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The Evolution of Emergency Management in America: From a Painful Past to a Promising but Uncertain Future

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I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter traces the evolutionary maturation of emergency management in America. It has been a slow and torturous process of ''coming of age,'' made all the more difficult by the unique peculiarities of America's democratized, constitutional, and federal republic and made more urgent by the implacable extension of our ''built environment'' into harm's way. The chapter also shows that what is evolving in emergency management, more often than not unconsciously, is a ''network entity,'' similar in some respects to ''network organizations'' that have developed in the private sector but different in other respects. It has the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at its center but is a complex network with a distinctive political economy and a ''network management process,'' if we understand that ''management'' in this sense is something quite different from the command-and-control characteristics usually connoted by the word. The chapter concludes with some questions concerning the future of emergency management, FEMA, and the network of which FEMA is the center.

II. THE TORTURED EVOLUTION

Extensive loss of lives and suffering, destruction of property, and disruption of essential services resulting from forces of nature, actions of enemies, and civil disorders have been fundamental aspects of human existence throughout recorded history. Societies have always sought to mobilize collective action to react to them and to cope with them, but until relatively recently in human history the ability to cope and expectations as to what could be done were miniscule. Things changed, however, as the ''developed'' societies entered the modern era. An Austrian official responsible for emergency management notes that ''. . . catastrophes . . . were always regarded as punishment inflicted by God, but hand in hand with scientific progress the principles of cause and effect were gradually

understood, and it was also realized that measures had to be undertaken to prevent and remedy disasters of all kinds'' (Fustenhofer 1993).

Indeed, in the waning years of the twentieth century, which is perhaps the apogee of modernism or perhaps just past it, there has been a quantum leap in people's expectations as to what their governments can do about such things. Not only do they expect a response but they expect far more in the way of a response. Not only do they expect a response after the fact and help in coping, but they expect warnings and prevention. In fact, their expectations of response grow ever closer to that of ''being made whole again'' and to assurances that causes will be found and ''corrected.'' Nor have government officials done much to abate this trend in expectations. Indeed, it is fair to say they have contributed to it. An American scholar's observation of several years ago now seems a vast understatement: ''The fatalistic assumption that natural disasters will happen and all we can do is cope is slowly being altered, leading to increased reliance on government action.'' (Cigler 1991:313).

As the nation's population has steadily grown, so has our typically modernist assumption that humans can control nature and the uniquely American optimism concerning our ability to control social forces. There has also been a steady shift in attention and expectations to the national level of government, despite growing rhetoric and symbol manipulation asserting that the contrary is, or should be, taking place, and this paradox is reflected within emergency management and FEMA itself. There has also been a great deal of burden shifting from state to state behind a fog of rhetoric asserting that the national government should not intervene by leveraging states to take preventive measures; simultaneously, there has been a parallel stream of rhetoric calling for more effective disaster response from the national government. To these trends, constants, and contradictions bearing on emergency management and our built environment, one must add the American faith, which has only begun to show the faintest signs of wavering, that our space is limitless.

If one stirs these ingredients vigorously, the result is a pregnant mixture of heedlessness, risk, vulnerability, and contradictory expectations of government help whenever the forces of nature and our built environment collide. We seem oblivious to the fact that this government, of which we now have such extensive if paradoxical expectations, is the same government in which we profess little confidence and indeed which we increasingly scorn and revile. A 1996 political cartoon captured some of this ironic mixture. It showed a couple struggling to stay afloat above their flooded home (no doubt built in a flood plain and uninsured). A sign has floated up from where they had previously proudly displayed it in their yard. It demands ''Get government off our backs!'' As a boat manned by a FEMA official speeds to the rescue, the homeowner, oblivious to the contradiction, exults—''Thank God, a government bureaucrat!''

This ironic mixture has led us to extend our built environment—freeways, housing tracts, and skyscrapers—into places that can only result in disasters: on seismic fault lines, in flood plains, on seaside and lakeside cliffs; within the 25-, 50-, 75-, or 100-year tide or flood marks; into the potential path of rock, mud, or snow slides; at the feet of active volcanoes; in areas where the wet season's lush vegetation turns to explosive tinder in the dry season; into ''tornado alleys'' and the traditional paths of hurricanes. The list of the ways we have put our lives and property at risk is endless and growing exponentially.

And there is more. Although the once looming specter of a thermonuclear holocaust has receded, we must now contend with domestic and international terrorism, which can

strike at any time and place and without warning turn skyscrapers, huge office complexes, shopping malls, sports stadiums, and subways into disaster sites in an instant. Additionally, there is the specter of emergencies arising from ''normal accidents,'' which inevitably result from the breakdown of the interconnected and tightly coupled systems of incredible complexity constituting the infrastructure of our ''built environments''—power outages, chemical spills, air traffic failures and delays, Y2K impacts (Perrow 1984). Finally, there are emergencies in the form of civil disorders—phenomena we prefer to think do not occur in a democratic society but which have always been a part of our existence and which we have no reason to believe will not be a part of our future (NAPA 1993:10).[1]

All of these can lead to only one conclusion: as we continue to extend our built environment into the path of powerful forces of nature, we will face an increasing number of events that we call emergencies, crises, disasters, or catastrophes. And as that number increases, so does our expectation that our government, at all levels but certainly at the national level, should and must ''do something'' about them—rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding.

Despite the historic persistence and future inevitability of disasters and emergencies, and the perhaps overly optimistic belief that something can and should be done about them, Americans, as our contradictory rhetoric demonstrates, have never settled the question concerning the role of the federal government in dealing with such incidents. Instead, the question is being answered by inexorable though largely unconscious evolution in response to a number of forces and under the press of events. Although the federal government has long played a role in these matters, it is the specific form of the federal involvement that has been and to some degree remains at issue.

Nor have we completely settled how emergency management should be organized. Particularly at the national level but at other levels as well, there are seemingly intractable problems of organization, administration, and coordination. How can one agency be given the power and jurisdiction necessary for effective disaster planning and coordination of response and recovery operations without giving it more power in times of both nonemergencies and emergencies than other participants in the political process are willing to grant it? What should be the role of the National Guard, the U.S. Department of Defense, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army? And what about all the other microemergency systems that exist? Petrochemical industries, the U.S. Forest Service, utility companies, nuclear power plants, the oil-shipping industry, the Department of Defense and many others have emergency systems that they have developed. Can these somehow be effectively coordinated?

III. ENDURING PROBLEMS OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Underlying the issues of defining and organizing emergency management are some problems associated with the function that are unique in their intensity and in their enduring nature. They endure because they are rooted in human nature, American attitudes toward long-range planning, the dynamics of power in the executive branch of government, and the short-term perspective of the American political process.

Generally, emergencies and disasters are easily dismissed as things that are unlikely to happen, more likely to happen to someone else, or liable to happen on ''someone else's

watch.'' As a consequence of these attitudes, there is a tendency on the part of elected officials to procrastinate or delay action that would prepare us for the next traumatic event. Senator Diane Feinstein of California offered an example of this. When she was mayor of San Francisco, she was approached by administrators responsible for Candlestick Park, who told her that inspections revealed the stadium to be dangerously vulnerable to an earthquake and that, if a quake occurred during a sports event, there would probably be a major loss of life. Repairs that could prevent this would be very expensive. Senator Feinstein candidly admitted that her first thought was, ''This isn't likely to happen while I am mayor. In fact, it may never happen. Besides, the cost will distort all the other budget priorities. Perhaps it can simply wait'' (U.S. Senate 1993). Nonetheless, she reluctantly agreed to have the repairs made. Months after the repairs had been made, an earthquake did indeed strike during a baseball game. There was considerable damage, but thanks to the recent repairs, nobody was killed or seriously injured. Nobody can say how often officials fail to take the action that then-Mayor Feinstein did, but probably more often than we like to admit.

Americans have also never seemed to value long-range planning and training, which are essential to emergency management. Although they have come to accept the necessity of these things in the military in order to protect citizens from threats from abroad, they have not yet developed an appreciation for their need in protecting citizens from hazards that can befall them ''at home.'' As a result of this underlying attitude, emergency management agencies are generally underfunded for planning, training, and exercises, even though these activities are every bit as essential for their effectiveness as they are for military organizations.

Emergency management also requires coordination of a wide range of organizations and activities, both public and private. Everyone acknowledges the critical need for such coordination in an emergency, but in fact no one wants to be ''coordinated,'' nor is it clear just what the term means in practice. Statutory authority is not easily transformed into legitimate political authority, and emergency management agencies are very seldom given anything but statutory authority to ''coordinate'' in the event of an emergency or disaster—which everyone prefers to believe is unlikely. Statutory power is a necessary but insufficient condition for real power to coordinate. Finally, emergency management has almost no natural constituency base (with the possible exception of insurance companies) until an emergency or disaster occurs. Except for those persons and agencies with responsibilities in emergency management, who are modest in number and influence, the function has no generally attentive, supportive set of constituents or clients, which is so important to the survival and effectiveness of public agencies. (NAPA 1993,17; Long 1949).

The never-ending problem facing anyone attempting to develop an emergency response is that every emergency is somewhat unique and will involve a certain degree of ad hoc organizing, mission learning, and, inevitably, mistakes. As one experienced emergency manager put it ''No matter how hard you try, sometimes you can't get a better grade than C+'' (Wamsley 1992–1993). Yet in spite of the imperfect nature of disaster planning, response will be performed in the full view of the media and ultimately the public. While emergency management seeks to develop a constituency to support their efforts, it is often caught between the imperfect nature of scientific planning, the unpredictable nature of emergencies, and the underlying expectation of citizens for unlimited security and protection.

IV. AN OVERVIEW OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT'S HISTORIC EVOLUTION

In spite of the systemic problems associated with emergency management within the United States, federal involvement in emergency management has a long history in this country. As early as 1786, the federal government, under the original Articles of Confederation, projected troops into a civil disorder brought about by Shays's Rebellion in western Massachusetts. This level of civil disorder response continued through the Whiskey Rebellion of 1792, the New York draft riots of 1863, the 1894 Pullman strike in Chicago, the ''race riots'' of the late 1960s, and even to current times with the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

Although dealing with civil disorder has always been an accepted role for the federal government, federal intervention in natural disasters has a history of nearly equal length. Starting as early as 1803 with congressional disaster relief to the city of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, federal involvement in natural disasters has slowly but steadily grown. While federal efforts in this area were modest during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, federal resources were used in response to or recovery from no less than 100 natural disasters between 1803 and 1950 (Drabek and Hoetmer 1991). During the twentieth century, the federal involvement initially took the form of little more than the congressional chartering of the Red Cross in 1905, federal troops to help maintain order in the wake of the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, and the granting of authority to the Army Corps of Engineers over flood control in the Mississippi Valley after the horrific 1927 flood.

Starting in 1916, civil defense began to emerge as part of emergency management, and a succession of new laws and organizations appeared during World War II. Finally, the specter of atomic warfare led America's political leaders to pass into law the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950. It gave the federal government the authority to initiate planning and provide state and local governments with ''guidance, coordination, assistance, training and matching grants for the procurement of supplies and equipment.'' This was undeniably a major impetus to the evolution of emergency management. During the Eisenhower Administration, no less than three major reports (Gaither, Rockefeller, and Rand) called for civilian shelter programs as part of the nation's overall defense strategy. Emergency management would eventually take on the role not only of helping civilians survive an attack but also of assuring that a functioning government and its officials would survive as well. The pattern of the federal government stimulating and funding state and local efforts was a major evolutionary step. The best way to organize federal efforts remained an open question, however, and a bewildering array of organizations followed one another during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s.

In spite of the expansion of federal involvement in emergency management and the subsequent professionalization of the field, federal emergency management response programs were constantly under political attack for being both inadequate and fragmented in their responses. Eventually, during the 1970s, this political dissatisfaction led to the creation of the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) under President Carter's Administration. While FEMA was originally viewed as ''one agency/one official/one point of contact'' for dealing with emergency management, the great expectations for the agency were quickly dashed as the systemic problems of coordination and a variety of dysfunctions associated with partisan and institutional politics plagued the agency's

operations. During the 1980s, the agency's credibility steadily declined, and both congressional and executive support for emergency management reached a nadir by the early 1990s.

The agency's state of decline and lack of credibility eventually reached a crisis point during Hurricane Andrew in 1992. The decision by the Bush Administration to turn to the secretary of transportation as a special presidential representative to head up relief efforts and to massively involve the armed forces only emphasized the total lack of confidence in FEMA's capabilities.

In the wake of disaster, there were calls from Congress to either abolish the agency, to turn the emergency management over to the military, or to disperse elements of the program to other organizations within both the federal and state levels of government (Wamsley and Schroeder 1996:235–244). The congressional call for change marked a critical juncture for FEMA and saw the agency, under a new president and a new agency head, begin to move toward a more effective response position. Today FEMA, and emergency management in the United States, has begun to take on a new direction and development, one that seeks to achieve, finally, that level of comprehensive response that the United States has been searching for since its very beginning as a nation.

There have been many changes in FEMA and its operations, but probably the most significant development has been the recognition, by the administration of FEMA, that while it may have a statutory charge to ''coordinate'' disaster efforts, it lacks the necessary legitimacy and power to exercise that authority to ''control'' disaster response efforts. There seems to be a growing awareness that in order to accomplish the goal of coordination, FEMA must rely upon the voluntary cooperation and assistance of a wide range of other government agencies spanning both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of our complex federal system. In order to accomplish this goal of coordination, the ''new'' FEMA, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously, has begun to reposition itself within a new organizational format and structure that, in many ways, resembles types of network organizations found in the private sector. The dawning realization within FEMA that a new approach was needed was convergent with, if not always the result of, several other contextual changes.

V. THE NATIONALIZATION OF DISASTERS

While natural disasters have occurred regularly over the course of American history, the use of a presidential declaration of a disaster had limited application until the 1980s. While disasters such as the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 and civil disorders occasionally called for federal involvement, many other natural disasters of equal impact were handled on the local or state level, with little or no federal assistance offered to help cope with the trauma following such events. For instance, in 1927, the flooding of the lower Mississippi River threatened the safety of everyone living in the Mississippi Delta area. Rather than calling for federal assistance, the banking community of New Orleans took matters into their own hands and dynamited the levies below New Orleans in order to divert water away from the city and into the lower Mississippi Delta region. The subsequent flooding of the delta, caused by the dynamiting of the levies, left over 100,000 persons homeless. The response by President Coolidge and his disaster manager, future President Herbert Hoover, was to merely offer the flood victims moral platitudes but leave the Red Cross and the State of Louisiana to help the survivors (Barry 1997).

Generally, the involvement of the federal government in disasters was limited, but starting in the 1980s, disasters began to be increasingly defined as matters of national concern. By 1993 over 70 requests for presidential disaster declarations were being received each year, and the number continues to increase annually. People engaged in emergency management widely believe that this trend is not necessarily due to an increase in nature's wrath, although El Niño and La Niña effects do seem to be increasing as global warming also increases. Rather, there is a growing consensus that this increase in defining natural disasters as ''national'' and calling for a national response is due to advent of ''live,'' ''action,'' and ''on the scene'' coverage by national media; a related need for presidents to appear to be ''strong'' leaders that take action in response to the needs of citizens; and heightened politicization (not necessarily partisan) of the disaster declaration and response process in general. One FEMA official emphasized the point to which things had gone by wryly remarking that ''. . . in Texas they want a declaration every time a cow pisses on a flat rock.'' While the decision by the federal government to increase its role in disasters probably has fueled the politicization of the process, neither one of these two factors, presidential needs, or climate changes, would, by themselves, have led to this level of escalation if it had not also been for the increase in immediacy directly attributable to the expansive nature of media coverage. Disasters are, in fact, ''newsworthy'' and as such help to sell newspapers, radio and television access, and even web pages.

A. The Camcorder Policy Process and the Nationalization of Disasters

Prior to the advent of television, news was conveyed to the general population through a mix of written media, still photographs, radio coverage, and short newsreel clips shown in movie theaters. While written coverage and radio broadcasts could inform citizens in a timely fashion, there still remained a time lag between the event's occurrence and the actual information reaching the public. This time lag factor began to change with the advent of television. At first television coverage was also limited due to the lack of technological ability to broadcast directly from the field. Starting in the late 1960s, though, this technological handicap began to dissolve as satellite linkages, coupled to portable broadcast units, began to be adopted by all the major television networks. Today the broadcast industry has the ability to cover events from the field in a real-time environment; it is not only able to report on the event as it is unfolding but also to place its coverage in the middle of the event as it is actually occurring.

The time lag factor that historically limited news coverage has now disappeared, and in its place we often find ourselves viewing events as they actually occur. Consider CNN's coverage of the Gulf War from Baghdad, as we watched the U.S. Tomahawk missiles bombard the Iraqis' military complexes, or nightly news broadcasts from the major networks as Belgrade's center was hit with multiple air raids. This immediate media coverage has become a factor in the policy arena as it affects natural disasters. Within a matter of hours from the time that a natural disaster strikes an area and in some cases even before the disaster touches ground, our national networks are on the ground, directly broadcasting details of the destruction that is either anticipated or has occurred. Often the media arrive even before the designated disaster response units are fully mobilized.

Further compounding the pressure on disaster response efforts is the fact that as they work to assess the damage and determine what resources should come into play, they

do so under the watchful eye of the media. In many ways a stopwatch is ticking as the public, through the eye of the media, watches the developing response and assesses the speed with which the agencies deliver aid and support to the affected area. The media themselves also add to the problems of disaster response. The unrelenting competition for viewers and ''market share'' fuels efforts to find and on occasion even create ''stories'' that will captivate and titillate the average viewer and affect viewers' preferences for one network over another.

The insatiable demand for audiences drives the media toward exaggeration and fuels the pressure for live national coverage. Disasters that in the past would have been viewed as local in nature are suddenly projected as either regional or national disasters. Take, for example, the media coverage concerning tornadoes over the past several years. Although tornadoes are common local events occurring each spring in many portions of our country, during recent years the national media projected the development of tornado damage as great national events. Instead of scattered tornado strikes in South Dakota, Mississippi, Georgia, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and New York that were doubtless disasters but just as assuredly local events, they were suddenly portrayed by the national media as national disasters—an assault by nature threatening the entire country due to possible climatic changes.

As the cameras roll and the public watches the events unfold, a ''milling process'' occurs in which public perceptions are developed concerning the effectiveness of government's response to the problem (Schneider 1992). The normal process of funneling aid and resources into the area are often seen as too slow or ''bureaucratic,'' especially as the media personalize the event by presenting interview after interview of individual victims and families bemoaning their lack of physical support within an atmosphere of personal and community shock. As the perception of the lack of effective response develops through the media, elected officials feel compelled to step forward and assume the ''strong person'' role, seeking to gain the political mantle of ''leadership'' that can ''jump start'' the presumably ineffective government bureaucracy. As the disaster reaches a ''national'' level through the media coverage, the level of political actors engaged in the ''strong person'' process escalates, until finally it reaches the highest elected offices of the land. All the while this escalating milling process occurs, the agencies designated to deal with the disaster are publicly undermined and yet are left to deal with the problem after the politicians and the media have left to pursue more lucrative ratings (NAPA 1993:18).

The end result of camcorder policy development is that the emergency management agencies, at all levels of government, are vulnerable to being stigmatized as ineffective and inept in the public eye. Still, the siren's call of media coverage is a tantalizing lure for any elected official, especially if one can project an image to a national audience. This national audience potential fuels efforts to have the disaster escalated to a national level, and the device chosen for such escalation is a presidential declaration, which is often followed by a presidential or vice presidential ''inspection tour'' of the stricken area. In our new media age, the national executive is often more than happy to oblige local and state officials.

B. The ''Photo-op'' Presidency and Nationalization of Disasters

Disasters are traumatic and leave people in need of psychological reassurance and support. These needs may be as great as or greater than their physical and material needs. It is

thus to be expected that people will look to and expect a strong leader—someone who symbolizes strength and potential succor. Executive figures at all levels—mayors, governors, and especially presidents—are natural focal points for such postdisaster psychological needs. Probably incumbents of the office of president have most avidly sought to meet this need and thus assume the mantle of the strong leader. The nationalization of disasters is inextricably linked with the expansion of the president's role as a symbolic leader and the related phenomenon of the ''photo-op presidency.''

The reasons for this are historic and complex but lie within a number of factors unique to the office of the president (Lane and Wamsley 1998). The first is that the offices of the president and vice-president of the United States are the only two elected offices in the United States that are voted on by the national voting public. Thus the office of the president theoretically stands at the pinnacle of all elected offices in terms of citizens' choices for elected officials. No other elected office can thus make as powerful a legitimacy claim, despite the fact that anyone who thinks about it for a moment realizes that by no means ''all'' citizens or even all voting citizens preferred a given electee. Presidents can claim, even if they receive less than a majority of all the votes of potential voters, that they represent the ''voting'' majority's preferences and wishes. Thus they have a decided edge when they make the claim that all elected officials make implicitly and explicitly—to speak for ''the American people.'' Of course, the congressional leadership can claim that ''collectively'' they also represent the voting majority's preferences, but no individual congressperson or senator can claim to represent the majority of the voting public. Thus, historically, every president has claimed to be *the* national leader and that their agenda should be the national agenda.

The second factor involved in the strong leader complex is the fact that every president has tried to make Presidency the equivalent of a chief executive officer analogous to a corporate CEO. Unfortunately, both scholars and practitioners of public administration have enthusiastically endorsed this change (Lane and Wamsley 1998) The authors of the Constitution clearly did not have such a notion in mind, for they intentionally created a system of fragmented authority: horizontally powers were not simply divided but made shared and overlapping between branches; vertically they were made shared and overlapping between levels. In essence our system creates an ongoing struggle between all branches and levels of government over authority and rights of office.

A close reading of the Constitution makes it abundantly clear that the authors thought of the legislative branch, not the executive, as the ''first among equals.'' Unfortunately, both scholars and practicing public administrators have also endorsed this change enthusiastically. (Lane and Wamsley 1998). But of the three branches (at all levels), the executive has always had the greatest prospect for expanding its role and increasing its power. Alexander Hamilton, the indefatigable proponent of ''energy in the executive,'' recognized that the potential for this expansion was inherent in the potential unity of the position and in the nature of administration which involves the crucial capacity to act (Green 1987). Presidents, governors, and mayors (in the strong mayor form of government) have historically seized upon oversight of administrative structures to expand their role and powers. This has held true despite the fact that shared powers enables legislative bodies to exercise joint oversight of the agencies through confirmation of many appointments, oversight of administration inherent in legislating, and through budgetary oversight and power to appropriate (Lane and Wamsley 1998). This pattern of expanding executive power has held true at all levels of government, but we need only focus on the national level for purposes of this chapter.

While political pundits may decry the usurpation of Constitutional authority by ambitious presidents, the media will seize every opportunity to create the presidential sound bite so essential to television's theatrical staging and to sustaining or increasing viewer ratings. For their part, presidents also recognize the significance for their power of the theater and drama provided by television news and take every opportunity to create the ''photo opportunities'' needed to project the image of a strong, forceful, and dynamic leader. Few events offer such potential for dramatic staging as a natural disaster, where the ''chief executive officer'' can stand in the midst of rubble, offering assistance and compassion to the citizen victims on behalf of all the citizens of the nation. The heroic leader, clad in the symbolic khakis of military command, can be instantaneously dropped into the scene of disaster by helicopter, with a bevy of media representatives broadcasting every dramatic minute as he at least appears to ''take charge.'' Lost, though, in the political theater starring the president as disaster hero, are all of the essential administrative and policy decisions that must both precede and follow that moment. Invisible as well are policies and programs that could be developed to deal with emergency management on a longer-term basis, especially such things as taking preventive action that avoids or mitigates disasters.

C. Presidential Disaster Declarations, Free Riders, and Nationalization

The problem with being a ''hero,'' of course, is that you have to do something heroic. When President Coolidge's personal representative, future President Hoover, stood in the mud of the flooded Mississippi Delta in 1927, had his picture taken with the devastated Cajun locals, and then boarded his train back to Washington, neither Coolidge nor Hoover were seen as heroes. In fact, Huey Long was able to use the lack of presidential leadership during the flooding to mount a political assault on Louisiana's state government, eventually seizing the mantle of hero for himself and creating a political dynasty (Barry 1997). But presidential resources for heroism have grown considerably since the time of Coolidge, and today presidents have the tools needed to do heroic deeds in the form of presidential declarations of disasters and release of emergency funds. These can be dramatic and politically profitable if handled effectively.

Depending on the terms of the declarations made under the Stafford Act, presidents can make available between 75 and 100% funding for repairs to private homes, reimbursement for the deductible part of homeowners insurance, between 75 and 100% of the cost of repairing public buildings and infrastructure, and 75 to 100% of the cost of debris removal. It also makes available low-interest loans to small businesses. Raising the limit on federal funds made available beyond 75% (normally matched with a 25% levy from the state government) is possible if a state's average per person expenditure on mitigation has exceeded $64. The reason for the federal matching requirement, of course, was to encourage state and local governments to develop mitigation and disaster response plans prior to an actual disaster occurring. The basic idea behind the match was that with proper planning and zoning and building code requirements at the local and state levels, the impact of natural disasters could be lessened and the cost to both federal and state governments decreased. Unfortunately this logic is undercut by another clause within the Stafford Act, which allows not only a presidential waiver for the state match requirement and an increase in the percentage of federal aid but also a reduction of the average expenditure per person on mitigation required of a state in order to receive the federal funds.

Thus the president can, at his own discretion, nullify all the previous match and expenditure requirements that were established to encourage local and state mitigation and response plans (NAPA 1993). And state leaders, knowing this, have pressed as hard as possible for all they can get. With the cameras rolling, the disaster victims standing in shock, and all of the local and state officials surrounding the president in the role of strong leader, the temptation is often too great for the president to resist opening up the federal largesse. While this plays well on the evening news and CNN and potentially boosts a president's poll ratings, it also undercuts the incentive for mitigation measures by state and local communities before a disaster strikes by raising the possibility that an area will be able to receive aid regardless of its slighting of mitigation and response efforts. In effect, when a disaster does strike, it sets in motion is something like a game of Monopoly, in which everyone except the American taxpayer has the potential to acquire a ''forgiveness of sins'' card. While some states take the mitigation and planning process seriously, others bet on the likelihood that if something happens, the federal government will cover the costs. Thus states such as California will make a serious attempt to develop and maintain an effective emergency management system while other states will not only underfund emergency management, but will use their representatives in Congress to attack FEMA for not giving them 100% of the recovery costs when a disaster strikes. Since the funds are federal and raised from across the width and breadth of the country, the states that experience relatively fewer or less frequent disasters or put greater effort into mitigation and response end up covering a large portion of the costs of states that experience more frequent disasters or put less effort into mitigation and response. This means that they are effectively and unfairly shifting the fiscal burden away from the citizens of some states to those of another. In essence, some become ''free riders.''

The inevitable end result of the conjunction between the process of presidential aggrandizement, the evolutionary changes in news media, and the ''free rider'' mentality of some states is that state and local variances allow the building of high-rise hotels and casinos into sand dunes along hurricane coasts, river cities refuse to construct flood walls, nuclear power plants are built on earthquake faults, and farmers till flood plains—and, of course, the American taxpayer foots the bill. In the end, all the political actors—presidents, governors, and mayors—come out looking like heroes and strong leaders while the media help to perpetuate the fiscal shell game. But presidents benefit the most, and since the presidency is a national office and the national fiscal resources are the greatest, the overall result is the nationalization of disasters on both political and fiscal terms.

Eventually, though, the media do leave, and presidents, along with other elected officials, look for new opportunities to be seen as leaders. FEMA, along with the other government agencies at all levels charged with dealing with the disaster, are left to struggle with the disaster's aftermath, which often lingers for years. FEMA needs the support of the president for the ''longer haul,'' but often his or her agenda is full of other more pressing problems. This lack of sustained presidential attention has so far been dealt with through the placement of persons who it was assumed could be political ''sentinels''; persons whose major qualification has been that of political and personal loyalty rather than knowledge of either the politics of Washington or emergency management. While plausible enough in theory, the placement of presidential sentinels within FEMA has created historical problems that, ultimately, work to undermine not only the agency's effectiveness and legitimacy but also presidential authority.

VI. FEMA'S NEED FOR ''MUSCLE,'' THE PRESIDENT'S NEED FOR ''SENTINELS''

FEMA, in relation to the entire federal government, is not a large agency. Fewer than 3000 employees seek to cover the entire spectrum of disaster problems across the United States. In addition to disaster problems, FEMA is also charged with being the lead agency for civil defense response. Yet FEMA's primary mission is to coordinate the response of all federal agencies to emergencies and disasters. In essence, this very small federal agency is charged to direct and coordinate the response efforts of the largest and most powerful cabinet departments within the federal government. In terms of its size and presidential support for most of its history, one can only view FEMA's relationship to the other agencies of the federal government as the equivalent of a chicken trying to dance with elephants. Obviously, an agency this small desperately needs a powerful advocate or ''muscle'' to back up its efforts to coordinate much more powerful agencies, and it needs it on a sustained basis through the day-to-day skirmishes of bureaucratic trench warfare as well as the dramatic moments of coordinating disaster response. The natural source, indeed the only possible source, of such support is, of course, the president.

Yet historically presidents have paid little attention to FEMA's role of coordinating federal efforts in natural disasters. The reasons for presidential neglect can be summed up in three factors. First, natural disaster response was never seen as a primary federal responsibility until the communications media changed public perception. Indeed, FEMA was always careful to describe itself as the ''responder of last resort'' after local and state authorities were overwhelmed and requested federal assistance. Second, natural disasters are episodic, the chance for presidential heroism brief and fleeting, and once a disaster is over, other more pressing political issues rise in the priorities of presidential attention. Unfortunately, the short time horizon of the partisan political world gives presidents, and for that matter governors, mayors and city managers, little reason to be interested in FEMA until a disaster has occurred. Third, FEMA's responsibility for natural disaster response was, until relatively recently, seen as marginal next to its responsibilities for dealing with population protection and government continuity in the event of a nuclear Armageddon.

Thus, from its very creation in 1978, FEMA and natural disasters were placed on a low-priority level within the White House and the larger executive office of the president. Still, a president does not like to look less than a strong leader when a natural disaster occurs and is also not willing to give up supposed presidential control over any aspect of the federal administrative structure. Thus, presidential political appointments of sentinels were used to achieve at least the reassuring semblance of control over the agency and at least the illusion that an effective response would be forthcoming when needed. Unfortunately, the results has been more illusory than real, in part because presidents were not willing to fight for adequate budgets and to intervene to back up the agency in its daily struggle to coordinate disinterested agencies that did not want to be coordinated in either planning or response. Perhaps equally important was the failure of some presidents to appoint persons in whom they had great trust or more often their failure to recruit persons whom they trusted *and* who had significant knowledge concerning emergency management.

A. To Politicize is Not to Control, or Why Sentinels Haven't Worked

Both Democratic and Republican administrations have used presidential political appointees as a means of downward penetration and presumed ''control'' of the federal

administrative structure and extending presidential control. Congress, for its own reasons, has allowed the process to continue, and even to be expanded (Light 1995). It is easy to forget—indeed, the White House Personnel Office and the president's staff often seem to forget—that the more important presidential appointments require Senate confirmation and that this has serious consequences for control. This makes the appointment of loyal and competent sentinels to the top position to look after the emergency management function problematic; even more important, it makes it nearly impossible for the person at the top of the agency to manage it in an integrated and effective manner. For ''presidential appointees'' are not actually the president's alone. They are in fact a product of a joint process and as such have long been used as weapons in partisan conflict and in the struggle between the executive and legislative branches of the federal government. The Senate has used the confirmation process to influence the type of person selected to oversee various programs and to strike its own political bargains with the soon-to-be incumbent program head. The House, for its part, has used partisan political linkages with appointees and its key role in the budgetary process to extend its leverage and oversight of agencies and their programs (Oleszek, 1989). This is discussed further below. For now we only want to point out that this, in the past, has left both the FEMA director and the president with something considerably less than control; indeed, it often leaves them struggling for mere cooperation (Wamsley and Schroeder, 1996).

B. FEMA's Congressional Problem

If FEMA's problems with the President can be characterized as too little attention or inconsistent attention, the agency's problems with Congress might be characterized consistently as too much attention. The problem of conflict between agency efficiency, presidential control, and congressional oversight is of course ongoing for all federal programs, but in the case of FEMA the problem is extraordinary and has had profound consequences. The roots of the problem can be traced directly back to the original creation of FEMA under the Carter Administration. Prior to 1978, the program areas of the present FEMA were handled by seven separate agencies of the federal government. The dispersion of the programs across these various departments added to the problem of developing a comprehensive, coordinating function. In order to offset the problem, the Carter Administration sought to amalgamate the various programs under one roof. The underlying belief within the administration was that such an amalgamation would result in a synergistic effect. As one person who had been present at the time of the reorganization put it: ''It was assumed that all these programs were related, not at their cores, but at their margins; and that their relations at the margins could create an important synergism'' (NAPA 1993:15).

The basic idea was that lessons learned from responding to disasters would lead to improvements in both preparation and mitigation planning for future disasters. The difficulty facing the Carter Administration, however, in developing this new ''synergistic'' organization was that creation of such an agency would require the rewriting of existing separate laws into a comprehensive statute. In order to develop such a new statute, numerous congressional committees, which had oversight on the separate seven agencies, would have to be consulted and formal approval obtained. Such a prospect appeared to be daunting, considering the political factors related to each committee and the interest groups involved in each area. The specter of committee and subcommittee turf battles stretching on for years was a chilling one. To avoid this obstacle, the Carter Administration's reorganization project staff attempted to achieve their goal by the use of an ''end run'' approach around the congressional committees. Rather than seeking formal legal integration within

a new organization, the Carter Administration simply transferred the specific programs housed in each of the separate agencies into the newly created FEMA, where each would continue to operate on the basis of its existing statutory turf. As a further means of avoiding the ruffling of congressional feathers, the administration also transferred each of the program's political executive positions, along with the sitting incumbent into the new agency. The effect was a ''confederation'' or ''umbrella'' agency with all the pathologies inherent in the genre.

The final result was that FEMA came into existence fragmented, with hermetically sealed program compartments each overseen by a political appointee with his or her own links, not just to the president but also to both congressional committees and the interest groups concerned with the specific program. Even though FEMA was charged with coordinating and linking the various programs, internally each program stood alone, with only the slightest traces of commitment to any shared mission and little or no reason to engage in coordination. Thus FEMA was born with 30 political appointees, 9 of whom required Senate confirmation by six separate committees, each with its own particular program interests and influence groups. The consequence of political appointees linked to congressional committees created avenues within the agency for various interest groups to foster their own agendas. These vertical agenda avenues are referred to within the agency as ''stovepipes'' (NAPA 1993:41–43).

C. Congressional Particularism and FEMA's Fragmentation

Congress is an institution based on particularism as opposed to universalism (Heaphey and Kronenberg 1966:16). It fulfills its systemic role and does its work by breaking big, seemingly incomprehensible problems down into simple and understandable terms upon which bargaining and decision making can be based. Harold Lasswell's aphorism concerning politics in general expresses the particularistic calculus of Congress perfectly. For the members of Congress everything can ultimately be reduced to ''who gets what, when and how,'' or even more pointedly, ''what will it do for me, my district or state, or my party, when will it do it, who will it specifically benefit or hurt and how?'' (Lasswell 1936). These are particularistic questions that require particularistic answers: particular persons, particular geographic places, particular funds, particular laws and programs. After all, it was former Speaker Tip O'Neill who epitomized the outlook of particularism when he said that ''all politics are local.'' They are not, or ought not to be, of course, but Congress, particularly the House, tends to see politics that way. It is Congress's particularistic view of the world and way of doing business that more than anything else has sustained FEMA's fragmented state and troublesome stovepipes.

FEMA's programs are authorized and operated in accord with a myriad of enabling legislation, appropriation acts, executive orders, and National Security Directives (NAPA 1993:124–125). Consequently, a myriad of committees and subcommittees with very particular interests have jurisdiction over its activities. In 1992 the director stated that 16 committees and 22 subcommittees of Congress had oversight over its programs and appropriations (NAPA 1993:75). But even this figure is questionable. Committee jurisdictions shift, however slowly and slightly, and additionally, there are numerous other committees that have jurisdiction over other federal agency programs providing assistance to disaster victims (e.g., the Department of Agriculture and the Small Business Administration) (Gilmour and Halley 1994; Oleszek 1989). Although numerous authorizing committees have jurisdiction over some aspect of emergency management, there is no single committee

that has comprehensive oversight responsibility for FEMA. In fact, one FEMA document states of emergency management in general, that about ''two-thirds of the House and Senate Committees get involved'' (NAPA 1993:75). The problem assumes nightmare proportions when one considers that within these committees there are many subcommittees each of which has its own micro-piece of jurisdiction over some aspect of FEMA that is even narrower than the concerns of the full committee. The fragmentation is so pervasive that no one has an overall perspective as to where individual programs fit within the broad framework of federal emergency management.

As a result, FEMA's mission is continually altered and shaped in a piecemeal fashion by diverse events: the influence of various constituencies, partisan changes in control of the houses of Congress, changes in committee members and staffers, and differing congressional interest. Adding to the problems of congressional fragmentation is the confirmation process for political appointees referred to above. Since each of the program areas has a precedent-setting existence prior to the creation of the agency, and since all of the political appointees bring with them contacts with the various interest groups and congressional committees overseeing the operation, a self-perpetuating stasis is created that is based on previous decisions and basic shared assumptions. Thus behavioral contracts, committee demands, and expectations have already been established between congressional subcommittees and committees and the appointees as to how each of the program responsibilities should be carried out (or how their stovepipes should be maintained). Under these conditions, if the FEMA director tries to change the course of the agency, the largest obstacle will be his supposedly subordinate political appointees and their congressional and interest group allies. The appointees will do whatever they have to do in order to ensure the structural integrity of their stovepipes and their alliances outside the agency, and if the director proposes anything that sounds like it may create a ''leak'' or a ''connection'' with another stovepipe, they will be quick to let the relevant members of Congress know. Congressional committees, in turn, have the ability to make the director's life miserable. The end result of this situation has, in the past, been an agency mired in turf wars and lacking the ability to develop a unified mission and the teamwork necessary to pursue it.

D. FEMA's Problem of Living Down Its Reputation

By 1992, the watershed year for FEMA, the agency was saddled with a reputation for inefficiency, ineptness, cronyism, ''pork barrel'' politics, scandal, and corruption. A good deal of this was deserved; much was not. The worst of its reputation was acquired under one director, Louis Guiffreda in the early 1989s. Two directors, Julius Becton and Wallace Stickney, followed Giuffreda and worked to turn things around, but with little or no effect. While there were accomplishments, ultimately there was little to show for their efforts. Reputation is a precious commodity within the beltway, and once a negative one is acquired, it is difficult to erase. As one observer commented, ''Once an agency is on the ropes in this town, it is really hard to recover'' (NAPA:49).

The agency's culture was tending more toward defensiveness in terms of its actions and programs. This was understandable, for it faced increasing external criticism of both its operations and justification for continued existence. It was becoming obvious that a major change in both operations and external relations were necessary if the agency was to survive. While key groups within the agency were prepared to attempt to change the organization, it faced the daunting task of overcoming 14 years of well-deserved skepti-

cism concerning both its intentions and administrative competence. In order to understand and fully appreciate this reputational problem, one must take an even closer look at the emergence and early years of the operation of FEMA and the disastrously significant events of the 1980s.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, the nation faced a series of major natural disasters.[2] In all cases, the inadequacies of the federal government to respond to the crises became painfully evident. But the legislation passed to adjust disaster response actions, instead of improving the system, further fragmented the various programs.

During this same period of time, emergency management emerged as a professional field of both academic study and public service. This progression toward professionalization occurred at the same time that the various governors began to voice their concerns over the inability of the federal government to effectively assist state governments during these disasters. Eventually, in 1977, the National Governors' Association initiated an evaluation of emergency management and in 1978 issued a critical report calling for more professionalism and a comprehensive national emergency policy as well as the creation of a federal agency that would concentrate the functions then dispersed throughout several agencies (National Governors' Association 1978). The issuance of the governors' report also corresponded to the Carter Administration's reorganization project, which eventually led to the establishment of FEMA in early 1979 despite considerable objections from Congress (President of the United States 1978).

The Carter Administration's plan for the reorganization of emergency management envisaged direct oversight by the White House through the director of FEMA as an independent executive agency. Under the original plan, the FEMA director was to serve as the chair of a White House emergency management committee. The committee was to include the assistant to the president for national security and was to directly advise the president on ways to meet national emergencies. Unfortunately, the original plan was never established (NAPA 1993:14–17).

As indicated above, the president's reorganization project decided to avoid a fight with congressional committees by ''cobbling together'' existing programs. FEMA was formally authorized as a federal agency on April 3, 1979, with a full budgetary line allocation set for the upcoming 1979–1980 fiscal year but without the proposed ties to the presidency or any structural integration. By the time that FEMA's budget allocations were formalized, the Carter Administration found itself in a losing presidential campaign against Ronald Reagan.

The defeat of Carter by Reagan in November of 1979 placed the entire process of developing FEMA on hold as the presidential transition dominated the attention of the administrative branch. Uncertainty was ratcheted higher when the Reagan Administration delayed the selection of a new permanent director for FEMA while it considered what role FEMA should play in the newly emerging ''Reagan philosophy of government.''

President Carter had appointed John Macy, a highly respected public administrator, as his first director. Whatever progress Macy might have been able to make was nullified, however, by the looming transition and his untimely death. Nonetheless, he had initiated a professional and nonpartisan evaluation of the agency's programs by a newly organized program analysis unit. It had analyzed each of FEMA's programs and outlined the potential options for their future direction. The Reagan transition team, however, announced that the briefing books that resulted were to be ''trashed,'' and in a remarkable meeting the top career staff were told that they were to blame for the agency's problems and would all ''be gone'' in short order.

The transition team used the provisions of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978—which allowed more flexibility in assigning, reassigning, and removing civil servants—to move career staffers to dead-end and unpalatable jobs that would lead them to resign and to open up positions for political appointees or noncareer senior executive service positions—i.e., political appointees.[3]

Finally, in April 1981, a director, Louis O. Giuffrida, was named for the agency. Giuffrida was a long-time associate of Ed Meese, an influential ''insider'' during Reagan's years as California's governor, and an insider in the new president's administration as well. There is little doubt among persons in FEMA at that time that Giuffrida owed his appointment to his connection to Meese. Giuffrida had been Reagan's chief advisor and organizer for California's civil defense and emergency management training programs. The California Emergency Management Agency was, and is to this day, a far larger organization in terms of operations than FEMA. But it is important to note that Giuffrida had not been director of the California agency. Had he been, things might have unfolded differently. His position involved little operational or managerial experience. It seemed that a far greater source of influence on the new director was his background in the army's military police, from which he retired with the rather prosaic rank of lieutenant colonel, and his subsequent rise to the rank of a general in the California National Guard.

Along with the naming of Giuffrida as the director of FEMA, the Reagan Administration also shifted the major emphasis of the agency. As envisioned by the Governors' Conference and the Carter Administration, FEMA had dealt primarily with floods, droughts, hurricanes, and other natural disasters. In addition, FEMA would have also had a secondary role within the broad civil defense structure, especially in terms of providing civilian support and protection in the event of a nuclear war. For the Reagan Administration, which saw ''government as the problem,'' and with its focus on the Cold War struggle with the ''evil empire'' of the U.S.S.R., it was natural to switch the priorities that the Carter Administration and the National Governors' Association (NGA) had envisioned and to make civil defense the primary mission, while downplaying federal involvement in areas of domestic national life like responding to natural disasters. Coming from California, with its well-developed capacity to respond to natural disasters, the Reagan Administration may have lost sight of the importance of the federal government in performing and enhancing the states' capacities to perform such functions.

In any event, civil defense and the continuity of government were further emphasized due to the personality and background of Giuffrida, who quickly, and no doubt to his considerable pleasure, became known within the agency as ''the general.'' Giuffrida saw emergency management's main priority being the sustaining of civilian life and the continuity of government after the outbreak of a nuclear war, and he advocated those priorities both within the White House and to Congress. Backing up the new emphasis for FEMA, the Reagan Administration proposed a 7-year $4.2-billion program, which involved FEMA in ''provid(ing) for survival of a substantial portion of the population in the event of a nuclear attack'' and a highly classified program to assure the continuity of government.

The Reagan landslide had not produced a Republican Congress, however—just a slim Republican majority in the Senate. Reagan's proposal for shifting FEMA's priorities occurred during a time when some members of Congress, most notably some Democrats, were beginning to call for a nuclear weapons freeze and greater efforts at ''détente'' with the Soviet Union. FEMA, which up to this point in time had been a ''backwater'' agency,

suddenly found itself thrust into the national limelight of a debate over both foreign policy and national defense.

Giuffrida and the other Reagan political appointees within FEMA wasted no time in beginning to develop the new agency priority and a culture to match it. A broad-based national ''crisis evacuation'' plan was developed calling for the evacuation of 400 ''risk area'' cities with populations of more than 50,000. Under the plan, it was assumed that the outbreak of a nuclear war would become apparent over several weeks, and would allow the nation time to evacuate millions of people from ''risk areas'' into safer ''host areas'' in the countryside. The goal of the plan was to save 70 to 80% of the population in the event of a nuclear war. Critics in Congress and other quarters insisted that the plan was unrealistic and pointed out that panic, traffic jams, and chaos would envelop every major American city if a nuclear war loomed in the near future. In spite of the congressional criticism, Giuffrida and the agency's other political appointees insisted that they had a ''legal and moral'' responsibility to develop the plan, and proceeded to direct the majority of the agency's resources toward that end. (New York Times 1982).

Soon FEMA took on the aura and all the trappings of a national security agency. The hallways of the agency were cluttered with signs saying ''Security is Everybody's Business''; an entire floor of the agency and various other facilities were devoted to the continuity of government and maintained at the highest level of security. Some key officials took to wearing side arms on a daily basis. The security focus, which critics labeled a ''fixation,'' was so pervasive that, by 1985, the Information Security Oversight Office was reporting that over 30% of FEMA's documents were classified as ''top secret,'' as opposed to 1% receiving such classification within the Defense Department and 5% within the CIA (Washington Post, 1986:F19).

Some of the agency's security concerns may well have been justified. The full story behind the agency's ''national security emergency preparedness'' operations has never been declassified, but if there was any validity in the things said about those operations in public access media, it would justify to some degree the claim of those involved: that it represented a serious strategic concern to the Soviet Union and that it was easily vulnerable to compromise with its only protection being the secrecy it could maintain. Be that as it may, the rationale and justification were swamped by what was perceived by ''old line'' national security agencies to be play-acting and posturing by the ''new kid on the block.'' The National Guard connection of Giuffrida and his coterie did little to enhance his standing with the regular officers in the armed forces who predominate in the Department of Defense, or, for that matter, with any of the other career civilian counterparts in the many other national security agencies.

What further damaged FEMA's reputation in the national security realm, however, was its attempt to extend itself into policy realms for which it lacked clear authority, credentials, or enough power backing by the White House, thereby making itself vulnerable to being scorned, attacked, or simply ignored. Or, to put it differently, in some instances it could be said that FEMA had statutory standing to do something but simply lacked the authority, credibility, or power backing to make others take it seriously. As an example of the first instance, when the nuclear-freeze debate intensified, FEMA began to develop an anti–nuclear freeze educational program aimed at both adults and children. In one instance, the agency issued a brochure for grade-school children that asked them to color in the items they would need in a fallout shelter. On another occasion, anti–nuclear freeze films produced by the conservative American Security Council Foundation were purchased by the agency and distributed to civic clubs around the United States (Washington Post

1985:A7). These moves, of course, were like waving a red flag at a metaphorical bull: in this instance, the Democrats in Congress, other national security agencies, and the Washington media.

At the height of the Giuffrida administration, over three-quarters of the agency's resources were directed toward the civil defense/anti–nuclear freeze and continuity of government programs (NAPA 1993). Naturally and unfortunately, the emphasis on civil defense was done at the expense of developing the capacity to better deal with natural disasters. Rather than improving the federal response to natural disasters, FEMA's procedural setup, or lack of a credible one, led to a series of allocations and designations for local disasters, perceived to have political influence behind them.[4] Compounding the problem of disaster designation was the fact that no standardized method was established to evaluate disasters and determine if an area was eligible for disaster relief. The General Accounting Office in 1982 recommended that FEMA develop computer models to standardize the assessment process, but FEMA refused to allocate funds for the programming of a new system. In addition to a lack of damage standards, FEMA also refused to assess the damage for such a designation until after the entire disaster event was over, thus delaying aid until well after the gravest and most damaging period had passed. Needless to say, the lack of effective disaster response to the various states further fueled the conflict between FEMA and Congress, especially in terms of the congressional members whose home states received little or no federal aid (Washington Post 1982).

While the conflict over whether civil defense or natural disaster should be emphasized strained relations between FEMA and Congress, the agency suffered further damage through the process of arbitrary removal and appointment of agency personnel. The Reagan Administration had adopted the Nixonian philosophy concerning the federal bureaucracy or civil service with a vengeance. Under Nixon's view of government in his second term, two basic premises were determinant as to who should be employed by the government and what restraints should be placed on their actions. The first premise was that ''protection of the national interests . . . requires undivided loyalty to the president and unquestioning obedience to his orders'' (Seidman and Gilmour 1986:109). The second premise was ''The bureaucracy or civil service represents the principal threat to presidential power. Members of the civil service cannot be trusted because they are either disloyal or have divided loyalties'' (Seidman and Gilmour, 1986:109). The Nixonian view was effectively summed up by John Ehrlichman when he said: ''There shouldn't be a lot of leeway in following the President's policies. It should be like a corporation, where the executive vice presidents (the Cabinet officers) are tied closely to the chief executive, or to put it in extreme terms, when he says jump, they only ask how high'' (Seidman and Gilmour 1986:121).

In essence, the Reagan Administration adopted the Nixonian philosophy related to the civil service but added an additional qualifying factor: ''The three criteria we followed were, was he a Reagan man? Two, a Republican? And three, a conservative? Probably our most crucial concern was to ensure that conservative ideology was properly represented'' (Newland 1987:45). FEMA very quickly became a prime example of the Nixon/Reagan philosophy.

Two weeks after the Reagan Administration took office, the acting FEMA Director, Bernard Gallagher, fired four top FEMA officials. Gallagher, who had never worked with the officials, never interviewed them, or even reviewed their personnel files sent a memo to White House Counselor Edwin Meese III not only recommending the firing of the four officials but also recommending their replacements based on party affiliation. None of the

replacements had any experience in managing disaster relief. In addition, Gallagher accused the former FEMA officials of fouling up the Three Mile Island nuclear emergency and based their termination on those grounds. It was only after the firing that it was discovered that the officials either had not been employed with FEMA at the time of Three Mile Island or had been assigned to other divisions not involved in the emergency (Washington Post 1983).

When Giuffrida took over as the director of FEMA, he proceeded to follow the White House example and rebuilt the upper levels of the agency around personal loyalty and cronyism. Over a dozen of the highest-ranked positions within the agency were filled by individuals with either direct ties to Giuffrida or the military police. The agency's executive administrator, deputy director, assistant deputy director, and all of Giuffrida's assistants were former army policemen who had served with Giuffrida and his associates over the years that he had been in the army and National Guard. FEMA officials were ordered to hire ''old military friends'' as either employees or consultants for the agency. Jobs were created for various ''friends'' and job descriptions were intentionally rewritten to qualify these individuals for existing agency openings. In addition, these people often received the highest salaries available for their job classifications. When questioned by the press on the propriety of such hirings, FEMA spokesman James L. Holton replied, ''It was natural that (Giuffrida) looked for people he could trust'' (Washington Post 1985: A4). Within the agency, objections to Giuffrida's hiring practices were met with swift retribution. FEMA's original personnel director decided to take early retirement rather than participate in the charade, and his successor, a 20-year personnel veteran, was quickly transferred to the nuclear war division when he objected to the hiring practices. Eventually, the personnel job was given to a former finance director who had no experience with personnel administration (Washington Post 1985:A4).

While the hiring practices of Giuffrida and his staff were troubling, even more serious was the general attitude that pervaded the upper administration in terms of dealing with the fiscal trust they were charged to maintain. Very quickly the agency's budget became a source for personal perquisites and questionable outside expenditures. The offices of the upper-level officials were soon sporting color television sets, hide-a-beds, loveseats, sofas, and leather chairs. A training center building was modified to include private apartments with fireplaces, wet bars, cherry-wood cabinets, expanded bathrooms, and, in one instance a special ''pasta kitchen'' for Giuffrida's gustatory pleasure. ''Friends,'' who were also paid as ''consultants,'' were provided with rent-free housing at the training center, and government cars with chauffeurs were used by the top political appointees to commute from home to office on a daily basis (Washington Post 1985:A4). In one instance a tawdry scandal surfaced in congressional hearings involving the director of FEMA's training center, who had allegedly put pressure on his female chauffeur for sex. In addition, overseas trips to Israel and Mexico also included first-class travel for wives, all at the agency's expense. FEMA funds were even used to award noncompetitive grants to unrelated institutes of which Giuffrida was an ''unpaid advisor'' (Washington Post 1985:A1).

While these examples of ''petty'' personal corruption were serious, of a far more serious nature was the use of the agency's budget for both political contributions and political payoffs. The attendance of FEMA officials at political fund-raising events sponsored by the National Republican Club were paid for by agency contractors, who then billed the expenses back to the agency, claiming that the expenses were incurred when such officials attended unspecified ''conferences.'' Attendance at various fund-raising social

receptions sponsored by conservative groups were also billed back to the agency by contractors. FEMA's food service contractor also catered champagne lunches and receptions for various Reagan officials to court corporate donors for political campaigns (Washington Post 1985:A1) Even more troubling, though, was the use of agency funds to award contracts for outside consulting work to groups having direct and indirect political and personal connections to the agency's administration.

Multi-million-dollar consulting contracts were awarded to companies whose officials had direct personal contacts with Giuffrida. Not content with obtaining the contracts, these firms proceeded to double bill the agency for equipment rentals and to award personal bonuses (Washington Post 1984). In addition, noncompetitive grants were used to award contracts to longtime friends and associates of the agency's upper-level management (Washington Post 1985). Once again, objections were met with a quick transfer to lesser jobs, and refusals to sign-off on shoddy contract work often resulted in forced resignations (Washington Post 1986).

The abuses within the agency eventually led to the opening of investigations by the Justice Department, the House Government Operations Subcommittee, and the House Science and Technology Committee. Eventually, in September 1985, Giuffrida resigned as director of FEMA and Julius W. Becton was appointed its new director. While the resignation of Giuffrida was generally seen as a positive move for the agency, the legacy of Giuffrida's administration would continue to haunt FEMA for the next 8 years. By the late 1980s, FEMA's reputation was compromised almost past redemption. In general, FEMA was referred to as a ''turkey farm'' of the federal government—a place for incompetent political appointees. Congress, because of FEMA's past record, tightened its oversight of the agency and its programs and began to micromanage every aspect of the agency's operations. And while FEMA continued to emphasize its civil defense role, the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War left it with little direction or purpose in that realm.

The election of George Bush to the presidency did little to alleviate FEMA's problems. Wallace Stickney, former head of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and a close personal friend of John Sununu (the White House chief of staff), was appointed the new director of FEMA. In general, though, Stickney was considered to be weak and inexperienced and was personally ''uninterested in the substantive programs of FEMA.'' During his term in office, Stickney was virtually invisible except when he would reluctantly go to Capitol Hill to defend the agency against its increasing number of critics. Unfortunately, Stickney, in 1991, forced a FEMA employee who had publicly acknowledged he was gay to reveal the names of other FEMA employees who were gay, threatening him with failure to receive a security clearance. The outcry from both the gay community and Congress about the ''blackmail'' forced Stickney to shred the list but once again reinforced the perception of FEMA as a political turkey farm (Time 1993:22).

In 1989 and 1990 both the Loma Prieta earthquake in California and Hurricane Hugo in South Carolina once again called for the federal government (i.e., FEMA) to respond. FEMA's obvious incompetence in responding to both disasters led South Carolina Senator Ernest Hollings to declare that FEMA was made up of ''the sorriest bunch of bureaucratic jackasses I've ever known'' (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report 1992). In spite of FEMA's lackluster performance, lawmakers decided to give the agency ''another chance'' and continued funding for the agency. But in 1992 the final chance for the agency appeared in the guise of Hurricane Andrew, and the agency's response had far-reaching consequences for its future.

E. The Turning Point

In June, 1992, The House Appropriations Committee issued a damning report concerning FEMA. The report found that the agency's morale not only was low but that there was outright bureaucratic war within the agency between the political appointees and the career officials. The committee's report not only accused the upper administration of mismanagement and incompetence but also publicly labeled the agency as a ''dumping ground'' for political appointees. While Stickney retorted that the report was full of ''innuendo . . . downright gossip and hallway speculation,'' he nonetheless faced powerful congressional forces opposed to the continuation of the agency's existence. Norman Y. Mineta (D-Calif.), upcoming chairman of the House Public Works Committee, had publicly declared his intention to ''write legislation that will have Congress rebuild this system.'' After the 1990 Loma Prieta earthquake, Mineta had declared that FEMA ''could screw up a two-car parade.'' An even more powerful threat came from Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), chairman of the appropriations subcommittee, with powerful leverage over the agency. Mikulski was demanding that the General Accounting Office conduct a full study of the disaster relief system, with the intention of opening hearings for a complete overhaul of the system within 1 year. (Congressional Quarterly 1992).

In addition to the congressional discontent, 1992 was a presidential election year, and while the Bush Administration, still basking in the glow of the Gulf War victory, was confident of being reelected, it was not a time to offer the Democratic party the opportunity to criticize any aspect of federal administration. In many ways, 1992 was a year for FEMA to ''lay low'' and mend political fences. But while Stickney and the Bush administration may have wanted to avoid a Congressional confrontation over FEMA, Mother Nature had another less welcome agenda. In the early morning of August 24, 1992, Hurricane Andrew slammed into southern Florida and proceeded to cut a 50-mile swath of damage and havoc across the state. In less than 24 hours, Hurricane Andrew left over 200,000 residents homeless, 1.3 million people without electricity, and all the residents of southern Florida with a scarcity of food, clean water, shelter, and medical assistance.

President Bush and FEMA Director Stickney immediately helicoptered into the damaged area and declared it a disaster area eligible for federal relief; then they returned to Washington. While the declaration was initially seen as a hopeful development, the full extent of the damage was only beginning to emerge. Andrew had not only destroyed the fabric of social life in southern Florida but had also wreaked havoc with the public safety infrastructure and shown that the system at all levels was inadequate to deal with a disaster of Andrew's magnitude. The homeless victims of Andrew also included the emergency management and public safety personnel of the devastated areas, who now, along with the rest of the local population, were desperately seeking food, water, and shelter. Not only were the power grids and water pumping systems disabled, but streets were choked with debris and the emergency response equipment and public communications networks had also been seriously damaged. Panic, devastation, and shock pervaded both the citizenry and public officials of southern Florida, all under the ubiquitous and unblinking eye of the national television networks, which were broadcasting directly from the heart of the damaged areas.

Very quickly, the county and state emergency management systems were overwhelmed and without the capacity to assess their needs and prioritize them. Pleas from local officials to state officials to ''send everything'' were met by replies from state officials that ''we can't send *everything*—what do you *need*?'' For 3 days after the hurricane

hit, southern Florida waited for relief from somewhere, but the state system seemed immobilized and FEMA, operating from its normal posture of ''responder of last resort,'' was waiting for state officials to ask for assistance and to say what they needed. FEMA did not even send in a damage assessment team to evaluate what resources should be brought into play; instead, it waited for formal requests from the state to come through normal channels.

While FEMA waited, the state government's damage assessment system was failing because the local public safety personnel, who would normally report the damage, were overwhelmed with trying to meet the life-support needs of citizens, reestablish some kind of organizational functioning and capacity, and meet the immediate needs of themselves and their families (NAPA 1993:28; Wamsley 1992–1993). Finally, after 3 days of mounting frustration over the lack of a meaningful disaster response, Kate Hale, Dade County's director of emergency preparedness, held a news conference and publicly pleaded to the nation over the national broadcasting networks: ''Where the hell is the cavalry on this one? We need food. We need water. We need people. For God's sake, where are they?'' (Newsweek 1992:23). The politically explosive sound bite was a perfect example of the camcorder policy process in action. It landed like a scud missile in the Oval Office, where by that time President Bush's reelection campaign was lagging behind Bill Clinton's in the polls. The ''heroic'' presidential visit to Florida only 3 days before now appeared to have been a hollow gesture by a weak and ineffective leader, reminiscent of Calvin Coolidge.

With 25 electoral votes at stake in the key state of Florida, the president needed to respond in a forceful manner, and he did (Wamsley 1992–1993). Within 24 hours of the Hale statement, President Bush dispatched 7000 federal troops to southern Florida. Within a week, the total number of army, navy, air force, and coast guard personnel dispatched would reach nearly 20,000, along with 19 generals and admirals (Newsweek 1992:23). In addition to ''sending in the troops,'' President Bush designated Andrew Card, the secretary of transportation, as his ''personal representative'' to assume leadership for all federal response and recovery activities in Florida and to coordinate with state and local authorities. At least symbolically, which is sometimes the most important dimension in politics and administration, FEMA Director Stickney, and FEMA generally, were pushed aside and made to look nonessential (Wamsley 1992–1993). FEMA was, of course, heavily involved in the response and recovery effort, but the public perceptions created by the ''bypass'' of FEMA were devastating for the agency. One event scarcely noted in the swirl of events was a visit to the disaster response headquarters by candidate Clinton, who avoided all publicity and simply sat and listened at several meetings (Wamsley 1992–1993).

That same September, Senator Mikulski included in the ''notes'' to an appropriation bill a requirement that FEMA fund a study by the National Academy of Public Administration of itself and the entire emergency management system. The notes further required that FEMA transmit the study to Congress without any changes by a date certain. By this time, the overwhelming majority of both the House and Senate were calling for a change in the wake of Hurricane Andrew, and the bill was quickly authorized. Not content in having just one study conducted, Senator Mikulski began to prod the General Accounting Office (GAO) into conducting another study of FEMA. While the GAO and the White House were reluctant to conduct such a study, Mikulski used her position as chairman of the appropriations subcommittee to force the GAO into action. Mikulski's subcommittee oversaw the GAO budget, and she threatened to slash the GAO's budget unless it con-

ducted the study. Both the NAPA and GAO study groups worked on the evaluation of FEMA, sharing data back and forth. In the meantime the Inspector General's Office within FEMA was stirred to action and began an analysis, and NAPA shared much of its findings with that organization. In the early part of 1993, all three reports were issued.

Both the NAPA and GAO reports called for a major redesign of both FEMA and the system of federal emergency management response. Two key elements in the reports called for FEMA to abandon its traditional posture of ''responder of last resort,'' take a proactive stance in terms of its natural disaster mission, and replace the large number of political appointees within the agency with career civil servants who were professionals trained in providing emergency responses to disasters. While the two studies were developing, the presidential election process reached its conclusion. In a stunning defeat, George Bush lost the election and Bill Clinton returned the White House to Democratic control after 12 years.

Congressional hearings centered on the three reports took place in early 1993. There was a solid consensus among the three reports as to a necessary reform agenda. Indeed, the chairman of one committee remarked that he had never heard such agreement among witnesses as to what should be done (Wamsley 1993). Things clearly were headed toward the comprehensive reform bill that Senator Mikulski intended to introduce. As often happens, this course of action was overtaken by events. The Clinton transition team asked for and received complete briefings from the NAPA study team, and from comments of the team it seemed clear that President-Elect Clinton was aware of many of the recommendations of the NAPA team, the GAO, and the inspector general of FEMA. Within weeks it became known that James Lee Witt was to be the new director of FEMA. Although the media found some amusement in the fact that he was from Wild Cat Holler in Yell County, Arkansas, there was also acknowledgment of the fact that Witt would be the first FEMA director with direct experience in dealing with emergency management, having served as director of the Arkansas State Office of Emergency Services under then-Governor Clinton. He may also have been the first director to have a personal relationship with *and* the confidence of a president as a result of his effective performance.

The NAPA study team briefed Witt and some of his close associates thoroughly before the announcement of his nomination. Whether the findings and forthcoming recommendations coincided with his own ideas or he was quickly absorbing them and planning to adopt them can never be known. It is, after all, one of the important skills of political executives and administrators generally that they be able to listen without making clear until the right moment what their own thoughts are. In any event, Witt immediately upon his appointment began to implement the overwhelming majority of those things recommended by the NAPA and GAO reports, with a few important exceptions.[5] Witt immediately proved in other ways that he was a highly skilled political executive of the type FEMA had long needed so desperately. First, as mentioned above, he insisted and obtained from the president and the White House Personnel Office what at the time he called ''a veto,'' or refusal rights on political appointees. Second, the week after his nomination was announced, he remained on Capitol Hill, listening and talking to the chairpersons of each of the myriad committees and subcommittees important for FEMA, the committees' ranking minority members, and the key staffers of both the majority and minority members of the committees and subcommittees. Third, the Monday following his week on Capitol Hill, he stationed himself at the entrance to FEMA and introduced himself and shook hands with every employee who arrived for work. With that one simple act he wiped away much of the bitterness and dissension, and a nascent union that had been born of

all the employees' bitterness shortly dissolved. Fourth, he met with all FEMA's members of the senior executive service and made it clear that he would value their assistance in turning the agency around. Fifth, he called for an ''all hands'' meeting with the FEMA Washington staff, the top officials in the regional offices, and randomly selected lower-level staff from the regional offices. In the meeting he made it clear that he considered it the beginning of a new FEMA and needed and expected their support to make it so. Witt, of course, has done much more, key aspects of which are discussed later in this chapter. These dramatic first gestures were incredibly important, however, and warrant mention as part of the historic watershed for FEMA and emergency management in America. Much of the future of both will depend upon appointing to the directorship of FEMA political executives with Witt's skills.

The debacle surrounding Hurricane Andrew, the issuance of the two reports, the extensive congressional hearings, and finally the appointment of Witt as director all signaled a watershed for FEMA. They also mark the beginning of an effort to develop a much different agency—indeed, a new structural arrangement in government that challenges traditional concepts of organization and management.

VII. THE OLD MODELS NO LONGER APPLY—AN OPPORTUNITY TO REINVENT AND REDESIGN A ''NETWORK'' OF SERVICE DELIVERY

The reality of public sector program implementation today is simply this: any implementation that is attempted in the name of ''enhancing public service'' will necessarily involve stakeholders external to the implementing organization (e.g., the local community, the private sector, other public sector agencies, or quasi-public entities). James Lee Witt, coming as he did from a state department of emergency management, knew this to be the case. That is, simply put, any concept of a program's implementation following a linear, top-down, centralized within-the-agency approach will most likely fail. In an environment comprising conflicting and semioverlapping functions and powers, differing motivations for involvement, and no single authority with a span encompassing all stakeholder parties, traditional ideas such as unity of purpose, line of authority, and span of control are quite difficult to apply. That is, the context of effective, large-scale action in federal emergency response has been steadily moved away from a concept of unified organization to a concept more appropriately described as an interorganizational ''network.''

This was the circumstance of FEMA, in spades, when it found itself faced with a major reorganization and repurposing following Hurricane Andrew. Simply put, an appropriate response to the needs of the organization could not be made by simply reshuffling the boxes of an organization chart that supposedly depicted internal administration. Instead, a complete reformulation of FEMA's reason for being and operation was called for, and this, in turn, depended on a restructuring of its relations with ''relevant others.'' New relationships would have to be established (politically and operationally) with entities external to the organization. That is, the agency's environment required that it reach out beyond itself and establish what can now be referred to as a network organization. In order to respond appropriately in a timely fashion, with all necessary resources, FEMA, a comparatively small agency, *must* effectively coordinate all the available resources of the federal government *and* integrate these resources with state and local level resources

already on the ground—this in a world where all actors applaud ''cooperation'' just as long as they do not have to be coordinated by someone else.

In their book *Managing Complex Networks*, Kickert et al. (1997) provide a detailed analysis of public administration's maturation beyond a traditional ''rational central rule'' to a multiactor model and then to a network concept of governance. There has also been much discourse in the American literature of the late 1970s and 1980s concerning the related concepts of ''top-down'' vs. ''bottom-up'' models of governance. The central thesis of all this work is that these different approaches to governance provide a lens through which the administrator views and acts upon the world. One may even refer to them as ''theories in use'' (Argyris and Schon 1978). By assessing the shortcomings of trying to apply a ''centralized top-down'' or ''multiactor bottom-up'' model of understanding to FEMA's circumstance, we can discern the necessity of using another, more complex model, the network, for understanding more clearly what has happened and where we are today.

A. From a Top-Down to a Bottom-Up to a Network Model

What has been referred to as the ''rational central rule'' or ''top-down'' model of governance is characterized by processes of public policy making and governance marked by a presumed division between politics and administration, one that portrays politics as the reaching of policy consensus by interested political entities and administration as the application of scientific knowledge to policy design and a program of implementation: a process of governance where decision making is unambiguous and authoritative and implementation is nonpolitical, technical, and potentially programmable (Landau 1979; Sabatier 1986; Wamsley and Schroeder 1996; Kickert et al. 1997:7).

This top-down model has also been referred to as the ''conventional'' model of governance, as it focuses explicitly on the relation between the agent and the objects to be ''steered'' or ''controlled.'' The policy process, thus, is characterized by a supposedly stark division between politics and administration—between those who make the rule and those who enforce the rule. The implementation phase is considered to be a nonpolitical, technical, and potentially programmable activity. Such a concept of governance is easily compatible with America's naïve conception of democracy and often the starting point for any new governmental agency. That is, a political body (in FEMA's case, the U.S. Congress) supposedly decides that there is a need that must be addressed by the establishment of a new agency (the political act). The agency is then supposed to venture forth to objectively ''implement'' the ''clear'' will of the establishing body (the administrative act). As can be discerned by the preceding history of this particular agency, because there was no clear policy that shaped the initial mission and political aspects of this agency, these features were thoroughly institutionalized in the higher percentage of political appointees than any other agency. That is, there was not established a discernible separation between the political enactors and the administrative implementers. This is not to say that this should have necessarily been the case but simply to say that the original conceptualization of FEMA operations was probably rather flawed.

Separating of the concepts of politics and administration is, of course, not new. In fact, Sun Tzu, author of the military and later management classic *The Art of Warfare*, written in approximately 400 B.C., states that ''enlightened rulers deliberate plans while capable generals execute them'' (Wee et al. 1996:149). In public administration literature, we often attribute such a conceptual divide to the writings of early-twentieth-century schol-

ars in praise of the wonders of the industrial revolution. This is, of course, ridiculous. Such an attempted conceptual divide has probably existed since the first tribal/clan leader told somebody else to do something he did not want to do himself or wanted it done ''exactly'' as instructed. To be fair, however, it may certainly be argued that what such a conceptual divide *means* in terms of the *roles* played by those *doing the telling* and those *doing the doing* has changed significantly following the industrial revolution. What had changed, in Sun Tzu's terms, is the concept of what constituted a ''capable'' general. To Sun Tzu, the political leader gives an order something akin to ''go and defeat my enemy.'' The general in this case is left with a very high level of discretion to determine the appropriate subgoals to be achieved and the strategies and behaviors necessary to achieve those goals. In this sense, the term *capable* has a very rich and wide-ranging meaning. In the writings of early-twentieth-century scholars of public administration, usually typified by those of Woodrow Wilson and Frederick Taylor, the capable general, or in this case administrator, is one who faithfully applies the rigorous scientific management techniques derived of industrial capitalism, *not* one who decides, at any stage, what should be produced and how. In this case, the capable administrator has a very limited and narrowly drawn role. The inherent assumption in this case is that that which is left over from the earlier meaning of Sun Tzu's capable general (i.e., what is left if we subtract the modern meaning from Sun Tzu's meaning) is somehow handled by the modern-day political entity giving the administrator a specific order. If we now consider that such orders are being handed down from within a constitutional democracy of divided power, where directives are seldom if ever any more specific than the order of Sun Tzu's political leader (e.g., go and defeat my enemy, or, better, go and fix the problem with the federal emergency management system), then the inadequacy of such a limited and narrowly drawn role should become evident. If we now go a step further and consider working within one of the most politically influenced agencies in the federal bureaucracy, then the inadequacy becomes pronounced in bold type.

In terms of implementation research, borrowing from the classic top-down implementation model of Mazmanian and Sabatier, causes of implementation failure can be discerned by starting with the policy decision (from the top) and asking four questions that highlight the flaws in the approach. These questions are:

> Were the actions of officials and target groups consistent with the objectives and procedures of the decision?
> To what extent were the objectives attained?
> What were the principal factors affecting outputs and inputs?
> How was policy reformulated over time on the basis of experience? (Sabatier 1986: 22)

To ensure a successful implementation, using this top-down model would require meeting six conditions:

> Clear and consistent objectives
> An adequate causal theory of the problem being addressed
> A legally structured implementation process to enhance official and target group compliance
> Committed and skillful implementing officials
> Support of interest groups and sovereigns

> Changes in socio-economic conditions that do not undermine political support or the causal theory (Sabatier 1986:23).

The many disadvantages of using such a model in approaching governance situations (especially the management of FEMA) have been well documented (Elmore 1979; Landau 1979; Barrett and Fudge 1981; Hanf 1982; Hjern and Hull 1982; Wamsley et al. 1996). For our purposes, however, the most obvious are that the model presupposes that there is one central top level agent(s), the policy maker(s), who has been able to reach a final and clear consensus among all stakeholders, and that such a person has access to all necessary information regarding a situation, as well as all information pertaining to potential solutions. That is, the key actor is the policy maker at the top. All other actors are considered either obedient instruments (best case) or potential impediments on which compliance needs to be enforced (worst case). There is no regard for the attitudes, values, and interests of the entities that will be responsible for implementation, nor the ambiguities of the policies that reveal themselves through the process of implementation.

The U.S. Congress, in establishing FEMA, was tacitly using the top-down, centralized model of governance. There was no provision that FEMA should be the overarching coordinator of a diverse range of resources spread throughout the federal and state governments. Quite the contrary, FEMA was originally conceived as a means of last resort to bail out the states when they needed it (and the thought was that they would not need it that much).

Another problem with this model is that it presumes a clear distinction between formulation and implementation of a policy. Unfortunately, when no preeminent authority is dictating clear objectives of a policy, as is inevitably the case in America, those objectives tend to be renegotiated many times during the implementation process itself. *That is, while the legislative stage in policy making creates what purports to be goals and objectives, what the end result is going to look like is simply not foreseeable*. For example, today FEMA considers itself to be ''forward leaning,'' meaning that it does not wait to be called into action by the state. FEMA gets the resources in place on the assumption that they will be called upon. A 3-day gap between disaster startup is no longer acceptable. This new policy of action has not been congressionally dictated. It is a policy decision originating from *within* the agency to effectuate better response and reduce the potential for political assault.

In general, the top-down model neglects the inherently political nature of the most critical aspect of governance, known as administration or policy implementation. Additionally, others have argued that efforts to achieve central coordination and control leads generally to increased bureaucratization and diminished effectiveness and efficiency (Landau 1979; Van Gunsteren 1976; Hanf and Toonen 1985; Schroeder and Wamsley 1996). Martin Landau and Russel Stout probably summarize it best when they write,

> [w]e began with a vision: If a domain of tasks can be mapped to a formal logic, and if that logic orders the behavior of a large and complex organization, then that organization becomes a decision machine whose operations are entirely unambiguous and whose output occasions no surprise. To create such an organization is a monumental feat, requiring an intelligence of the order of Laplace's demon; or, as Madison might have put it, ''So perfect a system is not for men'' (p. 148).

Generally speaking, from a structural standpoint, the inadequacy of this model for FEMA operations is not terribly surprising. Starting off, we face the immutable wall of

constitutional federalism dictating two broadly defined areas of authority, federal and state. We then have at both levels a further dissection of authority into executive, legislative, and judicial spheres of control. If that were not enough, we then have, again at both levels, a division of authority according to the functions or content of the action to be taken. That is, we have many different governmental agencies that address different functions (e.g., Emergency Management, Transportation, Social Welfare). Each of these agencies purportedly reports directly to the chief executive. In reality, and in fact constitutionally, these agencies also report to content-specific congressional committees and are often under the watchful eye of a monitoring judiciary (that is, the separation of powers at both the federal and state levels is often reflected within federal and state agencies). Additionally, in many states, we add the third ''local'' level of government which reflects much of the same complexity just discussed.

Supporting this system of split or shared power is the right of these various levels of government to maintain ''fiscal autonomy.'' In essence, each level of government has a base of taxing authority, which allows it to raise the necessary funds required to operate. Thus, at every level there is a source of both legal and fiscal authority supporting it. That is, at the get-go, there is need to conceptualize FEMA operations from the perspective of a more dynamic model.

B. The Multiactor Bottom-Up Model

The ''multiactor'' or ''bottom-up'' model, in direct reaction to the perceived problems of hegemony of the ''top-down'' model, represents a ''radical plea for decentralization, self-governance, and privatization'' while at the same time calling for a central government to ''give more attention to the problems of local actors to provide them with more resources. In this model, governance is seen as an essentially political process in which local entities barter according to their personal interests and purposes'' (Kickert 1997:8). This phase is clearly seen in the 1960s and 1970s in both the United States and Europe. In the United States, this model can be seen being employed in both the Great Society and New Federalism approaches of the Johnson and Nixon administrations. In Europe, a decentralizing theme can be clearly seen in many a country's reaction to the overburdening of public resources by the centrally administered socialist welfare state.

Such an approach is often referred to as a ''bottom-up'' approach because the perspective chosen is that of the implementing bodies and target groups, as opposed to a central overhead agent. Both models assume central and peripheral actors, but in the bottom-up model, power shifts away from the center to the periphery. The interests of these local, or bottom, actors are the point of departure for evaluations of public policy and its administration. Quite unlike the centralized top-down approach, this approach asserts that governance requires both policy making and administration that are seamless and, in their essence, *political* processes.

A general bottom-up model of analysis was developed by Benny Hjern and his colleagues Porter, Hanf, and Hull in their works of the late 1970s and early 1980s. This model was developed in direct reaction to the perceived shortcomings of the top-down approach. Generally, this model is driven by a need to operate in policy areas with multiple public and private actors. The model dictates four general steps to be taken by an analyst: (1) Identify the network of actors involved in service delivery in one or more locals; (2) ask about goals, strategies, activities, and contacts of each actor; (3) use these contacts to develop a network technique to identify local, regional, and national actors involved

Table 1 Three Perspectives on Public Policy Making and Governance

	Perspectives		
Dimensions	The Centralized Top-Down Perspective	The Multiactor Bottom-Up Perspective	The Network Perspective
Object of analysis	Relation between central ruler and target groups	Relation between central ruler and local actors	Network of actors
Perspective	Central ruler	Local actors	Interaction between actors
Characterization of relations	Authoritative	Centralized versus autonomous	Interdependent
Characterization of policy process	Neutral implementation of ex ante formulated policy	Political processes of interest representation and informal use of guidelines and resources	Interaction process in which information, goals and resources are exchanged
Criterion of success	Attainment of the goals of the formal policy	Local discretionary power and obtaining resources in favor of local actors	Realization of collective action
Causes of failure	Ambiguous goals; too many actors; lack of information and control	Rigid policies; lack of resources; nonparticipation of local actors	Lack of incentives for collective action or existing blockages
Recommendation for governance	Coordination and centralization	Retreat of central rule in favor of local actors	Management of policy networks; improving conditions under which actors interact

Source: Adapted from Kickert et al. (1997:10).

in planning, financing, and execution of relevant governmental and nongovernmental programs; and, (4) map, from the bottom up, the network of actors relevant to implementation, all the way to the top policy makers (Sabatier 1986:22).

This model, while attempting to address the shortcomings of its predecessor, unfortunately is disappointing in that it is, like its predecessor, rather inconsistent and one-sided. Like the top-down model, it tends to overemphasize the ability of one side to dictate the actions of the other; in this case, the periphery, as opposed to the center. This approach can also be charged with being both ahistorical and atheoretical. That is, it takes the existing members of an implementation structure as a given without analyzing why they are there or who else should be there given the history of the structure. It also does not start from an explicit theory of the factors affecting its subject of interest. It is solely the prisoner of the perceptions and activities of the participants. At best, one may say that this approach ''offers little more than a plea for the radical retreat of government (in which case the baby is thrown out with the bath water) or an argument for central rule for the benefit of local actors'' (Kickert 1997:9). Generally, we may state that it represents a direct reaction to the top-down model, as opposed to a complete model for understanding effective policy implementation. Or, as Sabatier puts it, ''Their networking methodology

is a useful starting point for identifying many of the actors involved in a policy area, but it needs to be related via an explicit theory to social, economic, and legal factors which structure the perceptions, resources, and participation of those actors'' (Sabatier 1986:35).

In fact, working with an expanded ring of stakeholders to establish an operational network for response is exactly what James Lee Witt intuitively set out to do with the establishment of the Federal Response Plan to national emergencies—the coordinate policy for resource sharing between federal agencies. The bottom-up model, however, would neglect the actual control and influence that was exerted from the ''central actor''—that is, FEMA—in establishing this stakeholder network. In fact, given the political language often used in describing bottom-up theory, such direction from the center would be considered a bad thing.

Both the top-down and bottom-up approaches, because they have been motivated by different concerns, do not directly address the need to actually work in multiactor situations. The top-down approach is primarily interested in the effectiveness of specific government programs and the ability of elected officials to guide and constrain and shape the behavior of civil servants and target groups. The bottom-up approach is primarily concerned with accurately mapping the strategies of actors in certain problem/issue areas. The bottom-up approach has *not* been primarily concerned with efficient implementation of a policy (that is, getting it done). The top-down approach sees public administrators as impediments to the will of political actors. The bottom-up approach is not concerned with getting the policy implemented in any timely fashion (just so long as more peripheral actors are involved). That is, they both fail to provide an adequate model of what has happened at FEMA under Witt. *We are left, therefore, in need of a model that takes into consideration the concerns of both the top-down and bottom-up approaches*.

That is, what we have come to in the case of FEMA is a need for consideration of policy making taking place in *networks* consisting of various actors (federal agencies, state agencies, local agencies, individuals, special-interest groups, public organizations, private organizations, nonprofits, etc.), none of whom have the individual power to autonomously determine the strategies of all the other actors. The policy processes is not viewed as the implementation of ex ante formulated goals, but as an interaction process in which actors exchange information about problems, preferences and means, and trade-off goals and resources (and in doing so make conscious and unconscious adjustments to one another).

Such an approach, what we may call a ''network perspective,'' builds on the bottom-up criticisms but attempts to be more realistic in its understanding of the role of a ''central'' actor as catalyst. In this model, while the central agency is no longer envisioned as holding a superior, hegemonic position, it is nonetheless viewed as being on at least an equal footing with other interested entities and of having special responsibilities for catalyzing, convening, synthesizing, and in general exerting leadership in the public interest. Additionally, failure of effective operations in this model is considered to be the result of the existence of blockages to collective action and a lack of incentives to cooperate. Such an assessment of contributing factors for failure begins to form the role of a center network administrator—an entity that is not only an agent of an executive with responsibility for implementing a program, but also an agent responsible for creating incentives for and evoking cooperation between interested parties and for identification of potential blockages that these parties, working collectively, will have to overcome. This network approach to understanding the development of FEMA and emergency management to date works very well in comparison to the older models of understanding. This is especially

so given the actual circumstances surrounding FEMA when Witt took over. At that point in time the public sector was beginning to be affected by the new forms of management processes and organizational formats that had been emerging in the private sector. Additionally, the ''reinventing government'' movement, along with process reengineering applications, moved to the forefront of administrative consideration at both the federal and state levels of government. Driving this development were several factors which have come to dominate both the public and private sector's view of the emerging information society.

First, both the public and private sectors were being influenced not only by advances in technology, but also by the accelerating rate at which these new developments are emerging within both our organizational and social structures. While these new technologies have allowed organizations to reach out beyond the physical constraints of time and distance, they have also challenged existing organizational and social relationships. Traditional forms of organizational interaction, which required direct person-to-person contact, are quickly disappearing as mediating technologies allow for immediate interaction across both distance and time.

Second, technological development has also had a profound impact on worker productivity, leading to major gains in worker outputs in both the public and private sectors. While the increase in productivity is welcomed, it has also led to the problem of creating an excess in the capacity of production for both the public and private sectors. The private sector's response to over capacity has been a movement toward major mergers between firms. But the public sector's inability to breach the federalist system of split constitutional powers has presented the public sector with the problem of both reducing and redistributing public sector capacity, yet at the same time being unable to do so due to the constitutional ''rights of place'' held by local, state, and federal governments. This factor, more than any other, speaks to FEMA's necessary use of a network model of governance to carry out its mission. Given the facts of a constitutional/federal democratized republic, there is simply no other way to manage large-scale emergency management effectively.

Third, customer and consumer expectations have risen due to the developments in technological innovation. The creation of new products and services, linked to the new technological platform, have allowed for an increase in the number and quality of choices available through the marketplace. Issues such as quality, value, and breadth of services are now major factors in customer choice. This level of rising customer expectations of choice is also reflected in the public markets for governmental services. While constrained by existing laws, regulations, and rules, public organizations face a citizenry now seeking and expecting a wider choice in the methods and types of government services that are offered. The days of ''one size fits all'' public equity is now being replaced by experimentation and innovation at all levels of government. That is, people want their emergency response now, and they want it in a form that is specific to them. This fact makes the necessity of well-coordinated networks of service delivery all the more important.

Last, an additional factor influencing both public and private sectors is the nature of the new technology. The marriage of computers and telecommunications has allowed for organizational control and oversight to be extended beyond the mere limits of geographic space. Where before supervision and control were directly linked to physical proximity, now supervision and control can be exercised through the technology, and this is not limited by distance. This capability is obviously a necessary ingredient in multiparty, multijurisdiction coordination.

All of the above factors began to impact thinking regarding the organization and structuring of government services during the early 1990s. What became evident, though, was that adapting existing organizational structures to these new forces would require a different type of focus than previously used in past governmental reform efforts. The focus of this new effort would have to be a total revamp of existing organizational processes and cross-cutting of organizational lines in order to utilize existing capacity located within another agency or group. The view of governmental processes would have to be extended at both the work and social levels and seen as a total systems concept involving all levels and operations of government. This new ''network'' view of governmental ''redesign'' would include a wide range of factors, including formal organizational structure, work practices, formal and informal groups, group operating styles and decision assumptions, personnel and group selection processes, individual and group socialization practices, and both individual and group career development.

The target of this new process would also be different than the target for past ''reform'' movements. Past reform had generally been associated with strengthening constitutional executive authority over the operations of government, often at the expense of the constitutional legislative authority. (Wamsley et al. 1996:265–271; Lane and Wamsley 1998). This new process, ''Reinventing government,'' on the other hand, would be focused on developing employee motivation and improving the level of services and quality within government services while maintaining the existing levels of resource allocations. To accomplish this end of creating scale without increasing the level of mass, the new process would have to rely on a complex network model that would cross-cut existing governmental structures.

C. Technological Capabilities

The basis for experimentation, in this case, is achieved through the application of three technological capabilities inherent within these new communications and automation platforms. These three new developments are communication, linkage, and knowledge enhancement.

In essence, the new platforms allow for communication to deliver all formats of information on a global level, thus freeing organizations from both time and distance constraints that have limited pervious organizational forms. Both human and technical resources can be ''remixed'' at will based on environmental feedback and without the constraints of distance.

The remix process if facilitated by the linkage factor, allows organizations to link their various technical platforms together across other organizational boundaries. What has started out as an internalized process within organizations, is now facilitated through linkage to outside organizations, thus increasing the possibilities of mixing and matching organizational subunits, production processes, individuals, work teams, and customers. In such an environment, external and internal organizational boundaries are either blurred or discarded, and fosters the development of even more alliances and networks.

Finally, by combining both an increase in communication with linkage to other organizations, the information for decision making and analysis is suddenly enhanced, and value is added to the overall base of data available to the network. To aid in this enhancement process, advanced applications such as expert systems, artificial intelligence, robotics, and object oriented data are brought into play against the knowledge base, forming a new level of analysis previously unknown to management and decision makers.

When all three ''technological capabilities'' are added together, one creates an entity in which the organizational assets, knowledge, and computing power are distributed across intra- and interorganizational boundaries. Rather than resources residing in a single location or controlled by a select group, resources are distributed across the organization and indeed across organizations and reside in multiple locations. Since the resource allocation is distributed across the network, the nature of roles and authority within the individual organizations are altered.

Organizational performance and output become highly interdependent owing to the need to tap resources from various levels of the network, which are often under the control or supervision of different groups. In such an environment, organizational roles often change, with personnel operating as leaders at one time and just as quickly shifting to a following role. By changing the location of resource allocations and role performance of organizational members, one creates an organizational interaction no longer based on command and control, but rather highly dependent of ''need.'' The network, in a sense, is ''self-organizing,'' and structures initiation, communication, and coordination based on the end process, not the organizational hierarchy. In such a dynamic environment, coordination can only be fostered through development of shared goals, common motives, and shared ''values,'' both management and personal, between organizational and network members.

Thus, at the base of these networks, resides a set of values that cross-cut organizational subunits and other organizations. The new value system seeks to replace the older ownership and control of information and resource mentality with one that fosters a sharing of resources and information—a form of collaboration. In addition, the authority of individual knowledge takes precedent over the authority of an individual's organizational position within the hierarchy. And finally, rather than viewing the environment as a factor that should be reacted to in a negative manner, the new value promotes the environmental stress as a learning and growth process full of potential for organizational and personal development. (Cohen and Mankin 1998:154–178). When the new network format is merged with the new systems model, plus the new technological capability, and overlaid with the new network values, one creates entity that, in essence, is the sum of the members attitudes, the management processes, the work processes, the network structure, and the technological platform.

Witt's assumption of office in 1993 corresponded with the emergence of these new network concepts and governmental redesign, issues. While it is not clear how self-consciously he drew upon these developments, they were nonetheless important in providing a favorable context for the decision process of the agency. To save FEMA from extinction was going to require a major reinventing FEMA process, and one that recognized the new organizational and technological design factors that had emerged into society.

D. Laying the Foundation for a Network Approach Within FEMA

In order for Witt to reorganize FEMA, he was faced with an immediate problem that could not be avoided. The basic problem was reestablishing credibility with Congress in order to at least delay the proposed demissioning of the agency. In order to accomplish the delay with Congress, though, Witt needed to first deal with personnel, and specifically with placing people with disaster expertise into positions of authority within the agency.

Witt was aided in the personnel process by the very positions which up to that point had been the bane of FEMA's existence: the gaggle of political appointment positions the

agency had acquired. Resignations and firings of 35 political appointees within the agency in January 1993—3 months before he was appointed the new director of FEMA—cleared the way for him to quickly appoint persons with backgrounds in emergency management. In addition to the departure of incumbent political appointees, Witt, in accepting the director's position, also was able to gain a critical concession from President Clinton. In his discussions with Clinton and White House staffers, Witt insisted upon and received assurance that he could assess the credentials of all FEMA political appointees and a promise that his recommendations for appointment would be given top priority. Immediately after that meeting he described this as a ''veto'' over anyone the White House Personnel Office recommended—something he seemed to construe as ''refusal rights'' (Wamsley 1993). As a result of the negotiations with the White House, Witt was able to quickly assemble a group of persons experienced in emergency management to fill the political executive positions of FEMA (Ward 1998).

Once Witt had dealt with the competency of ''political'' employees of the agency, he then turned his attention to the ''career'' employees. In order to deal with the problem of low employee morale, Witt directly tackled the issue of FEMA's reputation as a political dumping ground and the conversion of federal merit jobs to scheduled political appointments. He immediately halted the practice of making political appointments to senior executive service (SES) positions and returned the agency to a commitment to merit or career professionalism within the SES similar to other agencies. This single action quickly dampened the resentment among higher-graded career employees who had previously watched as positions to which they aspired for years were handed to political outsiders with no emergency management experience.

Witt also began the process of cross-training his entire upper-level staff. Whether he was following the recommendations of the NAPA study, acting on intuition or taking a cue from traditional Japanese management practices is not known, but he pulled managers from their jobs and rotated them through other positions. He began to advocate the concept of managerial competency based on every manager spending some time in each aspect of the agency and sharing their different perspectives and ideas across the spectrum of the agency's subunits. In order to put clout in behind his managerial ideas, Witt also altered the performance management system, making evaluations quarterly instead of annual, and allowing supervised employees to participate in the supervisor's evaluation. In essence, career advancement for managers within FEMA now also depended in part on their employees' evaluations of their management and leadership skills and their mastery of an overall agency perspective—a ''total system'' view of FEMA's mission.

Witt's move with regard to political appointees and career personnel accomplished two significant effects. The first, in terms of the political appointees, was to assure the agency that the individuals filling the political positions had at least a modicum of expertise within the area of their supervision. While the appointees would no doubt continue to have alliances and coalitions with program and congressional constituencies, they would be operating with some professional knowledge of each program area.

More significant, though, was Witt's cross-training program with the agency's career employees. By cross-training the employees and shifting them from program to program, Witt effectively undermined the ''stovepipes'' within the agency. Rather than advancing within a specialized program area, employees now had to advance on the basis of demonstrating an agencywide ability. Career and personal loyalties no longer were linked solely to the various separate programs, but now were linked to the agency's overall performance. In addition, by having supervised employees involved in the evaluation process, Witt

developed another level of personnel performance based on creating greater employee involvement in the agency, and placing responsibility for that increased involvement directly on the head of each supervisor. Teamwork, as well as program knowledge, now became a critical criterion for advancement within the agency. While the political stovepipes still exist, their efficacy was greatly reduced. Witt finally was able to begin the process of program integration which had been effectively avoided since the agency's inception under the Carter Administration. (Ward 1998)

Witt's restructuring of the personnel system was met with some resistance, especially among the long-term managers who saw it as an attack on their power. Still, even among the reluctant managers, it was widely accepted that a major change was long overdue. In order to deal with the resistance, Witt proceeded to also undermine the traditional funding streams for the various programs. Over the 15 years of FEMA's existence, 18 separate funding streams had been developed for states to receive federal disaster funds. The ways of receiving federal funds evolved over the years to meet specific needs and had become entangled in a web of red tape, program self-perpetuation, and inefficiency.

Witt consolidated the 18 funding streams into two streams. Next he announced that the funding from the two streams was to be awarded states based on their development of a comprehensive agreement with FEMA, which outlined each states specific objectives and tasks in support of the broader disaster objectives of FEMA. By consolidating the funding streams and connecting their allocation to state and federal plans for disaster relief and response, Witt effectively undercut the traditional resource base for the stovepipes, further weakening the reluctant managers who resisted the agency wide changes (Ward 1998).

While Witt's moves with regard to political appointees, career personnel, and funding streams allowed for the early development of a team approach within the agency and an undermining of the stovepipes' resources, he still faced the problem of deflecting the congressional movement toward agency demissioning. Once again, he was fortunate in assuming the post of director at a time when the agency was already beginning to take steps to improve its emergency performance.

E. The Reputational Context

Many of the higher-level FEMA officials, especially the career professionals, had taken the Hurricane Andrew presidential rebuff personally. While they were unable to gain the support of the previous director, Stickney, to institute an agencywide reorganization, they had begun to modify specific operational methods under their personal control and discretion.

Plans were drafted to begin the process of placing both disaster resources and staff into potential disaster areas before an actual emergency was declared. Rather than waiting for a state request for assistance, state officials were advised ahead of time on what resources were in their vicinity and what processes needed to be followed in order to request that such resources be mobilized. Additionally, FEMA officials began to consult regularly with both state and local officials, seeking their advice on what types of responses would be required in the event of a disaster. To foster communication, each regional office of FEMA assigned a specific employee to serve as a liaison to the state and local emergency management offices within the regional coverage (Congressional Quarterly 1993).

The staff planning soon paid off for the agency. Shortly after Witt took over as Director, FEMA was offered an opportunity to redeem itself and to prove to Congress

that it still was a viable and effective force. The spring of 1993 saw the midwestern states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri hit with a series of floods which quickly turned into a national disaster declaration.

Even before the flooding rivers had reached their crests, FEMA began to preposition both resources and staff into the flooding states. FEMA regional emergency operations managers helped the various states prepare the papers needed to secure ongoing assistance. FEMA also sent out preliminary assessment teams to Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois. FEMA officials also began offering supplies, such as tents, purified water, inoculation devices and mobile homes, to local and state officials without waiting for state requests for assistance. Once the emergency declaration was issued, FEMA officials held daily conference calls with state and regional emergency managers, and in the hardest-hit areas FEMA agents talked to state officials almost every hour. FEMA also granted states more independent authority to determine how resources were allocated and instituted a preliminary disaster assistance center with a direct telephone application system (Ward 1998).

The new FEMA approach did not go unnoticed. Indeed Witt had been shrewd enough to appoint a first-rate public relations expert to his congressional relations staff whose job was to be sure anything positive about the agency and Witt *was* noticed. For the first time in a long time, congressional voices spoke out with praise for the agency. ''FEMA's doing a great job,'' said House Majority Leader Richard A. Gephardt of Missouri. Rep. Neal Smith, Democrat of Iowa said ''They got on the ball right away.'' Even professional emergency management officials at the state level offered praise. ''This is the first time we have had this kind of coordination in my experience,'' said Jim Franklin, director of emergency management in Minnesota, and a 25-year state government veteran. ''They think like we do, not like the bureaucrats.'' Still, doubts about FEMA's long-term commitment remained in existence, and were evident in the additional comment that Iowa Representative Smith made in his praise of the agency: ''I don't know if it will last'' (Congressional Quarterly 1993).

In spite of the improved performance with the midwestern floods, FEMA still faced the prospect of a major congressional overhaul. Senate bill S995 had been introduced by Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.) and the chairman of the senate appropriations subcommittee, which called for a complete revamp of the nation's emergency management system. Specifically, Mikulski sought to reduce the number of political appointees, clarify the channels of liaison between FEMA and the Department of Defense by separating civil defense and continuity of government activities from those dealing with natural disasters, and create block grants that high-risk states could use to train local officials to combat disasters without authorization from FEMA. Mikulski's view of the agency saw FEMA still operating under the older Reagan Civil Defense model rather than a newer natural disaster model. ''The old FEMA is still functioning under a Cold War framework, under which more money goes into preparing for nuclear war than for the disasters ordinary Americans in our communities are going to face'' (Congressional Quarterly 1993).

Mikulski's bill was largely based on the two study reports of FEMA conducted by the Government Accounting Office (GAO) and the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA). Both studies found that FEMA, and emergency management in general, faced three critical problem areas. The first was that FEMA lacked a method of comprehensive assessment of damage, coupled to an effective provision of disaster assistance. The second was claimed to be a lack of explicit authority for FEMA to mobilize the broad multiorganizational array of federal emergency response once a disaster warning was

issued. (Others maintained that this was more a matter of ambiguity than a lack.)[6] And the third was a lack of adequate training and funding for state and local governments to develop effective responses to catastrophic disasters.

Both GAO and NAPA further clarified the three main areas of weakness when they testified at Senate committee hearings in May, 1993. In the hearings, both organizations recommended seven additional changes that would be required in developing an effective federal response. The first recommendation called for a greater involvement by the president and White House in disaster response, and the assurance of a swift, effective response to disasters. The second recommendation was the immediate deployment of FEMA disaster assessment teams in an emergency. The third was clearer legislative authorization for FEMA to mobilize resources for catastrophes. The fourth recommendation followed from the third, and called upon the Department of Defense to integrate their resources relevant to disaster response (particularly the National Guard) into a broad federal response system. The fifth recommendation called on FEMA to move toward a comprehensive emergency management charter, and away from a national civil defense program. The sixth area of improvement called for increased flexibility of funding to state and local governments to improve their own disaster response programs. And the seventh and final area of recommendation called on FEMA to assure Congress, and the nation that the top management positions of the agency were filled by individuals with sufficient professional backgrounds and experience to handle disaster response.

The Mikulski hearings were extensive and whatever might be said of them, they resulted in a thorough review of the implications of aspects of the legislation—implications that called for more work on the bill. As a consequence, Mikulski's original bill, S995, was withdrawn, and the committee spent the next year redrafting a new version of the bill. The one year reprieve gave Witt time to work on various aspects of FEMA's problems, and to also move the agency toward a better public and political image.

During the first 100 days of Witt's tenure, he continued to improve his relations with Congress. He met again with the chairs and staffers of all the key congressional committees overseeing the various FEMA programs. During this time he publicly testified before six congressional committees and subcommittees. In addition to mending fences with Capitol Hill, Witt forcefully continued his reorganization of FEMA's structure. His efforts in this area were so effective, that after only six months in the position he felt confident enough to ask NAPA to review the agency's operations in light of their previously critical report. The report was guardedly positive and encouraging.[7] Also aiding FEMA during the 1-year reprieve was the continuing effective response of the agency to a series of natural disasters. Within 15 months, FEMA effectively responded to 17 separate declarations of disasters.[8]

In spite of FEMA's impressive improvements, and the public/political relations efforts of Witt, the Mikulski committee continued their development of a new legislative agenda for FEMA. Finally, on August 18, 1994, the Senate governmental affairs committee approved a bill aimed at recasting the central mission of FEMA. The new bill, S1697, attempted to shift the focus of FEMA away from nuclear attack-related disasters, and instead focus the agency on providing relief after natural disasters. It would have required both the president and FEMA to submit plans to Congress for providing federal disaster assistance, and establish chains of command for disaster response. The submitted plans would have specified both federal duties in an emergency, and the response relationships that would be established between the federal government, various state and local governments, and any related private agencies. The bill would have also specified ways in which

FEMA itself would be reorganized, including the relocation of regional offices to high-risk areas. In addition to the above provisions, the bill also established a targeted grant program which allowed state and local governments to better prepare for emergencies. The measure authorized $200 million each year through fiscal 1998 for this grant program. While originally scheduled to be voted on by the Senate after the Labor Day recess, the bill was delayed due to the upcoming Fall congressional election. (Congressional Quarterly 1994).

However, the fall 1994 congressional elections proved a disaster for the Democratic majority in Congress. In a stunning defeat, they lost control of both the House and the Senate to the Republicans. One of the senatorial casualties of the election was Senator Mikulski's position as chair of a key subcommittee of Senate Appropriations—a position from which she had been waging guerrilla warfare against FEMA or, to be fair, against what she saw as its problems.

The new Republican majority had another plan for government, far different than the previous Democratic majority, a plan called The Contract with America. Very quickly, the new Republican ''contract'' plan devolved into congressional and presidential conflict. Partisan conflict over the role of government in American life, coupled to budgetary battles, led to governmental stalemate, and even shutdown, as congressional legislation met presidential vetoes. As the battle over the new Republican plan began to unfold, the Mikulski bill, along with the movement to reorganize FEMA, faded into the background.

The governmental stalemate and Senator Mikulski's loss of some of her leverage gave Witt the reprieve that he needed to reorganize FEMA without interference from either Congress or the president. In the political vacuum created by the changes in Congress and the stalemate between the Republican congress and the Democratic President Witt quickly moved to restructure both FEMA's mission, organization, and relations with others involved in emergency management at all levels of government and with those outside it.

VIII. FREE RIDERS AND MITIGATION: THE LEAST NOTICED AND UNDERSTOOD BUT MOST CRITICAL PROBLEM

Over the years of FEMA's existence, federal involvement in natural disasters had grown. Along with the growth in responding to natural disasters, the costs to the federal government had also increased. By the time that Witt assumed the directorship of FEMA, congressional concerns over the increasing costs had reached a point that many in Congress felt that some new type of financial arrangement was needed between the federal government and the State governments. At the bottom of this congressional concern was a growing reluctance to continue to bail out communities and states that suffered natural disasters, but who had taken no effective steps to institute preventive measures that would have decreased a disaster's impact.

Many states and local communities, on the other hand, felt that congressional criticism was either unwarranted or excessive. In the view of various states and local communities they recognized that they lay in ''danger zones''—areas prone to flooding, earthquakes, tornadoes or hurricanes—but the probability of such a disaster occurring was ''low.'' On the other hand, they also recognized that such high exposure would mean a huge number of costly claims in the event of a disaster.

Faced with a low probability but a high exposure, many of the danger-zone communities and states were reluctant to invest the millions of dollars necessary to change building codes, buy disaster insurance, or construct preventive barriers such as flood walls or

reinforced buildings for earthquakes. Generally the feeling was that citizens were demanding services that met immediate needs, therefore, mitigation costs should be foregone in the expectation that the federal government would provide the funds avoided to repair much of the damage from a disaster. The result of this form of federal/state risk management game was that disaster impacts were not evenly distributed within even the same area under the same conditions.

A classic example of this problem arose during the 1993 midwestern flooding in Iowa. Two Iowa cities, Dubuque and Davenport, both located on the Mississippi River within a few hundred miles of each other, were impacted by the flooding in completely different ways. In the 1960s, Dubuque had spent a million dollars to construct a flood wall around the city. Davenport, in 1984, refused to construct a flood wall, estimated to cost $20 million, claiming that it not only did not have the funds but also that the flood wall would obstruct their view of the Mississippi. When the 1993 flooding hit Iowa, Dubuque remained dry and secure, but Davenport's downtown commercial area was completely flooded. After the flooding, Davenport, in spite of its past history of refusing to take preventive measures, received the federal funds to repair the flood damage.

The cost shifting process of risk assessment in which states and local communities assessed the costs of prevention versus the likelihood of federal aid after a disaster was not an issue the general public was aware of, let alone understood, but it had become a major point of contention within the emergency management relations between the federal and state governments. Witt was firmly convinced, as increasingly members of Congress were, that emergency management had to be able to do response and recovery well, but in the final analysis its emphasis had to be prevention or mitigation of disaster impacts. The free rider problem and mitigation were thus linked. The only politically feasible means of getting at the free rider problem was through mitigation. Political leaders were not going to deny people aid after a disaster has struck no matter how heedless they had been with regard to prevention.

Further aggravating this problem was FEMA's own involvement in both disaster relief and providing disaster insurance. While FEMA provided low cost flood insurance to home owners—in 1993 a $300 annual policy insured a house up to $185,000—and sought to use the insurance program to encourage communities to adopt tougher building codes, it also provided programs that negated the insurance program's intentions. FEMA's disaster relief program provided low-interest loans up to $120,000 for individuals and $500,000 for businesses. In essence, the Disaster Relief Loan Program undercut the intention of the Flooding Insurance Program and provided local communities and states with a way out of making tough decisions that would anger local developers and contractors. In essence, all of the incentive for disaster mitigation was nullified by the relief program.

The insurance industry, under the efforts of their Washington lobbying organization, the Natural Disaster Coalition, had been seeking ways to provide state governments with incentives to adopt tougher building code standards and emergency prevention systems. The coalition proposed that states be required to submit a comprehensive disaster relief plan to FEMA in order to be eligible for receiving the federal insurance and disaster relief. The submitted plans would detail specific steps the states would take to identify risk structures, their methods to improve building code enforcement, and the deployment of a comprehensive emergency response system. In addition, the coalition sought to link insurance premium levels to local building code standards. To support their case, the coalition pointed to Hurricane Andrew in Florida, and estimated that at least $4 billion in damages could have been prevented if just the existing building codes had been enforced.

Many legislators, especially those in ''danger zones'' frowned on the coalition's proposal, primarily because of fear of skyrocketing insurance costs. Still, the coalition's proposals did fit the mood of Congress, and the overall feeling that public willingness to aid those communities which refused to take preventive measures was waning or would if the issue received much exposure. But in order for FEMA to deal with the free rider/mitigation conundrum, it first had to reach agreements with the states as to how their disaster preparedness plans would work within a national framework, and then what steps would be taken in relation to the national disaster response framework and then to deal with disaster prevention (Ward 1998). Only within such a comprehensive framework could FEMA effectively use its grant program to states in a way to get at the free rider/mitigation problem. But before such a comprehensive framework could evolve, federal and state relations would have to undergo extensive change.

IX. REINVENTING FEDERAL/STATE RELATIONS

Starting with President Jimmy Carter in the late 1970s, the process of reorganizing and downsizing the federal government had gained greater and greater emphasis with each succeeding Presidential Administration. While initially an executive initiative, over the years the effort had gained support from the general public, state governors, and congressional leaders. By the early 1990s, political leaders in both parties were rethinking the overall mission of the federal government, and seeking ways to both control rising costs for public services while increasing agency accountability to both political leaders and the general citizen.

President Clinton's capitalizing on this mood by championing ''reinventing government'' and the creation of the national performance review (NPR) provided Witt with an opportunity to reinvent FEMA's federal/state relations. The NPR report emphasized the necessity of the state governments entering into what were referred to as ''performance partnership agreements'' (PPAs) with the various federal agencies. The PPA concept proposed a radically new way of allocating federal funds to the various states, and in essence proposed that the state government's should have the flexibility of directing their own program development, while still being held ultimately accountable for their program performance by the federal agencies. The new approach recognized that each state had its own unique problems and resources and should be allowed to develop programs to maximize the use of federal funds while, at the same time, still being held accountable for the final level of program output achieved by the various program areas.

The new NPR approach—the performance partnership agreements—would give the states greater flexibility while still enabling FEMA to induce them to come up with outcomes that fit a comprehensive plan. FEMA recognized that many of the federal and state emergency management programs were duplicative and that in the past states had been reluctant to develop creative programs or partnerships in emergency management because of the lack of both financial incentives and flexibility. By utilizing the NPR approach concerning flexibility toward the state programs, FEMA hoped to restructure state and federal relations, improve the overall emergency management response capability, and yet by linking the receipt of both program grants and disaster funds to specific outcomes, to bring them into conformity with a national plan that could be the forerunner for an effort that focused on mitigation, and diminished the free rider problem (Ward 1998).

A task force composed of key officials from FEMA and several of the state emergency management programs developed a series of goals for the new partnership and subsequent funding programs for the partnership. Giving the states flexibility was risking it taking longer to negotiate agreements and meant that getting to the ultimate goal of mitigation would take longer to achieve, but the end result would be a nationally based comprehensive plan for emergency response that reflected the broad national goals, but achieved by individual state-specific objectives.

It is likely that Witt and those around him were confident that they would ultimately be able to get to an emphasis on mitigation simply because of their faith in the logic of mitigation as an idea that would attract support of powerful financial interests like the insurance industry and at the same time would make good sense to citizens once an educational campaign made clear its great potential to avoid human and financial loss. Witt's faith that mitigation was ''the answer'' and would prevail never wavered. At every opportunity, he would repeat his mitigation mantra: ''In the end, mitigation is the most effective form of emergency management'' (Wamsley 1993).

The final result of these PPA efforts was a FEMA strategic plan called ''Partnership for a Safer Future,'' which encompassed the PPA's at its core and extended them into a 5-year frame. Under the plan, FEMA laid out the overall objectives for national emergency management, and each state submitted a state-specific plan based on the PPA effort for achieving those ends. In order to assess each state's efforts toward meeting their goals, the program review process was changed.

In the past, state program managers had a checklist which they used to report on their success at meeting federal guidelines and standards. Under the new approach, FEMA allowed each state to determine how to improve the process, and worked with each state to establish state-specific measures of improvement. To ensure that each state ''stayed on target,'' the state-specific measures of improvement had to be collaterally set by each state and agency with the approval of FEMA. The process allowed the states to be responsible for establishing a response base, but with the expectation that it would improve disaster assistance within general national guidelines and structures.

Drawing upon the strategic plan, FEMA then entered into developing each of the states' formal agreements, called comprehensive agreements. FEMA regional staff were assigned to formally negotiate the agreements with each state's counterpart. In essence, the final negotiated agreement was then submitted to FEMA for final approval, and formed a contract between FEMA and the state agencies. In addition, the liaison staff of FEMA and their state counterparts would meet on a regular basis to review the agreement, and submit changes to FEMA when needed. The process thus became a continuous negotiating process, and a way to forge direct links between the federal government and each appropriate state agency.

Each PPA had allowed a state to develop it's own ''vision'' for emergency management, but in the Comprehensive Agreement this was framed within a five year plan which gave FEMA some assurance that a better response capability was emerging and would be constantly improved, and this enabled it to turn more of its attention to its ultimate goal of mitigation (Ward 1998).

X. ZEROING IN ON THE MITIGATION PROBLEM

By 1996, FEMA had negotiated comprehensive agreements with all 50 states. Immediately after the establishment of these, FEMA began to focus more directly on the mitigation

issue, and proposed a new agreement called a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the states and the federal government that would aim solely at mitigation efforts. The intention was that the MOUs would ensure that each state developed a statewide hazard mitigation plan, which included a priority list for mitigation projects within each state. Within FEMA, Witt established the Mitigation Directorate and charged it with implementing the MOUs.

Under the MOUs, Witt proposed establishing several incentives to encourage the states to develop comprehensive mitigation plans. One of these included the establishment of new disaster declaration criteria, which would reward pro-mitigation states by providing a higher cost sharing ratio for their next disaster.

In addition to providing a better cost sharing ratio, Witt began to lobby Congress for the establishment of a predisaster mitigation fund. The fund would have made money available to each state to create and implement innovative mitigation projects, revise building code standards, and underwrite insurance premiums for a wider range of types of disasters. Citing the 1993 midwestern floods, Witt emphasized the ''Volkmer bill,'' which allowed FEMA to buy out 10,000 properties within the various flood plains. While ambitious, the program was not well received by a Republican Congress more concerned with reducing federal costs and involvement in local and state affairs. Consequently the proposal stalled in Congress.

Recognizing the need for political and commercial support, Witt appealed directly to the Insurance industry to back his proposals, and to get involved in lobbying both the federal and state levels of government:

> The insurance industry has a valuable role in this. As leaders in the community . . . they can help bring the mitigation message to individual and corporate clients. Get to know local and state emergency management officials and get involved in emergency management activities. We have to continue to sit down together, you (insurers) and us, to help communities build safer. I know over the last three years we have made a difference and I know we can make even more of a difference in the next five years. Doesn't it make good sense for us to continue? I think it does, and I look forward to it. (Insurance Advocate 1996)

Witt's direct appeal to the insurance industry did not result in pressure on Congress to appropriate money for his mitigation plan. It did, however, win some respect from key congressional members who recognized that they were dealing with someone who understood how to find support from powerful people outside Congress if he felt forced to do so. More importantly perhaps his foray into Wall Street resulted in the emergence of a plan which eventually became known as ''Project Impact.''

A. Project Impact

In order to gain political and commercial support for funding a mitigation program, Witt had gone directly to Wall Street, and specifically to a very powerful and influential group within the insurance industry known as the Contingency Planning Exchange (CPE).

The CPE was established in 1985, and is composed of the United State's largest banks, most prominent legal and financial institutions, plus the biggest companies in manufacturing, trade, and advanced biological and mechanical technology. The CPE was initially developed under the Reagan Administration's Cold War/nuclear survival strategy, and was established to help the United States' largest corporations and financial institutions develop contingency plans for such a catastrophic event. The fall of the Soviet Union, like FEMA, had undermined the ''civil defense'' nature of the exchange's mission. The

CPE, like FEMA, was seeking a way to continue to exist within the new post-Cold War order. As Mark Harmowitz, CPE partnership coordinator and a member of the CPE executive board, put it: ''We at the CPE believe that we can no longer build contingency plans that only address the needs of our own companies. The impacts of disasters have far reaching consequences and demand that we plan our prevention, response and recovery efforts jointly with the communities where we operate. Avoiding damage from disasters is the key'' (Insurance Advocate 1998:4).

On the surface, the CPE's shift toward disaster mitigation might seem to be only an attempt by an organization to locate a new charter for existence after the demise of a previous charter. But in fact, the CPE's change in attitude was based on a more fundamental issue which was arising on Wall Street.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s a new type of investment had developed on Wall Street called the ''catastrophe bond,'' or ''cat'' bond for short. Such bonds were developed by investment bankers, who pooled insurance premiums, and repackaged them as securities. The development of the ''cat'' bond, had fueled a whole new area of investment called the ''reinsurance market,'' and spawned a new group of investment bankers and traders who specialized in this area. Aided by statisticians and meteorologists, these brokers analyzed the risks associated with catastrophes such as earthquakes and hurricanes, and then repackaged the reinsurance securities based on final profits after payouts for disaster claims. In terms of growth on Wall Street, the reinsurance market and Cat bonds were considered one of the prime future investment groups.

The key, of course, to making a profit in such a market was keeping the final payout schedule for disasters as low as possible. As in any insurance business, the major key to keeping pay-outs as low as possible is prevention prior to the catastrophe. CPE's new disaster contingency charter aligned with the profit concerns of the reinsurance market, and made it a prime candidate to work with various groups, such as FEMA, who were attempting to institute prevention and mitigation efforts before catastrophes struck.

Previously, FEMA had partially funded a project instituted by the New York State Emergency Management Office called the ''Joint Loss Reduction Project.'' Under the pilot project, both the New York State Emergency Management Office and the New York State insurance industry developed a shared mitigation program which promoted mitigation efforts tied to insurance premiums. It was this pilot program that became the basis for FEMA's ''Project Impact'' (Ward 1998).

Witt emphasized to the CPE and Wall Street that it was in the interest of the nation's business community to not only protect their own financial investments, but to also assist in protecting the communities in which they did business. Using the New York model, Witt proposed a joint public/private partnership to lead the nation in advancing a comprehensive mitigation program.

In order to bolster his case, Witt used the development of El Niño to put the ''fear of god'' into the reinsurance industry. For example, he told a gathering of the insurance industry: ''The impact of this year's El Niño continues to be felt across the country, We currently are handling 17 different disasters, all of them related to El Niño, according to the National Weather Service'' (Insurance Advocate 1998:4).

Witt went on to state that disaster figures did not take into account the loss from businesses closing and job loss, especially for small businesses—40% of which never reopened after a disaster. In the fall of 1997, FEMA held an ''El Niño Community Preparedness Summit'' in Santa Monica, California. President Clinton addressed the gathering of insurance industry representatives and emergency management leaders, and an-

nounced the establishment of a $50 million program which would be called Project Impact. Witt called on 500 businesses to join in a partnership with FEMA within 1 year to implement the program, and specifically called on the CPE to take the lead in representing the business and insurance industries in his efforts to have the program established permanently by Congress. ''The CPE is an important partner in FEMA's 'Project Impact.' Since disasters threaten the economic and commercial growth of entire communities, the comprehensive planning and solutions that the private sector can provide are essential'' (Insurance Advocate 1998:4).

Witt asked the CPE to persuade its membership to donate 12,000 hours of assistance to help small businesses prepare for natural disasters. In addition, he asked the CPE to request of its member companies a donation of $20 million in financial incentives to assist small businesses and communities in developing mitigation plans and implementing them.

Over the next 6 months, FEMA and CPE negotiated the general outlines of a joint program, and on March 25, 1998, they launched the program at a joint meeting in New York. Under ''Project Impact,'' seven pilot communities were to be selected to demonstrate the economic benefits of predisaster mitigation efforts. Each selected community would form ''teams'' to develop the local programs and would include representatives from the local business community, local government officials, and state emergency management departments.

Initially, seven pilot communities were selected for the program. Each of the communities received $1 million from FEMA as seed money to be used for disaster mitigation efforts such as installing hurricane straps in auditoriums, wind shutters on public buildings, and improved disaster shelters for victims. In order to receive the funds, each community had to pledge the cooperation of the local business community and local government officials in developing their mitigation plans. In addition, the communities were required to examine properties that were highly vulnerable, and to assess the cost of either replacing the property if damaged, versus outright purchase and demolition prior to a disaster.

Overall, the basic intention of Project Impact was to have communities assess and recognize the risks involved at the local level, and to take initiatives to address those risks. It was hoped that eventually, the process would lead to a recognition of the effect such an effort could have on the local communities bond ratings in the insurance market, and the impact that disasters had on the entire local community infrastructure.

The initial seven Project Impact pilot communities included a grant to Pascagoula, Mississippi—an area in which Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott held a significant investment in a chain of local pizza parlors.[9] Twenty more communities were expected to be added to the program within a year, and FEMA's eventual goal was to have at least one model community in each state.[10]

Project Impact was not, ultimately, the full-fledged Mitigation Program sought by FEMA. The failure of Congress to provide federal funds for property buyouts in high-risk areas significantly decreased its effectiveness. Nonetheless, Project Impact represented a major step toward FEMA's ultimate goal of designing an emergency management system which combined both emergency response and disaster prevention.

A framework for the development of a comprehensive response to natural disasters, one, which shifted essential resources to the state, and local levels of government, had finally been established. However, in order for such a comprehensive system to respond effectively, and to bring the necessary resources into play for both prevention and response, a support information system had to be developed. The development of such an information system seemed an overwhelming challenge.

In case of a disaster, one needs to know the types of resources that are available and their level of readiness. In addition, information about power and water/sewer lines in the affected areas, types of building structures, levels of building codes for property plats, and local chains of command for response are basic for effective response. The same information is also essential for assessing potential damage before an event occurring and for designating target area for prevention efforts.

Compounding the basic information problem is the fact that natural disasters occur in a non-deterministic manner. The direction and force of an earthquake, hurricane, tornado, or flood is constantly shifting based on factors beyond the limits of human cognition. Thus, monitoring the potential disaster must occur prior to the event, and while the disaster is at its full impact. This calls for an information system that must operate within a limitless number of probabilities.

Within FEMA, the development of such an advanced information system had been underway for many years before the appointment of Witt as head of the agency—especially under the ''black budget'' programs. Major breakthroughs in both computer and telecommunications technology, especially during the later 1980s and early 1990s, presented an opportunity for the creation of such a system. Unfortunately, the advanced telecommunications and computer assets needed for such a system existed but under control of the Department of Defense and they were highly classified. In order for FEMA to tap these assets for use in natural disasters, the issue of FEMA's role in civil defense and continuity of government, and its relationship with the Department of Defense, had to be resolved.

B. Settling the Issues Surrounding Civil Defense and Continuity of Government

FEMA's effectiveness in coping with natural disasters had long been hamstrung by the legacy of the Reagan Administration's obsession with nuclear attack survival. For years, as the country sought to cope with the effects of natural disasters, FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate, the directorate charged with civil defense and continuity of government, had necessarily kept large portions of the agency's capabilities behind a wall of secrecy. Fearful of revealing to the ''enemy'' ''top secrets,'' the directorate refused to deploy any of the advanced communications and technological systems that had been developed by the agency. These ''assets,'' while needed to aid disaster areas, were generally left immobilized during natural disasters.

The NAPA study had conservatively estimated that 27% of the agency's annual budget, about $100 million, had been directed into a ''black budget'' area devoted to national security preparedness. While some of the funds in the ''black budget'' would have been valuable in response to natural disaster, the national security and secrecy mentality of the operation had resulted in all of the advanced technological capacity being classified, and restricted in its use for response to natural disasters. By the time that Witt assumed the agency's directorship, no one was able to accurately estimate the total amount of funds that had been invested in the ''black budget'' operation. The end result was that FEMA had developed an advanced system for disaster response composed of underground installations, mobile units, ultrasophisticated and advanced communications systems, and probably the most advanced computer modeling systems in the world, but none of it was available for use in dealing with natural disasters.

Witt understood and was committed to lifting the secrecy shield, and deploying the civil defense assets in natural disaster operations. In order to alter the agency's mission

emphasis, he quickly declassified a series of agency documents related to the ''black budget'' operation, and dismantled the national preparedness directorate. In addition, he established an open line item within the agency's budget for national preparedness, and allocated only $7.5 million for its annual operation. The number of employees with security clearances was sharply reduced and former classified projects were then redesignated as ''dual use'' for responding to both natural disasters and national security emergencies.

The first example of this dual-use declassification was the Mobile Emergency Response Support fleet (MERS) and the Mobile Air Transportable Telecommunications Systems (MATTS)—both under the direction of the Response and Recovery directorate's Mobile Operations Division (RR-MO). These state-of-the-art vehicles had previously been deployed at five sites across the United States. Their original intended use was to keep a sophisticated communications net mobile and invulnerable to disruption, and to locate designated senior government officials in the event of an attack or threat of attack and provide them with mobile communications and facilities to continue governmental operations. After the dual use classification, these units were first deployed in Des Moines, Iowa, for the midwestern flooding to provide communications backup, power units, and water-purification facilities.

While on the surface these efforts appeared to open the operation, in fact a large portion of the operation remained classified and subject to various restrictions. Because these assets were still related to the national security preparedness function, FEMA had only shared authority over them with the National Security Council, which was the ultimate overseer and coordinator of the national response to all-out war (Ward 1998).

But due to the collapse of the Soviet Union the political climate was changing rapidly and FEMA, the National Security Council and the Department of Defense were faced with increasing pressure from Congress in terms of budgets. All these agencies recognized that such pressures had to be addressed for the continued viability of all of them. In addition, the nature of national security was changing. While the fall of the Soviet Union had decreased the nuclear attack scenario, new threats were arising, especially in terms of terrorism.[5]

In order for FEMA to move toward a natural disaster emphasis within the agency's operations, and to improve the agency's natural disaster response capability by tapping these advanced systems, an agreement had to be reached between FEMA, the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Security Council (NSC) regarding the national security preparedness assets in question.[6] Negotiations were entered into and a ''tiered'' system of access to the assets developed under the ''black budget.'' National security needs i.e., DoD and the NSC would continue to have first call on these assets in the event of an attack or threats to that effect. But barring such events, portions of the assets were to be available to FEMA for emergency management. Accordingly, many of the assets were declassified and designated for dual use operations. These included the emergency mobile fleet, computer modeling and projection of weather patterns, satellite camera and real-time video feeds for damage assessment, communication and computer linkages to DoD wide area network systems, and field computer and communications satellite uplinks and downlinks for use of on-site assessment and data feeds by personnel in the field. All of these dual use systems were available directly from the FEMA's natural disaster response center in the nation's capital. More advanced and classified systems were placed under DoD control and housed at DoD command centers. These advanced systems were integrated into the overall DoD defense and response systems, and access was restricted through formal authorization protocols. The secretary of defense was authorized to provide

access to the various systems in support of natural disasters. Access to assets was defined within a set of defense priorities set within DoD directive 3025.1. The secretary of the army was designated the DoD executive agency for support of civil emergencies.

As envisioned the new arrangement would begin with the prediction of a natural disaster. As it unfolded, a liaison officer from FEMA would be assigned to the Network Management Operating Center of the National Communications System/Defense Information Systems Agency. That person would be linked, by both telecommunications and data lines, to the FEMA control center in Washington. As natural disaster preparations and response operations developed for each situation, FEMA could request access to more of the advanced system network's assets. Each request for additional assets would be passed from the liaison officer at Network Management Operating Center to DoD personnel for approval. Upon giving approval, DoD would release portions of the system's assets to FEMA's control center, and put in place a series of ''firewalls'' to other levels of the system. A DoD-designated representative would then monitor the system while it was accessed to ensure that use was limited to only the authorized areas and to sever the link if any unauthorized access attempt was made. Once the disaster was over, the system was reconfigured to its original access levels, and both centers would disconnect the temporary linkages (Ward 1998).

By releasing portions of the ''black budget'' assets to ''tiered access'' under DoD control and authorization, FEMA maintained a role in the civil defense ''force structure,'' which was an important matter of status and reputation, but at the same time enabled it to significantly move the agency's primary mission toward disaster response, and the development of the ''all hazards'' approach. In addition, while FEMA added a layer of authorization to its system for access, it was able to maintain access to the advanced systems that had been developed, and are still being developed, within the ''black budget'' operations (Ward 1998). Once the civil defense issue had been resolved, FEMA was better able to pursue its disaster response agenda, and to concentrate on developing a shared federal/state system for disaster preparedness and response, and ultimately, mitigation. The new system would be able to bring to bear formerly classified ''high value'' assets to dispatch resources and information promptly from a ''forward leaning posture'' and do so with much better understanding as to needs and priorities than ever before. That anguished dialogue over a barely functioning phone in the wake of Hurricane Andrew should never need to happen again, i.e., local EM office: ''*We need everything! Send us everything*! State EM office: ''We can't send *everything*! What do you *need*!!''

C. The Technological ''Fix''

During the entire time that FEMA had been developing it's state and local efforts, its technical staff had been building an advanced system of assessment and response for natural disasters. They were aided in this by advances in both computer and telecommunications technology. Even before Witt's assumption of leadership, FEMA's technical staff had been working on using the advanced technological base, developed under the ''black budget,'' to supplement and improve its field response for natural disasters.

Shortly after Hurricane Andrew struck Southern Florida, Digital Matrix Services, Inc. (DMS), a Miami based Geographical Information System (GIS) software company contacted FEMA. DMS made available to FEMA its on-line digital database of Southern Florida, and the system was used by both FEMA and the Army's Special Forces transport division to assess damage, and to coordinate disaster relief into the hardest hit areas. Using the on-line maps in the DMS database, and satellite ground positioning systems, the relief

efforts were able to navigate the devastated area in spite of the fact that all the street signs and land markers were destroyed. The system was also used to select sites for sanitation and debris removal, and the siting of field relief operations for food and water distribution.

After Andrew, FEMA continued to work with DMS on how to apply the GIS systems, and especially in terms of linking the systems to field efforts. The basic premise of the development project was to build a portable, ready-to-go database of geographical information that could be tapped as the need arose. The database of populated areas likely to suffer natural disasters would be constructed prior to a disaster, and then be configured and operationalized to deal with the specific area that suffered a natural disaster. Once the disaster was past, the system would then be reconfigured to a ''wait'' status, and continue to build its resource of information.

Using commercially available street network files, images in the database were rectified so that actual size and distance appeared in a true proportion to the ground structures. The structures could also then be linked to individual addresses and homeowner information to provide a direct match between structures and homeowners. Special vans equipped with the system would then drive down the devastated areas, feeding visual information on damaged buildings directly into the database through satellite links, and providing an immediate damage assessment of the affected areas. The system was also linked to the ''dual-purpose'' ''black budget'' computer modeling systems to provide ''what-if'' analysis for determining possible damage and prepositioning of resources in the event of an on-coming hurricane, or the aftershocks of an earthquake. After Witt assumed the leadership of the agency, he threw his full weight in behind these preliminary efforts (Ward 1998).

By June of 1993, just 3 months after Witt had taken over, FEMA tested an advanced system of field support, in cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers, at Salt Lake City. The first trial of the proposed Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) involved the linking of laptop computers (running under Lotus Notes on-line conferencing capabilities) with microwave and satellite data links. The pilot system provided ''real-time'' conferencing capabilities between relief workers in the field and FEMA operational centers. Two-way wireless modems carried voice, data, and graphics to an earth station uplink that then bridged the communications gap to field offices. The laptop computers and desktop microcomputers were mounted in recreational vehicles, and provided relief workers with full access to power, water, and telephone grid maps, along with satellite assessment of fire and building damage in the affected areas. (American City & County 1993:38). The initial prototype DMIS was successful, and FEMA's technical staff began further development of the DMIS, with an especially heavy emphasis on the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The Federal Geographic Data Committee supported FEMA's efforts.

As with most areas of computer and telecommunications development, the federal government has often been in the forefront of developing advanced geographical information systems. While almost every agency of the federal government has some capacity in terms of GIS, the most advanced systems have been developed by the Department of Defense, the U. S. Geological Survey, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. While all agencies have some GIS capability, they are limited in their development of GIS by an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-16, first written in 1967 and then revised in 1990. Under OMB Circular A-16, the Geographical Data Committee was established, and charged with coordinating data collection, establishment of standards, and the purchase of GIS systems. All federal

GIS systems must be capable of being linked, and form what is known as the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). The Committee is chaired by the interior secretary and establishes the standards for technological platforms and software, policies for access, and control over the collection, storage, and distribution of spatial information. In essence, the committee is to develop a ''shared vision'' of data supporting multiple tasks, and held together by a common emphasis on geography.

Under the Geographical Data Committee's (GDC) direction, the computer modeling division of FEMA began to evaluate both the existing GIS systems available within the federal government, and the ''black budget'' modeling systems developed under the Reagan Administration. An assessment of the models showed that models originally developed to assess damage from a nuclear attack could easily be modified to assess damage from natural disasters, especially prior to the actual event occurring. The eventual system developed, called Consequences Analysis Tool Set (CATS) could use off-the-shelf GIS software and hardware, and link the system to remote sensing devices, resource databases, and demographic data plus land plats, to deliver assessment information. The system would have the capability of estimating damage prior to an actual event, provide direct support during a disaster, and, during normal times, be used for preparedness training and mitigation planning. The proposed CATS system could also be linked to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) hurricane warning system to develop profiles of a hurricane's path and velocity, and to estimate potential damage assessments prior to landfall. The system, when linked to NOAA's system, could utilize the DMIS system to assess where damage was likely, the degree of damage that would result from wind, storm surges, waves, and flooding, and the number, and type, of both people and businesses that would be affected. Once the preassessment model was run, a second model would then determine the level of resources that would be needed, and the locations for prepositioning of the resources. The GDC gave FEMA authorization to develop the system, and by the summer of 1993 a prototype was in place and under testing.

The first test of the system was in August 1993 when Hurricane Emily hit the Outer Banks of North Carolina. CATS estimated that 674 homes would be destroyed, and the actual storm resulted in 683 claims being filed. The project was jointly funded by FEMA and the Defense Department's Nuclear Agency, which provided access to the U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory's Geographical Resource Analysis and Support System (GRASS), which formed the base system for CATS. Using CATS as a base, further modeling was developed, and eventually models were constructed for floods, earthquakes, fires, and other less common disasters such as chemical spills. By 1995, both the DMIS and CATS were operational, and could be linked to a national disaster telecommunications network (Ward 1998).

The impetus for the telecommunications network had its foundation in 1989 during the San Francisco earthquake. Still mired in the cold war mentality, FEMA, up to that time, had remained a ''paper based'' organization when it came to natural disasters. As a result, the agency was inundated, after the San Francisco quake, with over 70,000 paper applications for relief. The warning signal from San Francisco was unheeded, however, and in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew the agency was once again flooded with tens of thousands of written applications. This time the agency realized it needed to ''modernize'' the application system. It began to develop Local Area Networks and Wide Area Networks to speed up the processing of both disaster applications and checks. Utilizing the capacity of both the DMIS and CATS systems, the technical support division of FEMA modified the U.S. Army's GRASS system, and linked it to the mobile field vans operating

with the DMIS. Field inspectors to assess damage used AST portable touchpad computers. The data from the damage assessment units was then fed, via Ethernet, into various servers located at FEMA regional offices. Each of FEMA's regional office servers were then linked to the other regional office servers. Using Cisco System routers, the sites could then distribute the workload on applications across the country (InfoWorld 1994:62).

At first the proposed new system was directed at decreasing the processing time for disaster applications, but as the system's effectiveness became apparent, the system was further modified to feed data directly into other state or federal agencies involved in the disaster response. It became apparent that the field agents, in place, were able to feed current information into the total system concerning the immediate level of damage on the ground. So the system was expanded to allow for the data assessment to be fed not only into the application system, but also into the Disaster Command Centers seeking to deal with response to the event. When the combination of DMIS, CATS, field vans, and field agents information was linked, the entire system was then linked, via satellite feed, from FEMA's Disaster Response Center in Washington, D.C., to field operations and command centers across the country. The final system provided a ''real time'' environment with direct feed from the disaster area, and all sharing the same level of information for coordinating the response effort (Ward 1998). With the final development of the telecommunications network, FEMA's transition into a network entity was complete.

XI. COMING OF AGE?

When one examines the history of FEMA, and the emergence of a network structure better suited for its role as national coordinator of response to natural disasters and emergencies, it becomes clear that FEMA has developed in two very distinct phases. The first phase, which represents the years of the Reagan and Bush Administrations, is one of seeking to model itself after a traditional hierarchical organization for management decisions, agency action, and technological implementation.

During this time the agency operated within a very set and rigid chain of command. It was heavily influenced by the civil defense portion of its mission, and tightly coupled to the overall federal response to a potential nuclear attack scenario and the continuation of government after such an attack. All other missions of the agency were considered secondary, and often either ignored or dismissed as irrelevant in light of the urgency of the primary mission. Decisions in relation to other levels of government, in particular state and local governments were framed within a traditional ''by-the-book'' mentality, with rigid adherence to regulations and rules. Pleas by local and state governments to allow them to exercise discretion and flexibility to fit local conditions were ignored, and in fact completely rejected as undermining ''efficiency.'' During this period of time, the agency tended to operate as a ''closed system,'' seeking to buffer the agency from outside influences, and often taking hostile actions toward individuals, groups, and even congressional actors, who were interested in the agency's decisions and methods of operation.

Information technology (IT) deployment within FEMA followed a classic systems design model premised on the assumptions that all operational linkages were definable, and had a set of limited boundaries and possibilities (Woodward 1958; Simon 1960). The agency also tended to apply technology within an organizational design structure that mirrored a top-down decision making process reflective of the existing agency decision premises and power structure.

In many ways, the agency, during this first cycle, exhibits many of the management/technology traits described by James March (1978, 1981, 1987). March's research findings tended to show that technologies perceived by management as increasing control, or creating stability of the organization under their control, will be more likely to be adopted than technologies management perceives as undermining or changing the organizations control systems or decision premises. Thus the agency, during this time, was willing to adopt and develop IT supportive of the continuity of government program, the agency's primary objective, but reluctant to develop a disaster assessment and response system which would have supported the agency's natural disaster program (a secondary, and minor, agency objective).

The first phase in FEMA's network development did not end abruptly, but rather was a period of four to five years during which the primary mission, civil defense and the continuation of government, was undermined and eroded. The cause of the erosion was the fall of the Soviet Union, and with it the reduced risk faced by the United States in terms of the nuclear war scenario. During this period of time, which roughly corresponded to the Bush Administration, FEMA, along with the entire military establishment, faced the issue of seeking to redefine their primary agency missions. In the case of FEMA, the mission redefinition was aided by the fact that the agency's original mission encompassed both a civil defense and a natural disaster response charter.

From a logical standpoint, it appeared relatively easy to shift the agency from a civil defense posture to a natural disaster posture. This was the position of Senator Mikulski and the congressional critics of the agency. But in actuality, the process of transition was not that easy to accomplish. Large portions of the agency budget were still committed to a joint continuation of government and Department of Defense response system, much of which was highly classified. In addition, the rigid hierarchy and chain of command mentality of the first phase was still in place, along with the individuals who had fostered the civil defense/continuation of government agenda of the agency. Thus while the agency's outside critics saw the transition as relatively easy, inside the agency and the policy subsystem was a remaining hard-core cadre who sought define a new ''defense'' posture for the agency, and to maintain the hierarchical and control organizational model.

The ultimate crisis for the agency, and the final destruction of the civil defense mentality, occurred shortly near the end of the Bush Administration when the agency was called upon to coordinate a ''major'' natural disaster—the landfall of Hurricane Andrew in South Florida. Unable to effectively respond to the disaster, the agency was pushed into a secondary role, thus fueling the congressional anger over the agency's inability to transition itself into a natural disaster response posture. It is at this point in time that the second phase of FEMA's network development emerged.

Fortunately, for FEMA, the crisis point occurred at a time when a different model for government reform was emerging—generally called ''reinventing government''—adopted by and pushed throughout the federal government by Vice President Gore as the National Performance Review. The NPR philosophy combined several models from the private sector, and included concepts from total quality management (TQM), process reengineering, and organizational designs built around loosely coupled telecommunications networks. In essence, the NPR movement sought to place ''citizen satisfaction'' at the base of all program and agency evaluation. It was within this ''reinvention'' reform movement that James Lee Witt assumed the directorship of FEMA.

FEMA's ''reinvention'' efforts extended the NPR model in a significant way by expanding the agency's perspective to include those elements of the emergency manage-

ment policy subsystem that existed outside both the agency and the federal government. Underlying this basic adoption of the NPR model was recognition by Witt, and others in positions of leadership, that the agency was not a ''mechanistic model, designed to achieve a specific, predefined output,'' and with everything outside the organization seen as mere context (Thompson 1967). Of course the agency prior to Witt did not see itself in quite such naïve and simplistic terms, but nonetheless it clearly tended in that direction. The agency's view of its world shifted under Witt so that it began to see itself as more of a social system, highly dependent on the agency personnel's interaction and relationships with other social agents (people) in other organizations in other branches and levels of government and outside the public sector as well—all of whom affected FEMA or who were directly affected by the agency's performance (Burns and Stalker 1961). In essence, the agency was no longer a closed system, as it was during its first phase of development, but rather had become an open system, in which the internal components and dimensions of the agency were linked to the external environment that encompassed all the agency's activities and relevant others, not only in its immediate task environment but also in its broader domain or political economy as well. (Thompson 1967; Wamsley and Zald 1976).

From the standpoint of the development of a network entity in the public sector, FEMA's experience has much to offer in terms of developing new strategies for governmental redesign efforts—especially in the deployment of IT in support of those efforts. FEMA could have elected to follow a path where technology was used to support predetermined management decisions. Or it could have elected to go for the technological ''fix,'' in which the capabilities of technology could have set the parameters of operations. Instead FEMA followed two parallel tracks for redesigning the organization.

On one track Witt, and the various department heads of FEMA, focused on creating formal and informal structures with other federal and state agencies necessary to foster cooperation and coordination prior to an actual disaster occurring. Undeniably it was aided in this by Witt's close relationship to the president. This gave FEMA officials the status that made people take them seriously. As one interviewee said, ''James Lee and his wife watch movies with the Clintons. Word gets around about that, and in this town that means people return your phone calls—and promptly too.''

Not only was the relationship to the president important, but so was the president's own perspective on emergency management. As a former governor and chairman of the National Governors' Conference, Bill Clinton was fully cognizant of how important emergency management could be to state and local government and therefore how important it could be to a president. Moreover, he had seen at first hand how important it had been to President Bush in 1992—indeed, he might well have owed his win over Bush in no small way to the debacle that surrounded Hurricane Andrew.

In all efforts to induce cooperation, FEMA recognized the constitutional ''rights of place'' held by other actors, and accepted the reality of a decentralized system of ''shared powers.'' There were no blustering claims of statutory powers or pointing to antiquated statutes that could conceivably give the agency awesome wartime emergency powers, as had occurred under Giuffrida. These negotiations, with relevant others ultimately, led to the creation of agreements on how various elements within a national disaster response system would interact in the event a disaster actually occurred.

On the second track, Witt supported the efforts of IT staff within FEMA to examine the possibilities of developing a new type of response system utilizing the network capabilities located both within the federal government, and outside federal control at both the

state government and private sector levels. These efforts ultimately led to the creation of an advanced telecommunications and computer network system that was able to configure its response to an emerging situation rather than a predefined scenario.

The convergence of these two parallel tracks of development within FEMA ultimately led to the creation of a form of ''network'' entity, not an organization in the usual way the term is used but a social construct that spans levels of government and sectors of society. This new network operates under the recognition by all the members of the system that the resources and organization needed to respond to a natural disaster do not lie solely within the federal government or for that matter within government. And it operates by means of the technological capability of the most highly classified communications and computer platforms in the world. But in the process of creating this new network, Witt has also created a new policy subsystem that recognizes the shared power basis of our constitutional order and the cooperation necessary to achieve effective coordination in emergency management.

Have there been any rewards to FEMA, and Witt, for the agency's remarkable transition? In fact there has been some recognition of the hard work that went into the transformation. First, and not to be dismissed, was the self-satisfaction of those involved. After years of denigration and public humiliation, a favorable press is no small matter. Morale at FEMA has never been higher. There was formal recognition that it was an exemplar in the reinventing of government effort, and finally there was an unusual presidential honor bestowed upon the agency. On February 26, 1996 at the National Emergency Management Conference, President Clinton addressed the conference delegates, and announced a startling commitment to emergency management:

> I am very pleased with the progress that's been made. I also am more impressed than ever before about the importance, the integral importance of FEMA to the Nation's business. It now relates to the Transportation Department, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Labor Department, the Energy Department, right across the line because of all of us having to work with James Lee in the dealing with disasters. So today it's a pleasure for me to announce to all of you that I am extending Cabinet membership for the first time in history to FEMA and to James Lee Witt. (Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 3/4/96, Vol. 32 Issue 9, p380, 2p.)

The successful development of any form of network entity, whether in the public or private sector, is highly dependent on the ''relationships'' that are established between key players in other organizations and the levels of trust held between the members of the partnership. (Chisholm 1996; Harari 1998; Holmlund and Tornross 1997; Sproull and Kiesler 1991) This trust development is usually based on two factors: how well the relationship benefits those involved, and the trustworthiness and competence of the leadership in the relationship. Witt has proved to all with whom the agency has developed relations that the relationship is valuable to them. They have received favorable attention for their roles in disaster response from the public, Congress and the president. Some may have been able to augment their budget appropriations with such attention. Witt has repeatedly shown himself and the agency competent. But questions remain about the future, one of these questions concerns what type of dependencies will the members of the new policy subsystem experience as they come to rely, even more than they have in the past, on this new network with its technological infrastructure?

It should be evident to the reader by now that there are two opposing views about the impact that technology has on an organization or other social constructs, i.e., a network.

One view, as expressed early in our discussion of James March's theories, holds that technology is used in organizations to reinforce hierarchy, control, and centralization. This body of research has a long history, with numerous supporters (Fleck 1984; Gotlieb and Borodin 1973; Mosco 1989; Orlikowski 1988; Simon 1960; Wiener 1950). The other view holds that technology leads to empowerment and liberation, and fosters decentralization of authority and control, especially IT. While it lacks the lengthy history of the first view, this latter position also has an abundance of supporters (Galbraith 1968; Naisbitt 1982; Roszak 1988; de Sola Pool 1983; Toffler 1980). The debate about whether IT and dependency upon it encourages centralizing or decentralizing—greater central control or greater autonomy throughout remains open. It is even conceivable that both possibilities exist, depending on how the network is used and who uses it.

Over time, the new network that FEMA has helped to create will undoubtedly expand. Its capabilities will become more sophisticated and powerful. As its functionality and utility increases, so will the dependency upon it of all the members of the policy subsystem (network). Yet ultimately the capability and efficacy of this new network hangs on the capability of the federal government's systems, especially the DoD's advanced systems, which are the ''backbone'' that links all the other systems together. Up to now, the DoD, FEMA, and the rest of the federal government, have been open to sharing this critical resource. But there is always the possibility that in the future access will become conditional. As it stands presently, a change in either the directorship of FEMA or a new presidential administration's position, could turn this network into a vehicle for even greater centralization and control. Only the future will tell what direction the network will take.

XII. CONCLUSION

When James Lee Witt was appointed to the directorship of FEMA, he was the first person to come to the position with significant experience as a state director of emergency management, having held such a position in Arkansas under then-Governor Clinton. Witt's challenges were daunting. He assumed the leadership of a thoroughly discredited and demoralized agency being threatened with extinction. Somehow, he had to bring the agency from the status of a ''turkey-farm'' to a professional, competent, high reliability agency capable of leading other government organizations and organizations outside of government in cooperative response to national emergencies and disasters. (At that point it would seem only Witt was thinking of eventually extending such cooperation to mitigation.) One would have been hard pressed to find anyone who believed he could meet those challenges. The best appraisal he might have received within the beltway was that ''he couldn't do any worse than his predecessors.'' He quickly began to confound this pessimism, however, by quieting congressional critics, including some who had seemed implacable, moving quickly to turn around the abysmal morale of FEMA employees, and then reinterpreting the statutes so as to enable response capability to be set in motion *before* the declaration of a disaster by the president (Wamsley 1992–1993).

In addition, Witt proceeded to reorganize the agency in November of 1993 along the lines suggested by NAPA. Witt also set about institutionalizing the languishing Federal Response Plan (the interagency plan for coordinated response at the federal level) and improving relationships between FEMA and state- and local-level response organizations. It seems that it was realized early by Witt and those around him that FEMA's dismal

reputation could only be changed with effective and highly publicized response to some emergencies that commanded national attention. Witt and his staff also clearly grasped that the states could no longer be left to fend for themselves until overwhelmed, with FEMA playing the role of responder of last resort.

To effectuate a more competent and integrated response, a better operational network had to be established encompassing federal, state, and local governments as well as nongovernmental entities. It has been in this realm of political relationship building that Witt has shown his greatest expertise. It is also in the establishment of this integrated emergency management system that we can see one of the clearest examples of a ''network organization'' or, better put, simply a network. That is, what has been established, more likely out of necessity than design and intuition more than conscious application of formal knowledge, is an interagency, intergovernmental, intersector response system that effectively coordinates all necessary resources needed in a response situation—regardless who ''owns'' them. Such a system would not have been possible without the leadership of Witt in establishing the necessary relationships for resource sharing, his relationship with a president aware of the importance of the emergency management function, and the great advances made in information technology in the last decade that have allowed such coordination to proceed without the need of a new centralized, coordinating agency (or a larger, more hegemonic FEMA).

Soon after these efforts began, Witt was required to lead the agency in its first responses to potential disaster (preparation for Hurricane Emily, which did not come ashore), a real if slowly developing disaster in the Mississippi Valley floods, a significant earthquake in California, floods in Texas and Georgia, and the Oklahoma City bombing. In these cases, Witt and the agency performed well and the press coverage was very positive (especially in comparison to previous press coverage). In fact, as of this writing, FEMA has been basking in its most extended and extensive public plaudits in its history. It appears that emergency management has become an acknowledged and accepted function of the federal government. Witt deserves a lot of credit for this accomplishment. Whether or not he is a great political executive, he is assuredly a very good one. Perhaps it should be sobering to think about how much difference a good political executive can make to an agency in a governmental system that operates with roughly 3000 senior political executives with little skill and experience and an average tenure of 2 years (Stokes, 1994).

Witt's many successes notwithstanding, the future of the network entity of which FEMA is the center faces many unanswered questions and a future that is as uncertain as it is promising. The number of emergencies and related costs of effective response continue to increase dramatically, while significant burden shifting from the states to the federal government (and from some states to others) continues. Additionally, public expectations of timely response by the national government are escalating at the same time that the emergency management policy subsystem and its focal agency, FEMA, are struggling to develop a network that can move forward with a comprehensive system under severe financial constraints.

As the Clinton Administration wound down, one other major question confronted Witt, FEMA the agency, and FEMA as the center of the emergency management network or policy subsystem. It is a question that has lain dormant now for several years. That is: What should be done about the inordinately high number of political appointee positions in FEMA? The NAPA panel, which included one state director of emergency management and one former deputy director of FEMA, believed strongly that as long as that many

political appointee positions existed, the temptation to fill them with persons of dubious credentials would be too great for the White House Personnel Office to resist. The panel also believed that nine political appointees that required Senate confirmation would continue to foster ''stovepipes'' in FEMA.

The question dropped out of sight shortly after Witt used the positions to quickly bring in competent professionals in emergency management. Witt and those around him considered it a closed subject. When one of the authors pushed the NAPA case—that in the long run this question would arise again and the outcome might well be contrary to the public interest in another administration—one of Witt's closest associates acknowledged that, ''You might be right in the long run and with regard to other administrations, but we are concerned only with *this* administration.'' Such a statement is, of course, the final, bipartisan word on such matters from the desperately short time frame of American politics. But if there is any time when the public interest perspective on this matter can be raised and not buried as it was in 1993, it is in the waning days of an administration, when places in history and legacies loom a bit larger than partisan expediency. With the advent of a new administration, especially if there is a change in the party occupying the White House, negative potentialities will again spring to life.

If the American political system had a process for developing competent political executives with specialized, functional knowledge, one could say there is every reason to retain such a high number of political appointees. Sadly, such is not the case, and there is little prospect that such a process will develop in the foreseeable future. That is not to say that our system has not and can not produce such persons. James Lee Witt is proof to the contrary. It is to say rather that we have been luckier than we have any right to be. But the problem is even more complex because it involves not merely the political and administrative skills and functional competence of the person made FEMA director, but also the sensitivities and cognizance of the president regarding emergency management and his or her relationship with the FEMA director. Clearly that relationship has to be closer and built upon more than shared party and ideology. President Reagan and ''General'' Giuffrida or President Bush and Stickney are proof of that. The NAPA panel tried to finesse the problem by recommending the creation of an adviser to the president for crisis management in the White House Office to be the liaison with an effective FEMA director and a surrogate for an ineffective one. Witt of course would have none of that and said simply, ''That's what I am, and my office is at FEMA, not the White House'' (Wamsley, personal communication 1993).

But if seen through eyes other than those of the FEMA director, it is a bit more complex. Picture a president who comes to the office having served only as an ambassador or senator and who has almost no awareness or knowledge of emergency management. Picture a White House Personnel Office, beset, as always, with requests and pressures for appointments to office for deserving party faithful. And as always the more prominent and visible offices go to party faithful who are also prominent and visible. Offices like the directorship of FEMA, at least in the eyes of the White House Personnel Office, go to persons less well known. They are not of course, necessarily less competent, but the probability diminishes and luck becomes a more significant variable in the equation. Who will lobby or press for someone who is not only of the ''right'' party but also a skilled political executive who is knowledgeable about emergency management? The National Emergency Management Association (NEMA)? Perhaps, but there is little reason to believe that the association would have much influence. The National Governor's Association? They have more immediate and greater concerns. What we can easily see, then, is

the disturbing prospect that the situation can be returned to the ''dark ages'' of emergency management virtually overnight.

In the best of all possible worlds, the directorship of FEMA would become an office seen as being largely above partisan politics, though still subject to presidential wishes and Senate confirmation, much as the FBI was in its early and middle years, or the CIA has been in most instances. But we clearly do not live in such a world. The NAPA study recommended elimination of most of the political appointees at FEMA. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 provides sufficient means to change a significant number of top positions if one needs to do that, as Witt did. As of this writing, information has appeared on the Internet suggesting that James Lee Witt is beginning to face up to this problem and has appointed a special advisory panel to advise him on what should be done. We can only hope this proves true.

From one perspective, the many accomplishments of James Lee Witt, of FEMA, and of the network entity of which it is the center are remarkable; yet from another perspective they are the necessary but still insufficient conditions for making this current phase in the evolution of emergency management in America the one that can be said to mark its ''coming of age.'' The necessary framework is in place for a comprehensive system not only for effective, cooperative response and recovery but also for mitigation. However, much remains to be done, many questions remain to be answered, and many issues are still to be resolved.

ENDNOTES

1. The Constitution provides an explicit federal role for suppressing civil disorders. Article I, Section 8 states that ''Congress Shall have Power to . . . provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, Suppress Insurrections, and repeal invasions.''
2. The Alaskan earthquake of 1964 set the stage by presenting the nation with the daunting task of completely rebuilding the physical infrastructure of one of our largest and most remote states. It was also a landmark in that the White House dramatically assumed direct responsibility for response and recovery in a way that previewed the evolving relationship between the presidency and disasters. The Alaska quake was followed by Hurricane Betsy in 1965, Hurricane Camille in 1969, the San Fernando Earthquake of 1971, and finally Hurricane Agnes in 1972.
3. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 allows up to 10% of the total Senior Executive Service to be political appointees.
4. For instance, in 1982, California, Maryland, Missouri, Alabama, and Washington all sought assistance because of flooding, but only California received aid.
5. Witt and his associates simply avoided dealing with the issue of political appointees and the recommendation that a Domestic Crisis Monitoring Unit be established in the White House. Their choice to avoid these items at that time made good sense from their perspective. Whether or not they should be reconsidered before a new administration assumes office is another matter and is addressed later in this chapter.
6. Wamsley has read all the statutes relevant to FEMA, and though he has no legal training, he sees no reason why FEMA lacks authority to operate from a proactive stance. There are so many statutes applicable to FEMA and the emergency powers that have been granted it or its predecessors over the years are so extensive, that it is hard to imagine what FEMA could not do. Some of FEMA's legal uncertainty seems to arise from the fact that managers in program areas, i.e. ''stovepipes,'' only looked at those statutes applicable to them. No one, including the legal staff, seemed to look at all the statutes from a comprehensive agencywide perspective.
7. FEMA officials clearly expected a report that was more enthusiastic, but the NAPA study team

and panel had good reason to be guarded in their assessment. There was a history of ''new beginnings'' that foundered to consider and there were still some outstanding disagreements between NAPA and FEMA, particularly the latter's refusal to do anything about the recommendation that political appointees be reduced.

8. The following is a list of the various responses and the level of funding appropriated for each disaster: Flooding: Minnesota, June 11, 1993: $72.5 million. Flooding: Wisconsin, July 2, 1993: $61.9 million. Flooding: Illinois, July 9, 1993: $243.5 million. Flooding: Iowa, July 9, 1993: $240 million: Flooding: Missouri, July 9, 1993: $262.5 million. Flooding: South Dakota, July 19, 1993: $34.4 million. Flooding: Nebraska, July 19, 1993: $53.7 million. Flooding: Kansas, July 22, 1993: $80.2 million. Hurrican Emily: North Carolina, Sept 10, 1993: $3.2 million. Wildland fires: California, Oct. 28, 1993: $83.2 million. Northridge earthquake: California, Jan. 17, 1994: $3.1 billion. Severe winter ice storms: Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Alabama, Feb. 28, 1994; $147.1 million. Severe winter storms: Pennsylvania, March 10, 1994; $75 million. Severe storms: Georgia, July 7, 1994; $210.8 million. Tropical storm Alberta: Florida, July 10, 1994: $29 million.
9. The other recipients were Deerfield Beach, Florida: Allegheny County, Maryland; Oakland, California; Seattle, Washington; Tucker and Randolph counties, West Virginia; and Wilmington, North Carolina.

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