

Monday, September 19, 2005

The loonies on BOTH sides (left and right) re: Katrina

Ok, this is getting out of hand.

First, let's dispense with the right, because its easier. There is a rumor flying around that the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit that was aimed directly at stopping levee enhancement in New Orleans.

That's not quite the truth, but its close enough that people can latch on to it (including Limbaugh) and run with it.

What's amusing about this little gaffe is that while there WAS a lawsuit, it was over levee improvements NORTH of the city. In other words, it was intended to stop flooding originating from the Mississippi River - not the gulf.

What sparked this little ditty was Al Gore ranting and raving to the Sierra Club in a speech about George Bush being to blame for Katrina. *But of course he was - don't you know that he's the devil incarnate and can create weather?*

Now that would be insane all on its own, but it gets better.

Apparently Louis Farrakhan has been saying that *the levees were blown up. Intentionally. Targeted at black people, of course.*

So we have the conspiracy nuts on both sides, and they're out in force.

But this isn't all.

There are some real facts emerging on the pre-hurricane actions of various political organs, and they're not pretty. For instance, it appears that \$60 million bucks went "missing" that was allocated by FEMA to New Orleans for levee construction. At least some part of it was spent instead of studying a rebuild/reconstruction of the Lake Ponchartrain bridge - for the purpose of boosting tourism.

TOURISM?!

Yep.

It gets better.

Nine months before Hurricane Katrina hit, members of the Louisiana Homeland Security office were indicted for obstructing an investigation on.... you guessed it.... diversion of federal flood-control funds.

In a November 2004 press release, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Louisiana announced:

"A federal grand jury has returned two separate indictments charging three members of the State Military Department with offenses related to the obstruction of an audit of the use of federal funds for flood mitigation activities throughout Louisiana. "The two emergency management officials were senior employees of the Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. Both were charged with conspiracy to obstruct a federal audit."

No, that's not a joke (Cite: <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/law/news/wdl20041129.html>)

Why did New Orleans flood? Was it entirely the result of this sort of thing? Almost certainly not - but to argue that this was not a contributing factor would be pure fallacy.

To expect the federal government to continue to give money to a state agency when it is proven to spend it in places where it was not originally authorized is like giving crack to an addict but expecting him not to smoke it.

Sadly, the entire city paid for this - and related - bits of malfeasance.

Posted by Karl Denninger at 22:30