-Problem philosophy of the mid-'90s, but the philosophy of a governing majority party in a country where people look to government to play a positive but not overbearing role in their lives." David Brooks, "The Savior of the Right," *New York Times*, October 23, 2005 (<http://select.nytimes.com/2005/10/23/opinion/23brooks.html?n=Top%2fOpinion%2fEditorials%20and%20Op%2dEd%2fOp%2dEd%2fColumnists%2fDavid%20Brooks>) (Accessed October 29, 2005.)

¹⁵ For examples, see The Pew Research Center, "How Americans View Government: Deconstructing Distrust," March 10, 1998. Available at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=95> (Accessed October 29, 2005).

¹⁶ Gregory B. Lewis & Sue A. Frank, *Public Administration Review* 62, Issue 4 (July/August 2002), 395.

¹⁷ See "Attitude About Public Service" data in The Pew Research Center, "How Americans View Government: Deconstructing Distrust," March 10, 1998, op.cit.

¹⁸ Spencer S. Hsu, "Chertoff Vows to 'Re-Engineer' Preparedness," *Washington Post*, October 20, 2005, A2. Spence S. Hsu, "After the Storm, Chertoff Vows to Reshape DHS. Secretary Pledges to Learn From Mistakes of Katrina," *Washington Post*, November 14, 2005, A11.

¹⁹ David M. Walker, "Managing Human Capital in the 21st Century," (Government Accountability Office), March 9, 2000; and Leonard Wiener, "Brain Drain: Half Of All Federal Workers Can Retire In Five Years," *U.S. News and World Report*, November 22, 2004.

²⁰ Partnership for Public Service and National Academy of Public Administration, "Where the Jobs Are. The Continuing Growth of Federal Job Opportunities," February 2005. Available at http://www.ourpublicservice.org/publications3735/publications_show.htm?doc_id=260717&page=1

²¹ The 1998 PEW poll (op. cit.) found little change in numbers of people recommending government service to a child, in a hypothetical. More than half said no. The impact of Katrina on perceptions of government is evident in a September 22, 2005 Pew Research Center survey. More than half the adults polled agreed with the statement "Government is almost always wasteful and inefficient." That represents an increase from 47% in December 2004 to 56% in September 2005.

²² United States Office of Personnel Management, "What Do Federal Employees Say? Results from the 2004 Federal Human Capital Survey," (no date), available at <http://www.fhcs2004.opm.gov/Published.htm> (accessed October 28, 2005).

²³ David E. Rosenbaum, "Study Ranks Homeland Security Department Lowest in Morale," *New York Times*, October 16, 2005. The story also noted "... in answer to the question "How would you rate the overall quality of work done by your workgroup?" only 22 percent of Homeland Security employees answered "very good." Only 20 percent strongly agreed that "My work gives me a sense of personal accomplishment." Only 27 percent strongly agreed that "people I work with cooperate to get their job done," and 13 percent strongly agreed that "my job makes good use of my skills and abilities." In each of these instances, the department's employees were less positive about their jobs than were workers at any other department or agency in the study."

²⁴ Quotes from <http://www.stephensonstrategies.com/2005/10/24.html>; see United States Office of Personnel Management Agency (op. cit.), Parts 1 through 5 for specific survey results.

²⁵ John W. Gardner, *On Leadership* (Free Press, 1993), 1, 2, 48.

²⁶ Michael Chertoff, "Statement by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff before the United States House Select Committee on Hurricane Katrina," October 19, 2005. Available at <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=4896> (accessed November 1, 2005).

²⁷ For a homeland security-related discussion of how the uncritical application of the machine metaphor can affect policy deliberations, see Richard A. Posner, "The 9/11 Report: A Dissent," *New York Times*, August 29, 2004.

²⁸ For examples, see David M. Walker, "Managing Human Capital in the 21st Century," (op. cit.) <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/> and <http://www.opm.gov/employ/html/COMPTNCY.HTM>

²⁹ Comment made by a Department of Homeland Security manager in an off-the-record meeting, September 5, 2005.

³⁰ Dexter Filkins, "The Fall of the Warrior King," *New York Times*, October 23, 2005; and Dave Grossman, *On Killing* (Back Bay Books, 1996), 291-292. This idea is also captured in a quote from General George C. Marshall: "The soldier is a man; he expects to be treated as an adult, not a schoolboy. He has rights; they must be made known to him and thereafter respected. He has ambition; it must be stirred. He has a belief in fair play; it must be honored. He has a need of comradeship; it must be supplied. He has imagination; it must be stimulated. He has a sense of personal dignity; it must be sustained. He has pride; it can be satisfied and made the bedrock of character once he has been assured that he is playing a useful and respected role. To give a man this is the acme of inspired leadership. He has become loyal because loyalty was given to him."

³¹ Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (Free Press, 1990), 81.

³² "Forgotten already," (*New Orleans*) *Times-Picayune*, November 13, 2005; Cathy Booth Thomas, "New Orleans Today: It's Worse Than You Think," *Time*, November 20, 2005.

³³ Beverly Potter, *The Way of the Ronin: Riding the Waves Of Change* (Ronin Publishing, 2001), 61.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 68 and 69. See also David Brown, “When Disaster Strikes, You Need To Take Matters Into Your Own Hands,” *Seattle Times*, October 9, 2005. During the Katrina response, there were numerous examples of individuals and groups who violated rules clearly inappropriate for the situation. In one example, helicopter pilots disobeyed their orders in order to save more stranded people. There were also instances where rules were inappropriately obeyed. For example, some volunteer police officers were not allowed to help with the response until they completed a sexual harassment course. There are times when disrupting convention or breaking rules is the right thing to do, and times when it clearly is wrong. People who pick incorrectly face consequences. A more complete discussion of when to obey rules and when to disobey them – and the consequences of following a *ronin* path – goes beyond the scope of this article.

³⁵ Louisiana 1927, by Randy Newman, *The Boston Globe*, September 7, 2005. http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2005/09/07/louisiana_1927/ (accessed October 29, 2005). “The lyrics ... tell the story of the Louisiana flood of 1927, which killed hundreds and displaced hundreds of thousands across six states. The disaster is credited with sparking one of the great voting movements of the 20th century -- the shift in Southern black allegiance from the Republican to the Democratic Party -- and with spurring the New Deal politics of big government.” See also John. M. Brody, “The Prologue, and Maybe the Coda,” *New York Times*, September 4, 2005. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover was in charge of the 1927 flood rescue activities. His successful efforts helped him get elected to the Presidency in 1928.