

## The wrath of God?

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Article

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### **The carnage caused by Hurricane Katrina may be another opportunity for the US to make amends without attempting to play God again.**

"THE death toll is expected to rise sharply from Gulf Coast towns and cities. A massive search-and-rescue situation is still going on. We believe there are hundreds more out there."

In one Gulf coast city alone, "30 deaths occurred in a single apartment complex", according to a local emergency services spokesperson. There were also reports of looting, break-ins, rape and orders to shoot-to-kill.

Shortage of fresh water, food and electricity are rampant. Highways, roads and other forms of communications have been shut down.

Patients are dying for the lack of treatment and medication, including oxygen and intravenous fluids.

Tens of thousands had to be evacuated to overcrowded temporary squalid shelters in the sweltering heat.

The number of those without homes is expected to be high with the poor suffering the worst. The chaotic situation is turning into a state of near anarchy. Thousands more military personnel have been called in.

Another tragic place in war-torn Iraq?

At a glance, it may well be Iraq — ravaged yet again by a mighty military raid, rained by bullets and bombs.

The US Homeland Security Secretary even likened it to the aftermath of the atomic bombing of 1945, though not quite. In reality, it was a zone hit by Hurricane Katrina — maybe less savaged and bloody than in Iraq or Japan.

The description above was from media reports during the last week of August as the result of the wrath of Katrina which ripped the US Gulf States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida.

The storm with blinding rain and ferocious winds at speeds of more than 200 kmh was one of the deadliest ever to pound the world's most powerful nation.

Several hundred houses were inundated with water, crushed by a tidal surge up to 10 metres high, leaving almost the entire neighbourhood water-logged. Many bodies were floating in the water, many left to rot.

Tens of thousands of people were made refugees.

The damage was estimated to be in the billions of dollars, making Katrina among the most costly hurricanes in US history.

The impact of Katrina is reminiscent of the nameless tsunami of December 2004.

"This is our tsunami," the mayor of the devastated resort city of Biloxi was quoted as saying. Whenever Nature decides to unlock its power, there is little mortals can do.

No matter how prepared, there can be no assurance even for the most technologically-advanced economies of the world.

Still, others compared the impact to that of the attack on the World Trade Centre on that fateful day, exactly four years ago today.

Rescue workers involved in both these catastrophes recalled little difference between the two, except Katrina is more extensive.

Fortunately though, Katrina is a name for a hurricane and not of a perpetrator who could be tracked down "dead-or-alive" with a multi-million dollar bounty on his head.

Fortunately too, the name could not be linked to any sovereign nation that would justify some sort of unilateral action.

Nor was it another form of WMD (weapon of mass destruction) but "water of mass destruction".

Thus, there could be no perfect excuse to invade another oil-rich nation, given the current unprecedented high oil price.

So what if the devastation by Katrina is an "act of God"? The doctrine of unilateralism fuelled by unbridled arrogance and Star Wars weaponry makes no distinction between the Kingdom of Man and the Kingdom of God.

For a long time, the same arrogance and weaponry has been directed at the helpless Children of God the world over, many at times unilaterally.



ROBERTSON: Repeatedly defamed Muslims on his *The 700 Club*.

It usurped the process of global consultation in preference to playing God.

A recent example was when US televangelist Pat Robertson, the founder of the Christian Coalition of America and a presidential race loser, tried to do just that.

He urged American authorities to assassinate a democratically-elected Latin American president, to stop his country from becoming "a launching pad for communist infiltration and Muslim extremism".

He was quoted by USA Today (Aug 22) on the Internet: "We have the ability to take him (the president) out, and I think the time has come that we exercise that ability".

He reckoned: "We don't need another \$200 billion war to get rid of one, you know, strong-arm dictator. It's a whole lot easier to have some of the covert operatives do the job."

He has in the past repeatedly defamed Islam and Muslims on his Christian Broadcasting Network *The 700 Club* programme.

Islam was dubbed as "a monumental scam" as well as the "religion of the slavers", and the Prophet of Islam as "an absolute wild-eyed fanatic", "a robber and a brigand" and "a killer". To him, Americans who became Muslims exhibited "insanity".

He argued that feminism encourages women to "kill their children, practise witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians".

It is such brusque style that creates wave of resentment across the globe.

This televangelist is no different from the so-called jihadists who preach hate and incite violence.

Hence, if "rogue" nations had been threatened for harbouring such characters in their midst, then US too stands accused of giving protection to a terrorist demanding the assassination of a legitimate president.

But for a nation bent on playing God, they are under the delusion that they are always right.

For instance, following the tragedy of 9-11, instead of pausing to consider what had gone wrong, this opportunity was seized by some quarters to unleash their perceived God-like power regardless of world opinion.

Perhaps, this time, the carnage caused by Katrina is another opportunity to make amends without attempting to play God again.

Maybe Katrina is a stern reminder that He is not exactly pleased with how His name has been taken in vain. But, will the self-proclaimed gods of the world ever learn?

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