

GOVERNOR KATHLEEN BLANCO: STRONG LEADERSHIP IN THE MIDST OF CATASTROPHE

As the Federal response to Katrina floundered under the leadership of Michael Brown, former Commissioner of Judges and Stewards for the International Arabian Horse Association, Karl Rove and top Republicans launched a political campaign to shift blame away from the White House and towards officials in New Orleans and Louisiana. Now, with Tom DeLay on board, Republicans are marching in lockstep and echoing White House's talking points. But as the death toll climbs, the American people are growing increasingly impatient with the White House's failure to accept responsibility for their role in this tragedy. And as the evidence shows, Governor Blanco and Louisiana officials at all levels of government worked steadfastly through the most adverse conditions and with limited Federal support to ensure the safety of their citizens, even before Katrina made landfall. This timeline details the actions taken by Louisiana officials during the first days of the crisis.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 26, 2005

BLANCO DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY

Governor Blanco Is The First To Declare A State Of Emergency. "Hurricane Katrina gained strength and took aim at the Gulf Coast on Friday night, with a path forecast to hit southeast Louisiana on Monday as a Category 4 storm with top winds of 132 mph....Gov. Kathleen Blanco declared a state of emergency late Friday, making it easier to implement emergency procedures, including evacuations, if necessary." [[New Orleans Times Picayune](#), 8/27/05]

WHILE BUSH VACATIONS AT THE RANCH

Bush Activities At His Ranch In Crawford Unknown While National Emergency Brewed. "No public events are scheduled." [[Washington Times](#), 8/26/05]

SATURDAY, AUGUST 27, 2005

BLANCO BUSY IMPLEMENTING EMERGENCY PLANS BEFORE HURRICANE HITS

Blanco Requested That Bush Declare A State Of Emergency. "I request that you declare an emergency for the State of Louisiana due to Hurricane Katrina for the time period beginning August 26, 2005, and continuing... In response to the situation I have taken appropriate action under State law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan on August 26, 2005... A State of Emergency has been issued for the State in order to support the evacuations of the coastal areas in accordance with our State Evacuation Plan and the remainder of the state to support the State Special Needs and Sheltering Plan." [Letter From Blanco, 8/27/05]

- **Bush Declared A State Of Emergency For Louisiana From Crawford.** President Bush declared a state of emergency in Louisiana, authorizing federal emergency management officials to release federal aid and coordinate disaster relief efforts. [[New Orleans Times Picayune](#), 8/28/05]

Gov. Blanco Implemented Contraflow Evacuation Traffic Plan. "As Hurricane Katrina took aim at south Louisiana, Gov. Kathleen Blanco on Saturday ordered State Police to implement the state's latest 'contraflow' traffic plan as scores of New Orleans area residents drove north and west toward higher ground." [[New Orleans Times Picayune](#), 8/28/05]

Mandatory And Voluntary Evacuations Ordered. By mid-afternoon, officials in Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, Lafourche, Terrebonne and Jefferson parishes had called for voluntary or mandatory evacuations. New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin followed at 5 p.m., issuing a voluntary evacuation. “Come the first break of light in the morning, you may have the first mandatory evacuation of New Orleans,” Nagin told WWL-TV. St. Tammany officials ordered evacuations of the parish's low-lying areas by today at noon. [[New Orleans Times Picayune](#), 8/28/05]

Blanco And Nagin Warned Residents To Take Katrina Seriously. New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, in a joint afternoon news conference with Gov. Kathleen Blanco, warned residents to take Katrina seriously. Hoping for yet another near miss could be deadly, he said. “This is not a test. This is the real deal,” Nagin said. “Things could change, but as of right now, New Orleans is definitely the target for this hurricane.” The mayor said he would stick with the state’s evacuation plan and not officially call for residents to leave until 30 hours before expected landfall, allowing residents in low-lying surrounding areas to leave first. But he recommended residents in low-lying areas of the city, such as Algiers and the 9th Ward, get a head start...Nagin said the city would open the Superdome as a shelter of last resort for evacuees with special needs. [[Times-Picayune](#), 8/27/05]

BUSH GIVES RADIO ADDRESS ABOUT IRAQ

Bush Radio Address Mentioned Iraq Eight Times Without a Single Mention of Hurricane Katrina. In his weekly radio address, President Bush said, “Our efforts in Iraq and the broader Middle East will require more time, more sacrifice and continued resolve. Yet people across the Middle East are choosing a future of freedom and prosperity and hope. And as they take these brave steps, Americans will continue to stand with them because we know that free and democratic nations are peaceful nations.” [Whitehouse.gov, 8/27/05]

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, 2005

BLANCO AND NAGIN ORDER MANDATORY EVACUATION, ACCEPT GUARD TROOPS

First Ever Mandatory Evacuation Of New Orleans Ordered. “New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin called for a first-ever mandatory evacuation of the city this morning, saying that Hurricane Katrina’s devastating power may well create the sort of cataclysmic damage that residents have long worried that a killer storm could cause in a city that lies mostly below sea level. ‘I wish I had better news, but we’re facing the storm most of us have feared,’ said Nagin, flanked by city and state officials, including Gov. Kathleen Blanco. ‘This is very serious. This is going to be an unprecedented event.’” [[New Orleans Times-Picayune](#), 8/28/05]

- **Bush Suggests Mandatory Evacuation After The Decision Was Made.** “11:00 AM Nagin orders mandatory evacuation of New Orleans. Ten shelters set up for those unable to leave. Evacuation orders posted all along coast. President Bush suggests mandatory evacuation after decision was already made but before it was reported to the public.” [Brookings Institute, www.brookings.edu]

Blanco Accepted An Offer Of More Guard Troops Before Katrina Hit; But Paperwork In Washington Held Them Up Until Thursday. “New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson offered Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco help from his state's National Guard last Sunday, the day before Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana. Blanco accepted, but paperwork needed to get the troops en route didn't come from Washington until late Thursday.” [[Associated Press State & Local Wire](#), 9/3/05]

BUSH TOLD ABOUT DANGERS OF LEVEE BREACH, BUT DID NOT ACT

Chertoff And Brown Given Briefing On Levees. Early DHS Secretary Chertoff and FEMA Director Brown given electronic briefings on possibility of levee break. [Brookings Institute, www.brookings.edu]

Bush Touts “Progress” In Iraq While Katrina Becomes a 5 Category Hurricane. Speaking to reporters at his ranch in Crawford, TX, President Bush spoke about Hurricane Katrina quickly, before launching into an update on Iraq that lasted far more than twice as long as Bush’s comments on Hurricane Katrina. “Yesterday, I signed a disaster declaration for the state of Louisiana, and this morning I signed a disaster declaration for the state of Mississippi... On another matter, today Iraqi political leaders completed the process for drafting a permanent constitution. Their example is an inspiration to all who share the universal values of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law... we’re making good progress toward making sure this world of ours is more peaceful for generations to come.” [Bush Remarks, 8/28/05]

President Bush declares State of Emergency in Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama. [Brookings Institute, www.brookings.edu]

MONDAY, AUGUST 29, 2005

BLANCO SAYS NEIGHBORHOODS DEVASTATED, WARNS PEOPLE NOT TO RETURN

Blanco Says People Are Swimming To The Boats. Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco said her office had reports of as many as 20 building collapses in New Orleans, and scores of residents stranded in attics or on rooftops. Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco said 200 people have been rescued in boats from rooftops, attics and other locations around the New Orleans area, a scene playing out in Mississippi as well. In some cases, rescuers are sawing through roofs to get to people in attics, and other stranded residents "are swimming to our boats," Blanco said. In one dramatic rescue, a person was plucked from a roof by a helicopter. Blanco took little comfort in the fact that the hurricane may have spared New Orleans much worse flooding, given the still uncertain toll in surrounding parishes. "I can't say that I feel that sense that we've escaped the worst," she said. [Associated Press, 8/29/05]

Blanco Fears Loss Of Life Will Not Be Limited. "We pray that the loss of life is very limited, but we fear that is not the case," Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco said. [Whittier Daily News, 8/30/05]

Blanco Says Rescuers Grounded Because Of High Wind. By late afternoon Monday the storm was downgraded to Category 1, with winds of 95 mph. But authorities in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, forced to hunker down for most of the day, were only beginning to take stock of the damage. "The high water is keeping us out of some areas, and the high winds are keeping our aircraft grounded," Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco (D) told reporters at a Baton Rouge news conference. She said she had "isolated reports of between four and six" fatalities, but nothing confirmed. Nonetheless, she said grimly, "we're worried." [Washington Post, 8/30/05]

Blanco Warns That It Is Too Dangerous To Come Back Home, Says Some Neighborhoods Devastated. "The roads are flooded, there is no electricity, the phones are down, there is no food or water," Blanco said. "I have ordered the Louisiana State Police to block reentry to affected areas. Wherever you live, it is still too dangerous for people to return home." ...Blanco said the storm had breached a 50-inch New Orleans water main, rendering the city's water undrinkable in all but a few neighborhoods. She said eastern New Orleans and St. Bernard Parish east of the city had been "devastated by floodwaters and high winds." [Washington Post, 8/30/05]

BUSH CONTINUES CAMPAIGNING ON MEDICARE AND HAS CAKE WITH MCCAIN

Bush In Arizona Campaigning Hard To “Pre-Sell” A Political Victory at 12pm ET. Bush talked to an invitation only audience of about 400 people at the Pueblo El Mirage RV and Golf Resort. The Arizona Republic said Bush came to campaign hard for his new Medicare plan. “The main focus of Bush's visit was to elaborate on the new Medicare drug benefit...Having high numbers of enrollees also will be a political victory for the president, since he pushed the Medicare reform measure through Congress in 2003. Members of the Bush administration have been on the road, going across the country to talk up the program.... ‘I think Bush would like it (the Medicare drug benefit) to play a role in the elections next year -- he's been touting it as one of the big accomplishments of his first term,’ David Mark, of Campaigns & Elections Magazine, said Monday.... Bush said Monday that he was in El Mirage ‘pre-selling’ the importance of enrolling for the benefit.” [Arizona Republic, 8/30/05]

Bush Declares Louisiana and Parts of Mississippi a Disaster Area at 1:45 PM. Bush declared parts of Mississippi and Louisiana a major disaster area and freeing up federal disaster aid. [Brookings Institute, www.brookings.edu; Detroit Free Press, 8/30/05]



Bush Stopped To Celebrate McCain’s Birthday At Luke Air Force Base. “Greeting Bush was Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.)... The president paused on the tarmac to help celebrate McCain's 69th birthday, but on a blazing Arizona day, the cake melted before he could taste it.” [Washington Post, 8/30/05]

“Upbeat” Bush Continues Campaigning, Speaking Straight From White House Talking Points In Rancho Cucamonga, CA at 5:45pm ET. “An upbeat and slightly sunburned President George W. Bush chatted with the nation's Medicare chief and several locals in a casual, town hall-type setting Monday, encouraging seniors to find out more about their new prescription drug benefits. Repeatedly telling an audience of 200 invited guests at the James L. Brulte Senior Center that the new program was "a good deal," the president

also assured seniors that he sympathized with their apprehension.... Bush, who spoke for just under a half-hour, pulled talking points directly from a White House fact sheet that states Medicare has not kept up with advances in medicine.... Bush's appearance was part of a \$300 million campaign to promote awareness of the program and boost interest in it.” [Whittier Daily News, 8/30/05]

TUESDAY AUGUST 30, 2005

BLANCO ORDERS EVACUATION OF SUPERDOME; CONDITIONS DESPERATE

80 Percent Of New Orleans Under Water. At least two levees protecting New Orleans have been breached and water levels continued to rise Tuesday morning, WWL-TV, New Orleans reported... Mayor Ray Nagin said the city's Twin Span Bridge is "totally destroyed" and that 80 percent of the city is underwater. New Orleans is 6 feet below sea level, and reliant on levees to hold back water from Lake Ponchartrain. [UPI, 8/30/05]

Blanco Calls Situation “Untenable.” Nagin Declared Martial Law. “‘The situation is untenable,’ Gov. Kathleen Blanco said. ‘It's just heartbreaking.’” “‘The devastation is greater than our worst fears.’ New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin declared martial law Tuesday afternoon and ordered everyone still in the city -- including police officers not considered ‘central emergency personnel’ -- to leave. But evacuation routes were blocked by flooding and debris.” [AP State & Local Wire, 8/31/05; Orlando Sentinel, 8/31/05]

Blanco Calls Conditions In Superdome Desperate, Orders Evacuation. “With water rising perilously inside the Superdome, Blanco said the thousands of refugees now huddled there would be evacuated within two days. She said officials are working on a plan to get the people to other shelters. The dome, which became a shelter of last resort for some 20,000 people, is currently without electricity and has no air conditioning. Broken toilets have also made for extremely unsanitary conditions, Blanco said. ‘Conditions are degenerating rapidly,’ she said. ‘It’s a very, very desperate situation.’” [[AP State & Local Wire](#), 8/31/05]

Blanco Started Making Requests For More Federal Troops. “Denise Bottcher, press secretary for Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco, noted that Blanco made a number of requests for more federal troops beginning last Tuesday, the day after Katrina hit the city. It wasn’t until Saturday [September 3], Bottcher said, that those troops – and more than 100 military helicopters – arrived in force. ‘I think considering that we have people dying by the minute, we expected it a little quicker,’ Bottcher said.” [[Chicago Tribune](#), 9/5/05]

Mississippi Receives Ten Times More Guard Troops Than Louisiana. “From the start, Louisiana appeared to lack enough Guard troops with the specific skills to handle the lawlessness, namely military police and other security forces. Neighboring Mississippi, also hard hit by Katrina, requested - and is receiving - hundreds more MPs and other Guard security forces from other states, according to a list of National Guard troop deployments obtained by The Sun. A document listing troops heading to both states shows that some 1,700 Guard security personnel from Maryland and four other states began streaming into Mississippi starting Wednesday. That day, just 150 security troops arrived in Louisiana from the Texas National Guard.” [[Baltimore Sun](#), 9/2/05]

- **Much Of Louisiana National Guard Deployed In Iraq.** “On Tuesday, Louisiana - which has several thousand National Guard troops deployed in Iraq - had about 65 percent of its Guard force available, roughly 6,500 soldiers and airmen. About 3,800 of them were called to state active duty by Blanco, providing debris removal, security, food distribution and law enforcement support. As of yesterday, another 2,000 Louisiana Guard troops were on hurricane relief duty.” [[Baltimore Sun](#), 9/2/05]
- **As New Orleans Began To Flood, Only Three States Had Given Louisiana Guard Help.** “When New Orleans’ levees gave way to deadly flooding on Tuesday, Louisiana’s National Guard had received help from troops in only three other states: Ohio, which had nine people in Louisiana then; Oklahoma, 89; and Texas, 625, figures provided by the National Guard show... With many states’ Guard units depleted by deployments to Iraq, Katrina’s aftermath was almost certain from the beginning to require help from faraway states.” [[Associated Press State & Local Wire](#), 9/3/05]

BUSH CONTINUED PR TOUR

Bush Continues PR Tour To Turn Around Lagging Support For Iraq. “Concluding a month-long vacation marked by antiwar protests outside his Texas home and a rising death toll in Iraq, President Bush on Tuesday invoked the anniversary of the Japanese surrender in World War II and the postwar rebirth of that country as a parallel to present-day U.S. efforts in the Middle East. Bush spoke against the dramatic backdrop of the Ronald Reagan, a 1,092-foot, nuclear-powered aircraft carrier docked at North Island Naval Air Station... The picturesque setting, enthusiastic crowd and historical references contrasted sharply with the political realities facing Bush as he returns today to Washington, where some lawmakers have begun comparing Iraq to Vietnam, a war with far more negative connotations than the Allied victory over Japan and Nazi Germany.... Bush’s speech Tuesday marked the latest of his several recent efforts to turn around public opinion on the war” [[Los Angeles Times](#), 8/31/05; [MSNBC](#), 8/30/05]



Bush Played Guitar With Country Singer After His Remarks In Coronado, CA at 3pm ET.

“President Bush plays a guitar presented to him by Country Singer Mark Wills, right, backstage following his visit to Naval Base Coronado, Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005.” [AP Photo/ABC News; <http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/050830/480/capm10208301856>]



While Floodwaters Pour Into New Orleans.

“Floodwaters from Hurricane Katrina pour through a levee along Inner Harbor Navigational Canal near downtown New Orleans, La., Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005, a day after Katrina passed through the city.” [AP Photo/Vincent Laforet, Pool]

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 31, 2005

BLANCO ASKS WHITE HOUSE FOR MORE HELP IN RESCUE EFFORT

Blanco Asked White House For More People To Help With Rescue Effort. Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco asks the White House to send more people to help with evacuations and rescues, thereby freeing up National Guardsmen to stop out-of-control looters. [[Associated Press](#), 8/31/05]

Blanco Asked For No Less Than 40,000 National Guard Troops. “In Louisiana, the reign of terror had become so severe that Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco asked for 40,000 National Guard troops to help restore order in New Orleans. ‘I have just gotten word that we will be getting all the troops that we need as long as we need them,’ Blanco said. ‘I have asked for no less than 40,000.’ Blanco said there were 4,000 police officers in the New Orleans area, amid reports of shootings, lawlessness and mass looting. More troops were moving into the city. The governor said she had authorized law enforcement personnel to use ‘all necessary force’ to quell unrest.” [[Baltimore Sun](#), 9/2/05]

- **National Guard Troops Finally Start Arriving In Gulf Coast.** “Gov. Kathleen Blanco said she has asked the White House to send more people to help with evacuations and rescues, thereby freeing up National Guardsmen to stop looters. An additional 10,000 National Guard troops from across the country began pouring into the Gulf Coast on Wednesday to shore up security, rescue and relief operations. The new units brought the number of troops dedicated to the effort to more than 28,000.” [[Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#), 9/2/05]

Blanco Announces Attempts To Plug 17th St Levee Failing, Calls Again for Superdome Evacuation.

Blanco said an attempt to plug the breach in the 17th Street levee appeared to be failing, because “the hole is so deep that [the sandbags] are just disappearing. The water is rising. It’s rising around” the Louisiana Superdome. Blanco said there were 20,000 people in the Superdome and it had become “a very, very desperate situation.” She said tensions were rising, and that the Superdome should be evacuated in the next two or three days. [[Los Angeles Times](#), 8/31/05]

Blanco Says Some Guard Forces Must Shift To Law And Order Duties. “By Wednesday night, Blanco was telling PBS' The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer that it was necessary to shift the focus of some Guard forces to deal with the growing criminal behavior, particularly in New Orleans. ‘We believe we need to free up the National Guard, essentially to do security in the city,’ the governor said. Chertoff said that in addition to local law enforcement personnel, there were about 2,800 Guard troops in New Orleans. Starting yesterday and continuing through Saturday, 1,400 National Guard MPs were expected to arrive daily from other states.” [Baltimore Sun, 9/2/05]

CHERTOFF SAYS SUPERDOME SECURE

Despite Blanco’s Assessment, Chertoff Says Situation At Superdome Secure. Blanco’s “remarks contrasted with those by Michael Chertoff, the secretary of homeland security, who said yesterday that the Superdome, where thousands of refugees sought shelter, ‘is secure’ with the help of ‘several hundred’ National Guardsmen and city police. His statement was belied by police at the scene, who described the situation as extremely dangerous.” [Baltimore Sun, 9/2/05]

BUSH GIVES “WORST SPEECH OF HIS LIFE”

Bush Made His Way Back To Washington DC. Working from his Texas ranch, Bush participated via videoconference in a large meeting of federal, state and local disaster management officials preparing for the storm's onslaught. Separately, he spoke by phone with the governors of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. Bush then flew over the Gulf Coast region as he returned to Washington from his Texas ranch. He saw homes reduced to rubble in Mississippi and flood waters creeping toward downtown New Orleans, submerging homes nearly to their rooftops. At 5:15pm ET, President Bush met with a task force established to coordinate the efforts of 14 federal agencies that will be involved in responding to the disaster. [AP, 8/31/05; KOMO RADIO-TV, 9/1/05]

Bush Addressed Nation From Rose Garden. “After sticking to his vacation plans amid rising bloodshed in Iraq, the president bolted Texas two days early to oversee recovery efforts from Washington. From the Rose Garden, Bush addressed the victims directly, speaking as he did four years ago about a national cause and unity of purpose. ‘I’m confident with time you’ll get your life back in order. New communities will flourish. The great city of New Orleans will be back on its feet and America will be a stronger place for it,’ Bush said. ‘The country stands with you.’” [AP, 8/31/05]

- **Editorial: Bush Gave One Of His Worst Speeches Of His Life.** “George W. Bush gave one of the worst speeches of his life yesterday, especially given the level of national distress and the need for words of consolation and wisdom. In what seems to be a ritual in this administration, the president appeared a day later than he was needed. He then read an address of a quality more appropriate for an Arbor Day celebration: a long laundry list of pounds of ice, generators and blankets delivered to the stricken Gulf Coast. He advised the public that anybody who wanted to help should send cash, grinned, and promised that everything would work out in the end.” [Editorial; New York Times, 9/1/05]

BLANCO DEFENDS NEW ORLEANS' RIGHT TO EXIST, DEMANDS LAW AND ORDER

Superdome Evacuation A Louisiana Operation: FEMA Not Involved. “Watching the slow procession from the Superdome, an angry Terry Ebbert, head of New Orleans' emergency operations, said the Federal Emergency Management Agency response was inadequate. ‘This is a national disgrace. FEMA has been here three days, yet there is no command and control,’ Ebbert said. ‘We can send massive amounts of aid to tsunami victims, but we can't bail out the city of New Orleans. We have got a mayor who has been pushing and asking, but we're not getting supplies.’ He said the evacuation was almost entirely a Louisiana operation. ‘This is not a FEMA operation. I haven't seen a single FEMA guy.’” [[Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#), 9/2/05]

Blanco Responds To Top House Republican's Assertion That New Orleans Should Not Be Rebuilt. “It makes no sense to spend billions of dollars to rebuild a city that's seven feet under sea level, House Speaker Dennis Hastert said of federal assistance for hurricane-devastated New Orleans... ‘It looks like a lot of that place could be bulldozed,’ the Illinois Republican said in an interview about New Orleans Wednesday with the Daily Herald of Arlington Heights, Ill...An angry Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco demanded an immediate apology from Hastert. ‘To kick us when we're down and destroy hope, when hope is the only thing we have left, is absolutely unthinkable for a leader in his position,’ Blanco said in a Thursday night news conference.” [[Associated Press Online](#), 9/2/05]

Blanco Promises To Restore Law And Order. “‘We will restore law and order,’ Blanco said. ‘What angers me the most is that disasters like this often bring out the worst in people. I will not tolerate this kind of behavior.’ Heavily armed state policemen stood watch Thursday as tense, exhausted and angry crowds struggled onto buses that would deliver them from the Superdome.” [[Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#), 9/2/05]

BUSH CLAIMS NOT TO HAVE KNOWN ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF LEVEE BREACHES

Brown Says Blanco Doesn't Need The Number Of Troops She Requested. “Blanco had requested 40,000 soldiers in Louisiana alone to control violence and help with other efforts, but Mike Brown, the federal disaster relief director, said he talked with Blanco and will meet the governor's needs with the smaller number.” [[The Advocate](#) (Baton Rouge, LA), 9/2/05]

Bush Said That No One Anticipated The Breach Of The Levees. Bush appeared on Good Morning America and said, “I fully understand people wanting things to have happened yesterday. I mean, I understand that -- anxiety of people on the ground. I can imagine -- I can't imagine what it is like to be waving a sign saying come and get me now. So there's frustration. But I want people to know there is a lot of help coming. I don't think anybody anticipated the breach of the levees.” Later in the day Bush appeared in the Oval Office with former Presidents Bush and Clinton, to announce their leadership of a private fundraising effort similar to their effort after the Tsunami earlier this year. [ABC, 9/1/05]

Bush Said He Understood People's Anxiety. “I fully understand people wanting things to have happened yesterday. I mean, I understand the anxiety of people on the ground. I just can't imagine what it's like to be waving a sign that said, ‘Come and get me now.’” [[The Baltimore Sun](#), 9/2/2005]

Conservative Manchester Union Leader Criticized Bush's Leadership on Katrina. “‘The cool, confident, intuitive leadership Bush exhibited in his first term, particularly in the months immediately following Sept. 11, 2001, has vanished,’ said Wednesday's editorial. ‘In its place is a diffident detachment unsuitable for the leader of a nation facing war, natural disaster and economic uncertainty.’” [AP, 9/1/05]

BLANCO SAYS EFFORTS TURNING A CORNER

Blanco Says Louisiana Is Turning A Corner, But Still Need To Restore Order. “Engineers were able to staunch the flow of water from Lake Ponchartrain into the city on Friday. The project's completion, ‘The first ray of real hope for people who have lost so much,’ Blanco said. The arrival of troops in the city was a show of force that put ‘confidence back’ into the population, Blanco said. ‘We have to restore order so that we can begin the process of rebuilding,’ she said.” [[The Advocate](#) (Baton Rouge, LA), 9/3/05]

Blanco Says Hoodlums Will Not Be Tolerated. “The guardsmen were posted at major intersections, and Army vehicles patrolled the streets, seeking to quell the looting and unrestrained crime that has shocked the nation. Some 300 members of the Arkansas National Guard, just back from Iraq, were among those deployed from foreign assignments specifically to bring order. ‘I have one message for these hoodlums,’ said Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco of Louisiana. ‘These troops know how to shoot and kill, and they are more than willing to do so if necessary.’” [[New York Times](#), 9/3/05]

BUSH BLINDSIDES BLANCO WHEN HE FINALLY SHOWS UP

Bush Blindsides Blanco With Attempt To Take Control. “Behind the scenes, a power struggle emerged, as federal officials tried to wrest authority from Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco. Shortly before midnight Friday, the Bush administration sent her a proposed legal memorandum asking her to request a federal takeover of the evacuation of New Orleans, a source within the state's emergency operations center said Saturday... Louisiana officials rejected the request after talks throughout the night, concerned that such a move would be comparable to a federal declaration of martial law. Some officials in the state suspected a political motive behind the request. “Quite frankly, if they'd been able to pull off taking it away from the locals, they then could have blamed everything on the locals,” said the source, who does not have the authority to speak publicly. [[Washington Post](#), 9/4/05]

- **Bush Wanted Her To Sign Immediately.** “Friday night, the White House moved to take charge of all the troops massing in Louisiana. At home, Blanco received a memorandum of understanding from the White House asking her to cede control over the National Guard. According to her staff, Blanco was asked to sign and return the document right away. Blanco consulted with her legal counsel, Terry Ryder, and then refused the request.” [[Newhouse News Service](#), 9/5/05]
- **Blanco Said Later If She Had Ceded Control To Bush The Guard Would Have Lost Law Enforcement Authority.** “‘The first five days of the recovery were heroic. We were the people who took control. The National Guard took control of the city, brought order out of chaos, because we have law enforcement authority. The federal troops do not. I was very concerned about giving up law enforcement authority.’ Blanco later added, ‘I asked for everything that we had available from the federal government. I got it from the National Guard. I got as much as possible. And the federal effort was just a little slow in coming. I can’t understand why.’” [[White House Bulletin](#), 9/6/05]

FEMA Director Brown Admits To CNN He Didn’t Know About The Problems at the Convention Center Until Thursday. Brown told CNN “I think it was yesterday (Thursday) morning when we first found out about it. We were just as surprised as everyone else and we didn’t know that the city had used that as a staging area...” [[CNN](#), 9/2/05]

- **But Bush Praises Him: “Brownie You’re Doing A Heck Of A Job.”** “Even though Bush has called the federal response to the disaster ‘not acceptable,’ he praised Brown Friday during a tour of Alabama, saying, ‘Brownie, you’re doing a heck of a job,’ the AP reported.” [[Chicago Tribune](#), 9/4/05]

National Guard And Supplies Finally Showing Up As Bush Shows Up To Tour. “Military vehicles bearing food and supplies sloshed into the drenched heart of this humbled and stricken city on Friday, while commercial airplanes and cargo planes arrived to lift beleaguered hurricane survivors from the depths of a ghastly horror... The fresh wave of relief efforts came on a day when President Bush toured the ravaged region by helicopter and walked through the residue of Biloxi, Miss., before ending up in New Orleans... By Friday, about 19,500 National Guard troops had arrived in Louisiana and Mississippi, and 6,500 in New Orleans itself, mostly military police officers, though Mr. Nagin maintained that was still not enough.” [[New York Times](#), 9/3/05]

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD

BLANCO PULLS IN EXPERIENCED LEADER TO HELP WITH EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Blanco Brings In Experienced Emergency Management Official To Advise On Relief Effort. Blanco created a philanthropic fund for the state's victims and hired James Lee Witt, Federal Emergency Management Agency director in the Clinton administration, to advise her on the relief effort. [[Washington Post](#), 9/4/05]

CHERTOFF POINTS FINGERS AND EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR BROWN

Chertoff Says State Responsible For National Guard Response And Says He Has Full Confidence In Brown. Chertoff told CNN that “[t]he traditional model for recovery and -- response and recovery involves having the federal government come into support the first responders, who are the first on the ground... our constitutional system really places the primary authority in each state with the governor.” Chertoff also said he has “full confidence” in FEMA Director Michael D. Brown, the DHS undersecretary and federal officer in charge of the Katrina response. [CNN, 9/3/05; [Washington Post](#), 9/4/05]

AMERICA LEARNS WHAT THE WHITE HOUSE KNEW: BROWN'S FIELD OF EXPERTISE IS HORSE SHOWS

FEMA Director Michael Brown Had No Experience With Disaster Management; Fired From Last Job Overseeing Horse Shows. “The Federal official in charge of the bungled New Orleans rescue was fired from his last private-sector job overseeing horse shows, and before joining the Federal Emergency Management Agency as a deputy director in 2001, GOP activist Mike Brown had no significant experience that would have qualified him for the position. The Oklahoman got the job through an old college friend who at the time was heading up FEMA.” [Boston Herald, 9/3/05]

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4TH

BLANCO DISAPPOINTED MORE EQUIPMENT NOT SENT FROM ADMINISTRATION

Gov. Blanco Declares State of Public Health Emergency. [[Brookings Institute](#), www.brookings.edu]

Blanco Visits Displaced Victims In Baton Rouge. “The Rev. Gerard Young embraced Gov. Kathleen Blanco as she entered St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge Sunday, the first day for formal Sunday services since Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast. ‘You have been so relentless,’ Young told her. ‘We are grateful.’ As Gov. Blanco walked up the front steps of the cathedral, she said, ‘We’re still rescuing people, hoping the water goes down.’” [[Associated Press State & Local Wire](#), 9/4/05]

Blanco Praised General Honore But Was Disappointed He Didn't Have More Resources In Tow. “Blanco said that when the plain-spoken, cigar-chomping Honore showed up in New Orleans late last week, she thought that her worries about a lack of federal troops and resources were over. Honore quickly became a media darling and the take-charge face of the federal government in New Orleans, barking out orders to surprised National Guards members who aren't even under his control. Blanco said she liked Honore's style, but was surprised that he arrived with only a few aides in tow. ‘He didn't bring any resources,’ Blanco said. ‘I just kind of expected, based on my conversations with the White House, that we could be getting a surge of equipment and we did not.’” [[Newhouse News Service](#),

BUSH ADMINISTRATION BLAMES LOCAL OFFICIALS

Brown Blames Nagin. “In a Washington briefing, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said one reason federal assets were not used more quickly was ‘because our constitutional system really places the primary authority in each state with the governor.’ And FEMA's Brown, a frequent target of New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin's wrath, said Saturday that ‘the mayor can order an evacuation and try to evacuate the city, but if the mayor does not have the resources to get the poor, elderly, the disabled, those who cannot, out, or if he does not even have police capacity to enforce the mandatory evacuation, to make people leave, then you end up with the kind of situation we have right now in New Orleans.’” [[Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), 9/4/05]

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5TH

BLANCO NOT TOLD OF BUSH'S VISIT

Bush Did Not Tell Blanco Of His Visit On Monday. “President Bush traveled South on Monday to promise “a huge effort” for Hurricane Katrina victims in a visit somewhat sullied by thinly-disguised friction with Louisiana's governor over the pace of relief...Blanco was not informed of the timing of Bush's visit, nor was she immediately invited to meet him or travel with him. Blanco's office didn't know Bush was coming until told by reporters.” [[Associated Press](#), 9/5/05]

BUSH'S BLAME GAME KICKS INTO FULL GEAR

Rove Is Directing White House Smear Campaign, Blaming Local And State Officials. “[T]he White House rolled out a plan this weekend to contain the political damage from the administration's response to Hurricane Katrina. The effort is being directed by Mr. Bush's chief political adviser, Karl Rove... In a reflection of what has long been a hallmark of Mr. Rove's tough political style, the Administration is also working to shift the blame away from the White House and toward officials of New Orleans and Louisiana who, as it happens, are Democrats.” [[New York Times](#), 9/5/05]

White House Officials Question State and Local Efforts. “In public statements and even more bluntly behind the scenes, Bush administration officials have questioned local efforts to rescue thousands of people who were stranded for days without food, water and shelter, resulting in death of an unknown number of Americans... As president, Bush typically has been loath to admit mistakes, and this situation is no different.” [[Washington Post](#), 9/5/05]

Tom DeLay Does His Part to Help Pass The Blame. “[DeLay said]... ‘It's the local officials trying to handle the problem. When they can't handle the problem, they go to the state, and the state does what they can to, and if they need assistance from FEMA and the federal government they ask for it and it's delivered.’ He added that Alabama and Mississippi did a much better job of responding quickly than Louisiana. Alabama and Mississippi have Republican governors.” [CNN, 9/6/05]