Federal Disaster Politics Before the Great Society: Doing Less/Trusted More

I)INTRODUCTION

Locating the Origins of Contemporary Disaster Politics:

Scholars seeking the origins of the federal government's now-substantial role in responding to natural disaster have often travelled quite far back in time. Perhaps most commonly, they have identified the Federal Disaster Act of 1950 (PL 875) as the point of departure, the moment at which ad hoc, improvised responses yielded to a more bureaucratised and systematic approach to emergency management.[1] Another contender would be the Great Depression: The American Red Cross's inability to deal effectively with a devastating Appalachian drought during 1930-31 helped to embed (arguably for the first time) the idea that responding to catastrophe was fundamentally a governmental task.[2] Alternatively, I have argued that the Civil War marks the rough point at which Americans first embraced the idea that there was a national collective obligation to alleviate disaster (normally through voluntary action, sometimes through government).[3] Going still further

[1] See Rutherford Platt, *Disasters and Democracy: The Politics of Extreme Natural Events* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1999), David A. Moss, *When All Else Fails: Government as the Ultimate Risk Manager* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), Keith Bea, "The Formative Years, 1950-1978," in Claire B. Rubin, ed., *Emergency Management: The American Experience, 1900-2010*, 2nd ed. (Boca Raton, Fla.: CRC Press, 2012), 83-114, Patrick S. Roberts, *Disasters and the American State: How Politicians, Bureaucrats, and the Public Prepare for the Unexpected* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), Peter J. May, *Recovering from Catastrophes: Federal Disaster Relief Policy and Politics* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985).

[2] See Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, *As Rare as Rain: Federal Relief in the Great Southern Drought of 1930-31* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1985), David E. Hamilton, "Herbert Hoover and the Great Drought of 1930," *Journal of American History*, 68, 4 (March 1982), 850-75. See also Gareth Davies, "Tipping Point: The Great Drought of 1930-31, and the End of Private-Led Disaster Relief," ms in possession of author.

[3] Gareth Davies, "The Emergence of a National Politics of Disaster, 1865-1900," *Journal of Policy History*, 26, 3 (2014), 305-26. See also, Leland R. Johnson, *Situation Desperate: U.S. Army Engineer Relief Operations, Origins to 1950* (Alexandria, Va.: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Office of History, 2011).

back, Michele Dauber has noted the relief that Washington periodically extended to communities hit by earthquake, flooding and fire even during the earliest days of the republic.[4]

These starting points are not mutually exclusive: rather, everything depends on how one characterises contemporary disaster politics. Drawing on my own research, and on two essays that Martha Derthick wrote in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, I would propose the following as being among the most distinctive and important features of modern emergency management in the United States[5]:

- Disasters prompt broadly shared political expectations of federal leadership, transcending usual differences between Left and Right;
- Disasters are now highly political events, in the partisan sense that they present important possibilities for winning or losing political credit, and for skewering one's opponents;
- It is marked by high-profile presidential leadership: the president has assumed the role of 'consoler-in-chief';[6]
- Dramatic, sometimes feverish news coverage, emphasising trauma and governmental mishaps, questions of equity, and winners and losers;
- A difficulty in enforcing political measures intended to discourage settlement or resettlement in especially dangerous locations;

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[4] Michele Landis Dauber, *The Sympathetic State: Disaster Relief and the Origins of the American Welfare State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013)

[5] Martha Derthick, "Where Federalism Didn't Fail," 67 *Public Administration Review* (December 2007), 36-47; Derthick, "The Transformation That Fell Short: Bush, Federalism, and Emergency Management," paper produced for Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, August 2009, 27pp, downloaded from www.rockinst.org on August 20, 2016.

[6] I first encountered this phrase in Michael Fletcher, "President Again Takes on Role of Consoler in Chief: Political Problems are Set Aside as he Addresses the Grieving," *Washington Post*, April 18, 2007, p.A12.

- A difficulty in coordinating action in the context of a complex federal system, and a bewildering range of actors and programs at each level therein.

My purpose in this essay is to suggest that even the most recent of the four starting-points adumbrated above did not inaugurate a regime of disaster politics that very closely resembles these contemporary characteristics. I will support this claim by investigating how the United States responded to disaster during the first decade or so after the passage of the 1950 disaster act (henceforth, PL 875).

The origins of the essay lie in a series of email exchanges that I had with Martha Derthick in the fall of 2014, very shortly before the onset of her final illness. Deeply immersed throughout her career in the evolution of American federalism, from its Madisonian origins to the present day, she remarked that she had never given concentrated thought to its character during the Eisenhower Administration, when she had embarked upon her career as a political scientist.[7] Doing so now, what struck her most forcefully was Ike's seeming belief that the essential character of traditional federalism might yet be preserved, despite the intense strain that the Great Depression, World War II and the Cold War had placed upon its venerable fabric. "He really wanted to put a finger in the dike of centralization," she observed. "Poor Ike, as Harry Truman once said in another context."[8]

[7] When Eisenhower took office, Martha was a junior at Hiram College, in her home state of Ohio, majoring in history and politics. Between 1954 and 1956, she took a master's degree in international affairs at Radcliffe College, under the mentorship of Samuel P. Huntington, whereupon she *joined* the Eisenhower Administration, as an executive trainee in the Department of Defense. Finding that position tedious, she moved to the Historian's Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which was then preoccupied with the Suez crisis, prior to returning to Radcliffe for a doctorate on the politics of the National Guard, supervised by V.O. Key, Jr. Email, Martha Derthick to author, Aug. 25, 2011; email, Lisa Steiner (Martha's college room-mate at Radcliffe) to author, Aug. 23, 2016.

[8] Email, Martha Derthick to author, Sept. 18, 2014.

Prior to donating it to the editor of this journal, Martha alighted in particular on the 1955 report of Eisenhower's Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, chaired by Meyer Kestnbaum, and on the 1960 report of a subsequent Joint Federal-State Action Committee. Generally critical of the growth and centralization of government that took place subsequently, Martha was reminded that "the 1950s really do take one back to a time when the U.S. was—almost—governable, before Lyndon Johnson and a profoundly altered legal profession were unleashed upon the land."[9]

In this essay, I examine mid-century disaster politics in relation both to Martha Derthick's observations about the Eisenhower era, and to the characterisation of contemporary emergency management that I have derived in part from her recent writings on that subject. I will begin by summarising how Washington responded to disaster during the 1950s; then I will focus on the Eisenhower Administration's efforts to contain growing expectations of relief; and the third section of the essay will explain why, in the long-lost political world of the 1950s, Ike could make that effort without incurring any political cost; and I conclude by thinking about emergency management during the 1950s in relation to contemporary disaster politics.

Responding to Disaster in the 1950s:

The magnitude of the shift from improvisatory to bureaucratic politics in 1950 is easily exaggerated. It is true that the Columbia River flood of 1948, which inundated the government shipbuilding town of Vanport, Oregon, highlighted the difficulty that Washington had in meeting post-New Deal expectations of government when Congress was out of session, or (as in this case) about to be so. But it is also the case that a substantial

[9] Ibid; also, emails, Derthick to author, Sept. 12, 2014, and Oct. 7, 2014.

body of routinized disaster politics already existed by 1950, for dissatisfaction with the ad hoc approach to catastrophe went back at least to 1934, when Congress had first given the Bureau of Public Roads the authority to repair highways and bridges after a disaster. Since then, a series of subsequent measures had further embedded disaster politics in the administrative state to a far greater degree than before, involving by 1950 a large number of federal agencies. In 1935, for example, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation acquired a Disaster Loan Corporation, empowered to lend funds to businesses and individuals following a disaster; in 1938, crop insurance and commodity credit programs were established, for farmers affected by disaster (each administered by its own corporation within the Department of Agriculture); in 1944, the Public Health Service was authorised to intervene in disasters to avert the risk of epidemic; in 1947, the Federal Works Administration was empowered to distribute war surplus equipment when the president declared that a disaster was truly national in scale; and the following year Truman was for the first time granted an emergency fund, to be deployed at his discretion when catastrophe struck.[10]

By Harry Truman's second term, therefore, the shift from ad hoc to bureaucratic disaster relief, far from just beginning, was already well far advanced, and PL 875 was prompted in part by that very fact, specifically by the proliferation of small disaster programs that by now were sprinkled across the federal bureaucracy (invariably administered by agencies for whom this was a side-line). When the Red River of the North broke its banks in 1950, Senator Edward Thye (R-Minn.) complimented the federal agencies that had rushed to the rescue, but observed that

[10] Some of these programs are summarized in U.S. Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on Reorganization and International Organizations, *Federal Disaster Relief Manual,* revised ed. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1959), *passim*. See also Ruth Stratton, *Disaster Relief: The Politics of Intergovernmental Relations* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1989). See, finally, sundry correspondence in the records of the House Committee on Public Works, Series HR81A-D14, Box 11, Record Group 233, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., including 3pp typed paper, n.a., n.d. (but 1950), headed "Some of the Current and Potential Public health Service Activities Which are Available to the Medical Health Services of a Federal Program for Either Peace-Time Disaster Relief or War-Time Civil Defense."

there was "not appropriate coordination of activities" among them.[11] The main importance of PL 875 lay in the way that it sought to synchronize existing programs, and made permanent the disaster fund that Congress had granted Truman in 1948, rather than in any new initiatives.

Despite that, some conservatives worried that the very existence of the act would stimulate new expectations of federal relief from governors and local officials: Cong. John Byrnes (R-Wisc.) predicted that the disaster fund would be "like every other new Government program; it will grow, and grow, and grow. Five or ten years from now it will be $25,000,000 instead of five."[12] In the event, though, federal disaster spending did not expand in any significant way during the next decade: it remained distinctly supplementary to state and local spending, and federal relief was confined largely to the rebuilding of infrastructure, on the grounds that support for individuals was a matter for the American Red Cross. In two years (1953 and 1959), Red Cross spending on disaster exceeded spending under PL 875, while in other years Washington spent roughly twice as much, with no clear trajectory over the course of the decade. As of 1954, Eisenhower revealed that "estimated expenditure under Public Law 875 authority since its enactment has averaged about 14 percent of the overall costs while local municipal authorities have furnished an estimated 74 percent, and State participation has been about 13 percent." In the late 1950s and early 1960s, federal disaster spending actually declined.[13]

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[11] Edward Thye to Sen. Dennis Chavez, May 11, 1950, in records of the Senate Committee on Public Works, Series 81A-E14, Box 4, RG 46, National Archives. See also, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Public Works, *Authorizing Federal Assistance to States and Local Governments in Major Disasters* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1950), 2.

[12] *Congressional Record*, Aug. 7, 1950, 11908.

These data presumably owed at least something to the determined efforts of the Eisenhower Administration to hold down spending and rein in expectations of federal disaster aid. That determination reflected both his broader ideas about American federalism and some particular concerns that he developed in response to the major natural disasters of his years in office. Even among conservative post-World War II presidents, Eisenhower stands out for the seriousness with which he sought to restrain the growth of government and promote the devolution of public authority to the states. In part, this was a response to the New Deal. In conversation with Thomas Dewey during the 1952 campaign, Ike expressed deep regret at the broad popularity of the "tendencies toward centralization and paternalism," and insisted that they must be halted and reversed, despite the unhappy reality that no one who "frittered away his political assets" by baldly stating that could possibly be elected.[14] But it was the Cold War context that gave particular fervor to his efforts to rein in government. While still president of Columbia University, Eisenhower insisted that "the army of persons who urge greater and greater centralization of authority and greater and greater dependence on the Federal Treasury are really more dangerous to our form of government than any external threat that can possibly be arrayed against us."[15] And as president he regularly reinforced that same message, most notably in an address to the nation's governors during his first year in office:

[13] Eisenhower quote comes from his annual report on PL 875, dated July 26, 1954 (House of Representatives document 83-479 in U.S. Serial Set). Other data calculated from Douglas C. Dacy and Howard Kunreuther, *The Economics of Natural Disasters: Implications for Federal Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1969), 32, Table 2-1, covering 1953-1965. Because annual figures can be distorted by one particularly expensive disaster, or by an unusual lull, it makes sense to calculate averages over a number of years. Between 1953 and 1957, the five-yearly average for federal spending was $31.54 million per year; between 1958 and 1962, it fell to $27.84 million.

[14] Cited by David Halberstam, *The Fifties* (New York: Villard Books, 1993), 4. See also Dwight Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963), 113-21.

[15] Cited by Gareth Davies, "Education Policy from the New Deal to the Great Society," in Brian J. Glenn and Steven M. Teles, eds., *Conservatism and American Political Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 90.

> I am here for a very simple purpose, because of my indestructible conviction that unless we preserve in this country the place of the state government, its traditional place—with the power, the authority, and the revenue necessary to discharge those responsibilities—then we are not going to have an America as we have known it. We will have some other form of government.[16]

This presidential attitude was embodied in general and philosophical terms in the work of the Kestnbaum Commission and the later State-Federal Advisory Committee, each of which strove – almost entirely in vain -- to identify practicable methods for shoring up the fiscal power of the states, devolving currently federal programs, and reducing the regulatory and oversight burden of matching grants-in-aid initiatives.[17] In terms of concrete public policy, meanwhile, the same impulse can be seen in a variety of areas, including agricultural subsidies, elementary and secondary education, and overall budget-setting.[18] And it can certainly be seen in the area of disaster politics too, starting with the drought that afflicted Texas throughout the first half of the 1950s.

Eisenhower had won the state of Texas in 1952, was friendly with its governor, Allan Shivers, and believed that the GOP now had great opportunities to make political inroads in the hitherto solid Democratic South.[19] Farmers, moreover, the group most adversely affected by the drought, were a generally Republican constituency. Despite these facts, when Texas farmers clamored for federal relief during the early years of his presidency, Eisenhower and his deeply conservative Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson, did all that they could to resist.[20] When angry farmers formed a "cattle caravan" and visited Washington in 1953, picketing the White House, Eisenhower

[16] Cited by Arthur Larson, *A Republican Looks at his Party* (New York: Harper, 1956), 24.

[17] For the nugatory effects of these energetic efforts, see Tim Conlan, "From Cooperative to Opportunistic Federalism: Reflections on the Half-Century Anniversary of the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations," *Public Administration Review,* 66, 5 (Sept.-Oct. 2006), 663-76, and Morton Grodzins, "The Federal System," in Aaron Wildavsky, ed., *American Federalism in Perspective* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), 256-60.

[18] See, respectively, Ezra Taft Benson, *Cross Fire: The Eight Years with Eisenhower* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962), James C. Duram, "A Good Growl: The Eisenhower cabinet's January 16, 1959 Discussion of Federal Aid to Education," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* VIII, 4 (Fall, 1978), 434-43, Iwan Morgan, *Eisenhower versus the Spenders: The Eisenhower Administration, The Democrats, and the Budget, 1953-1960* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

[19] See Robert Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 173-74.

[20] Unless otherwise stated, material in this section is drawn from Roger Lambert, "Drought, Texas Cattlemen and Eisenhower," *Journal of the West,* XVI (Jan. 1977), 66-69. For Eisenhower's admiration of Benson's flintiness, see Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 90.

refused to see them, while Benson (who did meet with them) grouched that they seemed still to have enough money to fly back to Texas.[21] They insisted that Texas and other drought-hit Plains states must take the lead in alleviating distress—that oil-rich Texas, in particular, was rich enough to do so. When a local Republican leader warned that the party was losing support, Ike unbent enough to visit Texas, but took the opportunity to remind farmers that their current pleas for support sat oddly with their usual wish to be left alone by government. When advisors counselled another visit, in the fall of 1956, Eisenhower (in a move that would surely be unthinkable today?) insisted that it would have to wait until after the election.

In general, Eisenhower and Benson were dismayed by the seeming reluctance of the states to take the lead in responding to the drought: at a Congressional leadership meeting in 1956, Ike indicated that he would be more willing to help if only the governors would show greater initiative, rather than coming cap-in-hand to Washington.[22] He reacted the same way when a series of devastating floods in the North East renewed political interest in federal flood insurance. This idea had first been floated during the Truman administration, but the private insurance industry's conviction was that floods were not an insurable risk because the risk of catastrophic loss was too great, and because there was not a sufficiently big pool of policyholders to allow premiums to be set at affordable rates. That was enough to defeat the concept in 1951, despite Truman's backing, but an unusual sequence of six hurricane-induced floods in 1954-55, gave it new impetus, both at the state level and on Capitol Hill, with legislators clamoring for an administration bill.[23]

The White House was less than enthusiastic, mainly because of the level of subsidy that seemed to be required to keep premiums down, also because—again—the states seemed resolutely

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[21] Benson told a cabinet meeting that the only real solution to the farmers' plight was more rain, which he had requested. See Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, July 3, 1953, in Cabinet Meetings Series, Box 2, Dwight Eisenhower library, Abilene, Kansas. (I am grateful to Dr. Ian Hart for this and other Eisenhower library references.) Unless otherwise stated, material in this section is drawn from Roger Lambert, "Drought, Texas Cattlemen and Eisenhower," *Journal of the West,* XVI (Jan. 1977), 66-69.

[22] Legislative Leadership Meeting, May 1, 1956, Supplementary Notes, Legislative Meetings Series, Box 2, Eisenhower Library.

[23] For the sense of urgency in Congress, see Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, Dec. 15, 1955, in Cabinet Meetings Collection, Box 6 [check], Eisenhower Library.

opposed to shouldering any of the cost of those subsidies, as were their representatives in Congress.[24] When the Administration proposed that sixty percent of the cost be borne by policy-holders, with the rest split equally between the federal government and the states, the political reaction was decidedly cool, causing Eisenhower to vent his frustration to party leaders:

> The President said it was difficult for him to see why the States shouldn't be as interested in the Flood Insurance program as is the Federal government. He recalled how the drought crisis brought the question up in 1953, and how he had said that he would recommend certain actions if the States would show just a little bit of interest in helping, but except for Governor Shivers, all the rest of them howled at the thought. The President didn't know what could be done to restore a proper attitude in this respect.[25]

Evidently unmoved, Republican legislators joined their Democratic colleagues in enacting a flood insurance proposal that contained no state contribution at all. Although Eisenhower signed the bill (well aware of its political importance to allies from flood-hit states such as Sen. Prescott Bush of Connecticut), he was probably not disappointed when the House Appropriations Committee refused to appropriate any money for its implementation, causing it to wither on the vine.[26] Not until the Great Society era would the idea resurface, by which point the federal subsidy element would be greater still.[27]

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[24] For the Cabinet's unenthusiastic reaction to the Bureau of the Budget's first flood insurance proposal (on the grounds that it "was not insurance but rather an outright gift"), see Highlights of Cabinet Meeting, Oct. 28, 1955, Cabinet Meetings Series, Box 6, Eisenhower Library.

[25] L.A. Minnich, Jr., Supplementary Notes on Legislative Leadership Meeting, May 1, 1956, in Legislative Meeting Series, Box 2, Eisenhower Library.

[26] Committee chairman Clarence Cannon (D-Mo.) commented that the insurance industry was notorious for being willing to cover almost *anything,* including "your house, your dog, your ear, your wife, or your glass eye." They would protect you, he suspected, against "anything you might suggest—fire, hail, tornado, or twins." But even these snake oil salesmen drew the line at floods, because of "the absolute certainty of loss." In these circumstances, the private insurers "generously turn over all the losses to Uncle Sam. Uncle Sam is the goat. He holds the bag." *Congressional Record,* May 5, 1957, p.6443.

[27] When Congress enacted flood insurance in 1968, the federal subsidy stood at 80%, and by 1970 at 90%, with no state contribution. See Gareth Davies, "Inching Toward Land Use Regulation," and "Implementing Flood Insurance," draft book chapters in possession of author.

Another area of disaster policy where Eisenhower strove to revivify what he took to be embattled concepts of self-sufficiency and decentralization was in relation to the role of the American Red Cross. In response to the floods that had swept a broad swathe of states from Pennsylvania to New England following Hurricane Diane, in August of 1955, the President fully recognized that there was a national obligation to alleviate their effects, and indicated that he was prepared to summon Congress into special session if need be. But he also worked hard to sustain the principle that federal aid was for temporary restoration of public infrastructure, while relief to individuals was a matter for local action and the Red Cross. His Secretary for the Army noted approvingly that "the local people are standing on their own feet. They are not waiting for the federal government to step in. They are taking charge."[28] And when Eisenhower visited the scene, his purpose was not to minister to his stricken people (in the characteristic idiom of more recent presidential disaster politics), but to meet with governors and implore Americans to make voluntary donations.[29] Here is what he had to say in his weekly radio broadcast to the American people:

> In my opinion, everybody within the sound of my voice will sleep better tonight if he turns in everything that he can spare to meet this great disaster. [Donations to the Red Cross go to] human beings, not just to cleaning roads and rebuilding schools but to people that are hungry, or cold, or have no place to go.[30]

Eisenhower's tone reflected not just his strong commitment to the idea of voluntarist giving but his belief that the traditional role of the voluntarist Red Cross in alleviating disaster was presently being undermined, in keeping with the larger forces of socialization and centralization that he detected in American life during the 1950s. Things came to a head in 1957, when his army friend Alfred Gruenther, the organization's new president, told him that it was struggling to raise money. Addressing the annual Governors' Conference, Ike warned that disaster aid was one of many areas

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[28] This was Wilber M. Brucker, quoted in *New York Times*, Aug. 23, 1955, 14.

[29] On the subsequent evolution of presidential disaster politics, and the emergence of the role of consoler-in-chief, see Gareth Davies, "Presidential Disaster Politics from Coolidge to Nixon," in Brian Balogh and Bruce Schulman, eds., *Recapturing the Oval Office: New Historical Approaches to the American Presidency* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 233-49.

[30] "Ike Asks Public for Flood Aid: He'll Call Back Congress if Necessary," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Aug. 24, 1955, 1.

where a failure by the states to take the initiative was placing new and undesirable pressure on Washington to move into the vacuum, and thereby undercutting the voluntarist tradition. His remarks are worth quoting at some length:

> Consider for a moment floods, droughts, hurricanes and tornadoes. Year by year, more and more Federal funds are being requested to meet such disasters which heretofore States, communities and philanthropic agencies have met themselves.
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> One of my greatest friends is now head of the American Red Cross. He came to that post when the Red Cross reserve funds have been practically exhausted. The drive for Red Cross funds this year did not realize its full objective. He tells me, from constant travel around this country, the excuse he so often meets is: "Why should we donate to the Red Cross? Our taxes through the Federal government are now taking care of these disasters."
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> In vain does he explain that the government steps in only to restore public facilities —roads, bridges, other public facilities, utilities, and so on. The Red Cross meets each person's problem as an individual and as a family.
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> The simple answer is: "We pay taxes no for disasters and therefore we don't have to donate to the Red Cross." I regard this as one of the great real disasters that threatens to engulf us when we are unready as a nation, as a people, to meet personal disaster by our own cheerful giving. And I think—at least he believes, and he seems to have the evidence to prove it—that part of the reason is this misunderstanding that government is taking the place even of rescuing the person, the individual and the family from his natural disasters.[31]

In addition to exhortations such as this, Ike sought to stimulate state action in the case of natural disasters by embracing the Kestnbaum Commission's suggestion that each state should have to make a stipulated minimum contribution before Washington would release any funds under PL 875. In effect, each state would have to establish its own emergency funds, its own administrative

[31] Eisenhower, Address to the Governors' Conference, Williamsburg, Va., June 24, 1957, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower—1957* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1961)), 492-93. When Val Peterson visited Cameron Parish after Hurricane Audrey, he communicated the same message. In the case of individual relief, he noted, "varied governments are extremely secondary to the Red Cross, and I believe it is important that this continue to be the case. You can't beat the work of volunteers over the short pull. The quick response of the Red Cross, uncluttered by codes and laws and beholden only to the human heart, reflects the moral and physical fibre of America." See Peterson, "Val Peterson Describes Devastation of Cameron," typescript of article prepared for International News Service, July 1, 1957, In Records of American Red Cross, RG 200, DR-237, Box 1,739, National Archives, College Park, Md.

procedure for handling disaster.[32] Somewhat relatedly, Ike's new civil defense director, Leo Heogh, strove to increase the capacity of local and state units to handle disaster, seeking to reduce pressure on his under-funded national office, as well as to make the point that civil defense following a nuclear attack was inescapably a local function in the first instance.[33]

Sustaining Limited Expectations

It is hard to know how far Eisenhower's policies and use of the bully pulpit explain the failure of disaster spending to increase in any substantial way during the decade after PL 875. That he declared fewer national disasters during his presidency than have any of his successors might be seen as confirming his uniquely determined resistance to disaster-inflation; on the other hand, he endorsed fully two-thirds of gubernatorial requests for aid, which is fully in line with the figure for his successors.[34] The *latter* evidence suggests one of two alternative conclusions: either that his use of the bully pulpit helped to dissuade some governors from approaching Washington for relief, or that the pressures from the states during the 1950s were not so formidable as he tended to imagine. Again, it is hard to be certain, but it is open to doubt whether even Eisenhower would have persisted with his stringent efforts to contain disaster spending had the wider political culture been pushing *very* strongly in the opposite direction. In the rest of the essay I will suggest some features of that larger mid-century political landscape that may have inhibited expectations of government when

[32] For the initial recommendation, see Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *Report* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, June 1955), ch.13 ('Natural Disaster Relief'), xxx-xxx [check]. The tariff that the Eisenhower Administration subsequently established was drawn up by the Joint Federal-State Action Committee: see Dwight Eisenhower, *Report of Activities Under Authority of the Federal Disaster Act* (87th Cong, 1st Sess., House Doc 47), Jan. 12, 1961, 1.

[33] See Damon Manders, "Continuous Emergency Operations: U.S. Army Engineers Relief Operations, 1950-1979," unpublished manuscript in possession of author, 80-85. On local leadership in civil defense, Eisenhower had remarked that "You cannot give civil defense to Atlanta from New York City or vice versa. The people on the spot have got to taken an interest or it cannot be done." See Patrick Roberts, "The Lessons of Federal Defense Federalism in the Homeland Security Era," *Journal of Policy History* 26, 3 (2014), 356.

[34] Eisenhower made 13 disaster declarations per year; Kennedy made 17; Johnson made 19. Presidents from Eisenhower through to Reagan all turned down roughly one-third of gubernatorial requests. See tables 5-1 and 5-2, in Richard Sylves, "Federal Emergency Management Comes of Age, 1979-2001," in Rubin, ed., *Emergency Management*, 124-25.

disaster struck, and allowed Eisenhower to bang the drum for restraint without incurring the kind of political price that such an approach would almost certainly exact were it employed today.

Civil Defense

One part of the explanation may be the new state capacity for dealing with disaster associated with the advent of Cold War civil defense. Civil defense has generally received unsympathetic coverage from scholars, focussing largely on its conceptual implausibility and the mood of hysteria that it is alleged to have embodied.[35] In a recent article, however, the political scientist Patrick Roberts has argued that one area where they played a generally constructive role was in responding to natural disaster. Whereas contemporary homeland security arrangements are marked by a rigid, top-down approach, Roberts sees in the Eisenhower era a far more productive emphasis on state and local leadership, one that allowed disaster-hit communities to respond flexibly and increasingly professionally to catastrophe.[36] In part, this role arose from the fact that civil defense was such a hard sell, even at the height of the Cold War: struggling to persuade Congress and states to appropriate funds in response to a threat that was at once vast and impossible to quantify (and whose efficacy was questionable), advocates emphasized the role that civil defense could play on a day-to-day basis in handling natural disaster—as well as arguing that responding to such disasters was good training for the ultimate catastrophe of nuclear war.

Take, for example, "Time of Disaster," a public information film that the Federal Civil Defense Administration released in 1954. Local communities, its narrator observed, were often ill-prepared for disaster, and the "staggering destruction and human misery" that they sometimes inflicted owed much to that fact. The film, though, goes on to dramatize the impact that a civil

[35] See Dee Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon: Why Civil Defense Never Worked* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), Laura McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), Andrew Grossman, *Neither Dead nor Red: Civil Defense and American Political Development During the Early Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2001), Paul S. Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Nuclear Age* (New York: Pantheon, 1985). [check these sources]

[36] Roberts, "Lessons," 354-83.

defense plan can make in the case of an imaginary tornado: townspeople are shown being calmly escorted to bomb shelters by trained professionals; school kids do 'duck and cover' drills; civilians and trained workers in helmets rescue disaster victims from rubble; stockpiled heavy machinery and medical supplies appear on the scene:

> Every man, woman and child, trained or untrained, had to pitch in and help, to reduce the toll of death and loss, even avert the very course of disaster. And so this lesson was learned: A community unprepared for major disaster will suffer the greatest loss, but in a city with a civil defense plan, ready to be put into action at a moment's notice, man can wrest from disaster a part of the toll that it would normally take."[37]

Perhaps most significant here was the dual emphasis on expert training and individual competence and responsibility, and their perceived centrality to a community's prospects in the event of nuclear attack. In the film just described, for example, the clean-up after the tornado is followed immediately by a mushroom cloud, the narrator intoning that "catastrophe must be met head on," that "we pray it may never come," but that it "could be tomorrow," in which case civil defense was "our best hope." The same link between disaster relief and war, and the same emphasis on individual responsibility, was also drawn in a two-part documentary that Chet Huntley hosted for NBC in 1958, entitled "Biography of a Disaster." A critical segment on the casual response of the residents of Eagle Pass, Texas and Piedras Negras, Mexico, to warnings of flooding in 1954 was followed by an interview with the technical director of the National Academy of Sciences' Disaster Research Group, which had been established to understand how ordinary people and communities characteristically respond to catastrophe. In the case of Eagle Pass, it appeared to NBC's reporter that Texans had learned their lesson: certainly all of those whom he interviewed vouchsafed their determination to take disaster more seriously in the future. Again, the program ends with the ultimate spectre of nuclear holocaust—*this* was the ultimate rationale for taking disaster seriously.[38]

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[37] "Time of Disaster," National Productions documentary film, with cooperation of FCDA. Copy in Moving Image Research Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., tape FAD 4509.

[38] "Biography of a Disaster," Part 1. NBC News Documentary, Nov.11, 1958, copy in Moving Image Research Center, Library of Congress, tape 57650-4-1.

When Eisenhower Administration officials praised the work of local civil defense units in responding to disaster, there was clearly an element of propaganda involved.[39] Equally, the two scholars who have explored the reality behind the propaganda – Patrick Roberts and historian Damon Manders – each conclude that the existence of civil defense did give states and local communities a significantly greater capacity to respond to disaster than they had previously possessed, and contemporary news coverage is sprinkled with appreciative references to its role in combatting particular emergencies.[40] More generally, the way that the media covered disaster during the Eisenhower era can help us to understand why the president was under so much less pressure to spearhead a massive federal response than has been the case since the 1960s.

Media and Disaster

As at other times in American history, both before and since, the media gave saturation coverage to disaster during the Fifties, drawn by the elements of drama, tragedy, heroism and trauma. As *See It* Now's Edward R. Murrow observed, the movements of even an unexceptionable hurricane were "recorded as completely as those of the president or a movie star."[41] What is more, newspapers and broadcasters had a far greater capacity than before to convey those themes with vivid, raw and immediate images, thanks to the new ease with which high-quality photographic images could be disseminated and – especially – the rise of television.[42] So keen was NBC news to be first on the scene when disaster struck that it hired private weather companies to help it to position its television crews ahead of hurricanes.[43] And in 1953, when WBAP, a television station

[39] See Arthur S. Flemming, "The Impact of Disasters on Readiness for War, in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* vol. 309 (Jan., 1957), 65-70; Val Peterson, "Coordinating and Extending Federal Assistance," *Annals* (jan. 1957), 52-55; Harold Larson, *Republican Looks at His Party*, 153-54; see, finally, annual reports by the Federal Civil Defense Administration and the Office of Defense Mobilization.

[40] See Roberts, "Lessons," and Manders, "Continuous Emergency Operations," 38-98, *passim.* For positive news coverage, see "Biography of a Disaster—No.2," NBC Documentary, Nov. 18, 1958 (concerned with Hurricane Audrey), Item 57664-4-1 in Moving Image Research Center, Library of Congress; Warren L. Hogan,ed., *Hurricane Carla: A Tribute to the News Media* (Houston, Tex.: Leaman-Hogan, 1961), emphasizing the efficiency of the evacuation; also, "'Disaster' Shows Air Rescue Value: 1500 in Pennsylvania Test of Evacuation Facilities in Simulated Flood," *New York Times*, Oct. 14, 1956, 31.

[41] "Flying into the Eye of Edna," *See It Now,* CBS, Sept. 14, `954, Library of Congress, Reel FCB8953.

[42] For new world of photo-journalism, see Stanley Frank, "Disasters are their Dish," *Saturday Evening Post*, April 16, 1949, 168.

[43] See "Government Weather vs Private Service," *Meriden [Conn.] Record-Journal*, Sept. 1, 1955.

based in Fort Worth, Texas, compiled its highlights for the past twelve months in connection with a competition entry, over half of the ten or so snippets had to do with disaster. "The big story of the year in Texas," the narrator explained, "was the weather and its violence." The drought of the fifties may have developed gradual, unevenly, and without obvious drama, but WBAP brought it to life with diverse footage of withered crops, stoical farmers, young children collecting scarce water with buckets, and pilots 'seeding' clouds and seemingly triggering torrential rainfall. Similarly effective was its coverage of the devastating tornadoes that struck Waco and San Angelo during 1952-53. WBAP, the narrator trumpeted, had been first on the scene when they struck, its photographers providing blanket coverage of the damage and rescue work, and the subsequent rehabilitation drive. The claim was supported by astonishing aerial shots of devastation, and by harrowing images of bloodied, sallow, gaunt tornado victims being pulled from rubble.[44]

This sort of coverage presumably increased the pressure on government at all levels to respond to disaster. At the same time, though, certain aspects of television and newspaper coverage might have served to contain those expectations, especially in relation to the federal response. First, and reinforcing a point just made in relation to civil defense, reporters characteristically emphasized the capacities of ordinary people faced with catastrophe--their altruism, their bravery, the way that they worked together to alleviate their shared plight. Second, I have found remarkably few examples of journalists or politicians seeking to exploit evidence that government was in some way complicit in a particular disaster.[45] This is not to say that grievances along these lines did not exist at the local level: when, the U.S. Weather Bureau got the timing of Hurricane Audrey wrong, and when it misjudged the course of Hurricane Diane, government

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[44] The Texas News," WBAP news compilation, n.d. but 1953, Moving Image Research Center, Library of Congress, item FBC 8818. Other snippets featured the flooded Sabine River, a plane crash in Houston, and the survival and rescue of a USAF pilot from Texas who had been buried in snow in Labrador for a full week. Only four items were non-disaster-related: Ben Hogan's return to Texas after winning the British Open golf tournament; the actress Mary Martin visiting Fort Worth; a black Korean War POW returning home; and the 1952 presidential campaign.

[45] The three exceptions that I have found are Marquis Child, "Promise and Performance," *Washington Post*, June 3, 1948 (which blames congressional Republicans for the Vanport flood); Drew Pearson, "Senate Studies Intricacies of Flood Control," *Lewiston [Maine] Daily Sun,* Nov. 10, 1966, 3 (which similarly ascribes the high hurricane death-toll of 1955 to Congress's failure to build enough dams and levees); and "Government Weather vs Private Service," an editorial in the *Meriden [Conn.] Record-Journal*, Sept. 1, 1955.

meteorologists faced plenty of flak, while a detailed account of the latter disaster describes how its traumatized, angry victims pointed the finger additionally at engineers, Congress, local governments, the Small Business Administration, and the Red Cross.[46] But if one's point of comparison is the frequently acrimonious politics surrounding such subsequent hurricanes as Agnes (1972), Andrew (1992), and Katrina (2005), then what strikes one most are the mildness of the criticism, and the seeming disinclination of either reporters or politicians to capitalize upon it.

The causes of this disinclination lie beyond the scope of the present essay—one could speculate that they are related in some way to the media's more generally deferential attitude to public authority during the 1950s and early 1960s, or to the way that broadly shared affluence spawned unusually high levels of public trust in government.[47] Whatever the causes, their impact on disaster politics is surely evident: the lack of critical commentary can only have served to insulate presidents and federal agencies from the kind of intense pressure to act that they have faced in more recent decades. After Hurricane Katrina, George W. Bush was roundly criticized for flying over New Orleans rather than sharing in the suffering of its people more directly. By contrast, when Hurricane Audrey killed over 600 Louisianans in 1957 (a larger number than any other natural disaster between 1938 and Katrina) Eisenhower's decision not to visit Cameron Parish seems to have attracted no adverse publicity at all—if indeed it was even noticed.[48] Similarly, one newspaper's front-page coverage of Hurricane Diane was accompanied by a piece on Eisenhower's Colorado vacation that centered on his sunburn, fishing exploits, and general air of contentment, but there is no suggestion that the juxtaposition of the two stories might have been ironic.[49] As I have argued elsewhere, the idea that there was a national political obligation to respond to disaster was by now

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[46] On Diane, see David Dempsey, *Flood* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1956), 117-18, 133. For popular criticism of government meteorologists, see "Hurricane Experts Hold Differing Views; All Face Storm of Criticism from Public," *Eugene [Ore.] Register-Guard*, Oct. 2, 1955, 4C.

[47] For the first of these subjects, see Larry Sabato, *Feeding Frenzy: How Attack Journalism has Transformed American Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1991): he associates this period with "lap-dog journalism," contrasting that with the "watchdog" reporting of the later 1960s, and the "junk-yard dog" coverage inaugurated by Watergate. On levels of trust, see Seymour Martin Lipset and William Schneider, *The Confidence Gap: Business, Labor and Government in the Public Mind* (New York: Free Press, 1983).

[48] At a press conference four days after the hurricane, Eisenhower was not asked a single question about Audrey. See Davies, "Presidential Politics of Disaster," 234.

well-established, but – before the advent of the 'permanent campaign' – discharging it was seen as a primarily bureaucratic task, rather than a presidential one.[50]

Feeling Good About Disaster

Contemporary discourse on disaster in the United States is often permeated with the fear that the nation is becoming more vulnerable to catastrophic loss, because of climate change, the growing concentration of valuable real estate in hazardous locations, and the limited capacity of structural engineering to protect imperilled communities. By contrast, journalistic and political responses to disaster during the post-World War II era often included references to things getting better. Reporting on the Missouri River flood of 1952, Walter Cronkite remarked that its toll had been astonishingly low; Edward R. Murrow made the same point in relation to the hurricanes Edna and Carol in 1954; and a 1953 documentary by Paramount Films contrasted the massive death-toll following the 1928 Florida hurricane with today, when "fatalities are the exception." [51]

Explanations for this pattern focused on expertise and technology. In addition to the efficacy of civil defense (in terms of stockpiling supplies and coordinating evacuations), politicians and engineers highlighted the role of federal public works in combating mother nature: since the 1930s, the federal role in flood-control had increased massively, and in 1956 was extended further, to encompass Atlantic and Gulf hurricanes.[52] Television and newspaper reporters, meanwhile, were struck by the growing ability of meteorologists to measure and predict the weather, thanks to new technologies such as radar, radiosondes and 'brangoballs', and to aeroplanes sturdy enough to fly

[49] See "Ike Gets Sunburn on Fishing Trip," *Lewiston [Maine] Morning Tribune,* Aug. 22, 1955, 1. The adjacent headline reads "Flood-Battered Region Fears Epidemic as Water Recedes." See also the presidential vacation coverage that accompanied Hurricane Ione, a month later: "Eisenhower a Happy Man While Fishing and Cooking," *Reading [Pa.] Eagle*, Sept. 20, 1955, 18.

[50] Davies, "Presidential Politics of Disaster."

[51] Cronkite quoted by Christine Klein and Sandra Zellmer, *Mississippi River Tragedies: A Century of Unnatural Disaster* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 94-5; for Murrow, see "Flying into the Eye of Edna," *See It Now*, CBS television, Sept. 14, 1954, Library of Congress, reel FCB 8953; for Florida, see "Hurricane Hunters," a Paramount Pacemaker documentary, n.d. but 1953, Library of Congress, reel FEA 0623. See also Stewart Holbrook, "The Mythmakers," *New Yorker*, July 31, 1948, 35, which describes the low death-toll of the Vanport flood as "miraculous," and pokes fun at the wild rumors that had circulated in its immediate aftermath.

[52] The Hurricane Survey Act of that year, whose chief sponsor was Sen. Prescott Bush (R-Conn.), instructed the Army Corps of Engineers to explore ways of protecting developed portions of the coast from hurricane, from Maine to Texas.

right into the eye of a hurricane, record data with those new instruments, and transmit them back to mainland weather centers, whereupon weather boffins could read the runes and give precise and timely guidance to communities under threat. (Some experts even anticipated a future in which new technology would allow them not just to monitor and predict bad weather, but to prevent it altogether.[53])

In this heady environment, particular media interest centered on "hurricane hunters," the navy and air force aviators and government meteorologists who undertook those perilous missions. As early as 1947, they were the subject of a Hollywood movie starring Richard Widmark, based on a screenplay by Herman Wouk.[54] Half a dozen years later, Paramount's documentary, "Hurricane Hunters," explained that flying into a cyclone was like flying through water, and viewed by its battle-hardened practitioners as being "tougher than combat." But the payoff was huge. Here is the narrator's peroration:

> Years of concerted effort on the part of many people, many organizations, have made [Florida] a place where oncoming generations will experience hurricanes but never again hurricane disaster. Floridians have learned that you can live safely now in what were once danger areas. They've learned that structures that are properly built can be depended upon, no matter how high the wind. And, most important for those who love the tropics, they've learned to depend upon that symbol in the sky [cue: glamorous, young sunbathing couple, looking up at a B27 hurricane hunter], the symbol of cooperation between the Weather Bureau, the air force and the navy--the hurricane hunters who look for trouble, and always find it.[55]

In case this sort of publicity were insufficient, the Weather Bureau produced its own documentary, "Operation Hurricane," two years later, emphasizing the same themes, together with (again) the crucial role of civil defense. Almost certainly more influential than any other program, however, was the 1954 episode of Edward R. Murrow's landmark current affairs show, *See it Now,* in

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[53] See Jacob Hamblin, *Arming Mother Nature: The Birth of Catastrophic Environmentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[54] For more on "Slattery's Hurricane," see David Toomey, *Stormchasers: The Hurricane Hunters and their Fateful Flight into Hurricane Janet* (New York: Norton, 2002), 70.

[55] "Hurricane Hunters," Paramount Pictures

which he accompanied a hurricane hunter crew into the eye of Hurricane Edna. As with his more famous show on the McCarthy phenomenon, which aired a few weeks later, "Flying into the Eye of Edna" managed not just to dramatize its subject but to influence political debate. On the one hand, Murrow emphasized the tremendous power of nature, and the "puniness of man and his works," suggesting that "if a true definition of humility is ever written, it might well be written in the eye of a hurricane." On the other hand, though, he stressed the progress that the hurricane hunters were making in "understand[ing] what turns a storm into a 'monster'," gave his hunters an attractively boy-next-door human face (they introduced themselves individually by name and home town at the end of the show), and provided meteorologist Robert Simpson (a cheerful-sounding young man with an attractive TV manner) with a perfect opportunity to make the case for increased government funding. When Congress subsequently overcame its historically penurious approach to funding the weather service the following year, allowing it to establish the National Hurricane Center, all this favourable media attention must surely have contributed to the breakthrough.[56]

Conclusion

In an important 1996 essay, Martha Derthick argued that the 1960s and early 1970s had yielded a new regime of "regulatory federalism," as the Warren Court and Great Society legislation gave Washington new coercive power over the states in areas such as civil rights, legislative apportionment, environmental regulation and the criminal justice system. In this essay, entitled "Crossing Thresholds," the 1950s belong to a political world that has decisively vanished.[57] The same might be said in relation to disaster politics. Toward the end of her career, when Derthick developed an interest in Bush-era emergency management, such signs of state assertiveness that she identified were primarily reactions to the widespread federal instinct to want to control the whole show: when

[56] For the subsequent breakthroughs in technology that this facilitated, see Gordon Dunn and Banner Miller, *Atlantic Hurricanes* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960).

[57] Martha Derthick, "Crossing Thresholds: federalism in the 1960s," *Journal of Policy History*, 8, 1 (1996), 64-80.

Jeb Bush inveighed against this idea in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, he was responding to his brother's desire to streamline matters by putting the U.S. Army in complete control of the emergency operation, gubernatorial resistance notwithstanding.[58]

That is a very different regime of emergency management than the one described in these pages. To be sure, there were some pressures to increase the federal role in responding to disaster during the 1950s, arising naturally out of Washington's growing role in national life more generally since the New Deal and World War II. But they were not very strong, emanated mainly from the states themselves, and were for the most part resisted by the federal government. I have argued here that a number of circumstances combined to lessen the federal pressure to act: new civil defense arrangements enhanced state and local capacity to respond to catastrophe; media coverage rarely dwelled on instance of governmental failure but, rather, emphasized upbeat themes of resilience, initiative, mutual support and technological progress; and the Eisenhower administration (together with powerfully placed conservatives in Congress) insisted that disaster was in substantial measure a state responsibility.[59]

By logical extension, it makes only limited sense to see the Federal Disaster Act of 1950 – still less any earlier period – as having marked the origins of contemporary disaster politics. During the decade following its passage, after all, federal spending on disaster did not significantly increase, and the idea that relief for individuals was the responsibility of the states and the Red Cross remained largely intact.[60] However, as Martha Derthick has noted, the Eisenhower Administration's effort to defend traditional federalism turned out to be unsustainable, indeed would soon appear "quaint, even archaic," in relation to disaster politics as more generally. Some saw it that way at the time, of course, or else Eisenhower would not have had to expend such energy defending federalism in the

[58] Derthick, "Transformation," 1.

[59] The parentheses refer to the role of the House Appropriations Committee in defeating flood insurance under both Truman and Eisenhower.

[60] For the main exception, housing aid, see Andrew Morris, "The Origins of the FEMA Trailer: Emergency Housing and Federal Disaster Relief," paper delivered at Policy History Conference, Richmond, VA, June 2012. Copy in possession of author.

first place.[61] By the mid-1960s, though, the impulse to centralize was vastly stronger than it had been even a few years before, and the federal role in responding to disaster mirrors that broader process. Federal disaster spending after Hurricane Diane amounted to no more than 6% of total spending, and as late as 1964, Washington contributed only 12% of the cost of alleviating that year's floods in the Pacific North West, but by the time that Hurricane Agnes struck the mid-Atlantic states in 1972, the federal share stood at 48%.[62] Where presidents declared between 13 and 20 disasters per year prior to the late 1960s, under Nixon and Ford the figure leapt to 36, and by the Carter years it stood at 42.[63] Fast-forwarding to the Clinton and George W. Bush presidencies, the number of declarations had increased still further (to 56 per year and 72 per year, respectively), while total federal disaster spending was more than ten times as high (in inflation-adjusted dollars) as had been the case under Johnson.

In the light of these data, as well as the evidence presented in this essay, contemporary federal disaster politics are fundamentally different in character now than was the case during the 1950s. It is most likely to those same years that Martha Derthick covered so trenchantly in her essay "Crossing Thresholds" that one should turn in seeking the origins of Washington's current approach to emergency management.[64]

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[61] When the Kestnbaum Commission issued its report in 1955, seeking to identify ways of shoring up state capacity, Sen. Wayne Morse (I-Ore.), an iconoclastic liberal, filed a dissenting statement, on the grounds that the states could not be trusted to address the challenges of modern political life in any meaningful way. See US Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *Report*, 277-79. Arthur Larson associated former Democratic Secretary of State Dean Acheson with the same opinion, in *Republican Looks at his Party*, 23.

[62] David A. Moss, "Courting Disaster: The Transformation of Federal Disaster Policy Since 1803," in Kenneth Froot, ed., *The Financing of Catastrophe Risk* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 327.

[63] Calculated from Table 5-1, in Sylves, "Federal Emergency Management, 124.

[64] For my initial efforts to heed this injunction, see Davies, "Presidential Politics of Disaster," and Davies, "Lyndon Johnson and Hurricane Betsy: The Birth of Modern Disaster Politics," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, forthcoming.