

New World Orleans

We shall have world government whether or not you like it—by conquest or consent.
—James Warburg, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February 17, 1950

Was New Orleans a martial law experiment waiting to happen?

If so, it may have begun 18 months ago when the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in *United States v. Kelly Gould* that Louisiana law enforcement officers didn't need a warrant to conduct a search of homes and businesses. This ruling effectively stripped Louisiana residents of the Fourth Amendment rights enjoyed by their fellow citizens in the other 49 states.

It's also interesting to note that, according to a February 27, 2004 *Times-Picayune* story, New Orleans was being considered as the site of a Homeland Security regional headquarters.

Senator David Vitter, in promoting New Orleans as the best choice, said the area possessed "strategic assets as a base of operations for the military."

Well, it's certainly a base of military operations now.

And New Orleans Homeland Security Director Terry Ebbert added that "southeast Louisiana is a very important strategic area that is getting greater and greater national recognition."

I'm sure this isn't the kind of national recognition Ebbert had in mind.

However, it looks like those cheerleaders for the Homeland Security complex won't have to use eminent domain to kick out the residents of New Orleans' flooded districts (coincidentally the poorer parts of town) because Katrina and breached levees took care of that.

Now, though it took some time, I'm sure we're all relieved that the New Orleans and Louisiana governments and the Feds have finished playing tag-you're-to-blame and have agreed that the one entity responsible for the late response is none other than Michael Brown, former director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Brown, we are told, waited five hours after Katrina's landfall before presenting to his boss, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, a proposal calling for at least 1,000 Homeland Security workers to be dispatched to the region.

Why did he wait? How could he be so incompetent? Indeed, Brown must be the bad guy.

But wait a minute. Isn't it possible that anyone with a pulse knew exactly what was going to happen to the Gulf Coast? So why didn't Chertoff—who stands behind President Bush each time the latter gives a speech regarding the Katrina relief effort—inquire days before the hurricane hit as to what Brown's plan might be?

Do you really believe Chertoff and Brown are that feckless?

Okay, let's assume Brown is that dirt dumb. Well, shouldn't the boss realize something's not happening and get the ball rolling himself?

Brown is nothing other than a fall guy, just like George Tenet, former Central Intelligence Agency director, who was sacrificed for his agency's supposed ineptitude prior to 9-11. These individuals fall on their swords, take their pensions, and retire. The problem's solved. The drooling masses are satisfied and don't seem to notice that these bonehead agencies—to include the Federal Bureau of Investigation—are rewarded with an expansion in size, power and budget.

And the police state just grows bigger and bigger.

An example of the police state and martial law is up and running in New Orleans, where Mayor C. Ray Nagin, who once criticized the Feds, has authorized law enforcement and the U.S. military to execute a forced evacuation.

New Orleans' residents are now being subjected to house-to-house searches, the confiscation of legally owned guns, and the presence of paramilitary mercenaries patrolling their streets, which flies in the face of Police Superintendent Eddie Compass' edict that only New Orleans law enforcement would carry weapons.

Blackwater Security, of Iraqi infamy, Securitas Security Services USA, Inc., and other private security firms are in New Orleans, packing M-16s and a frightful degree of power. Be advised that these outfits are not sworn to uphold the Constitution.

An article (see <http://www.truthout.org>) entitled "Blackwater Mercenaries Deploy in New Orleans" stated:

"Some of the mercenaries say they have been 'deputized' by the Louisiana governor; indeed some are wearing gold Louisiana state law enforcement badges on their chests and Blackwater photo identification cards on their arms. They say they are on contract with the Department of Homeland Security and have been given the authority to use lethal force."

The United Kingdom newspaper, *The Guardian*, reported that "David Reagan, 52, a semi-retired U.S. army colonel from Huntsville, Ala., who fought in the first Gulf war and is commander of Blackwater's operations in the city, refused to say how many men he had in New Orleans but indicated it was in the hundreds."

The Guardian also stated that Instinctive Shooting International, which claims to be approved by the U.S. Government to supply Homeland Security services and which employs former Israel Defense Force soldiers, is in New Orleans to provide protection for upscale communities.

The "Blackwater" article, co-written by Jeremy Scahill of the radio program "Democracy Now!" and Daniela Crespo, a correspondent for AlterNet, related a comment made by a mercenary that his outfit's presence in New Orleans could last as long as six months.

Although that projection is distressing, a more chilling consideration is the possibility that the use of private military companies might become the norm whenever disaster strikes the U.S.

"This is a trend," the mercenary told Scahill and Crespo. "You're going to see a lot more guys like us in these situations."

What's going on here? The government now thinks it's okay to have private armies enforce not so much the law but order? So, then, what's all this talk about how free we are in the U.S. because our military is fighting abroad? Or is that the plan? Use our the military to expand the empire and to fatten the wallets of the companies that profit from war, destruction, and construction, then hire Brown Shirts to keep the peasants in line should they finally get the idea that something has gone terribly wrong in this nation.

Vyzygoth is a local radio host persona. His identity is available by request at the news office. Send correspondence to vyzygoth@hotmail.com or readznews@aol.com. His radio show, "From The Grassy Knoll," broadcasts live Fridays from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. ET on AM-1350 WDCF and AM-1400 WZHR, with live streams on kgrn.info and pascoradio.org. Archived shows can be accessed at vyzygoth.com.