

# Will Obama Treat the Bay Area Like Haiti?

by Nancy Spannaus

May 4—In the wake of the massive Japanese earthquake on March 11, which came amidst an intensification of such extreme seismic and weather events worldwide, and especially along the Pacific Rim of Fire, it is clear that the West Coast of the United States is an area of prime concern. Both the San Francisco Bay Area and the Northwest Cascadia Subduction Zone (off the coasts of Oregon and Washington State) are long overdue for major earthquakes, for which they admit they are substantially unprepared.

And what is President Barack Obama doing about this danger? As of this writing, he is presiding over a budget process which is slashing every key component of preparation to forecast the occurrence, or mitigate the results of a disastrous event. This includes cuts in the official agencies for Earthquake Mitigation, cuts in crucial satellite and space programs which can issue warnings and increase understanding of the process leading to such events, and cuts in support for local governments, which are being forced to lay off vital emergency personnel who would be tasked to respond in such a disaster.

Obama is, by all evidence available, prepared to give the U.S. West Coast, and the Bay Area in particular, the “Haiti Treatment.” Are the American people going to keep him in office under these conditions?

LaRouche’s Political Action Committee has launched a campaign, via [www.larouchepac.com](http://www.larouchepac.com), to educate the American people on this threat. We summarize the case here.

## **The Haiti Model**

It is perhaps arguable that the more than 300,000 deaths which occurred in the impoverished island nation of Haiti from a 7 magnitude earthquake in January of 2010 could not have been prevented. But the deaths and immiseration since that time—especially from the cholera epidemic still ravaging the island—have to be laid directly at the doorstep of President Barack Obama.



LPAC-TV

*LPAC-TV's special report, "Earthquakes and the Bay Area, presented by Ardena Joy, is a powerful reminder that the densely populated region is totally vulnerable to the long-overdue "Big One," in which hundreds of thousands of lives could be lost. Obama says there is nothing we can do about it.*

While providing some military logistical support of immense use to the immediate rescue effort, the Obama Administration *explicitly* refused to act on plans that were put before the President for a program of relocation, infrastructure construction, and public health, which would have moved hundreds of thousands of people out of the Port au Prince capital area, where they were prime targets for the outbreak of disease.

Lyndon LaRouche, who presented one of the plans which Obama rejected, warned at the time, that the refusal to move the population to higher, safer ground would lead to the outbreak of disease, especially once the rainy season hit. So no one could say that the outbreak, a few months later, was a surprise. Today, the disease continues to spread, and, according to the latest reports, the more than half a million Haitians who are still living the slums of Port au Prince are literally "drowning in sewage," thanks to the inaction of the U.S. President (and, of course, the rest of the international community).

The death toll from the diseases since the quake is not actually known—but it ranges in the thousands, and *every single one of them* is on the head of President Barack Obama.

### **Now, Look at the Bay Area**

Situated along the Pacific Rim of Fire, the San Francisco Bay Area sits atop a fault zone composed of seven

faults, the most well-known being the San Andreas Fault, which runs a length of roughly 810 miles through the state of California, and was the fault responsible for the two most famous San Francisco earthquakes—the World Series earthquake of 1989, and the 1906 earthquake.

According to a study conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey, in cooperation with several other California-based geological and emergency services agencies, even the minimal projected damage of an earthquake on the scale of between a magnitude 6.7 and 7.9 in the Bay Area would result in thousands of lives lost, and hundreds of thousands displaced.

The impact studies that were done are constrained by what the Bay Area has experienced in recent earthquakes. But what if an earthquake on the scale of Japan's were to hit the Bay Area? Can we even fathom the impact, if a magnitude 9.0 or higher earthquake were to strike the densely populated California coast.

As LPAC-TV's April 28 special report, "Earthquakes and the Bay Area" (<http://larouchepac.com/node/18056>) pointed out, the Bay Area is home to 7.4 million Americans, living in 101 cities. It is a financial and cultural center for the United States. And it is totally vulnerable in the case of an earthquake disaster. The recent rounds of brutal budget cuts—permitted and encouraged by the Obama Administration—have devastated vital fire and health-care services, both critical in a crisis. There has even been a decision to eliminate the aerial support which the California Fire Service used to have to put out fires from the air.

Back in 1906, when the San Francisco quake hit, estimated to have been between 7.9 and 8.25 magnitude, the infrastructure existed for the evacuation of more than 200,000 people, both through the Southern Pacific Railway and the U.S. Navy. There has been no preparation to carry out such an evacuation today, should warning be given, or even in the aftermath of a quake.

It's not only the Bay Area which is vulnerable, of course. The Cascadia Subduction Zone is also considered long overdue for a quake, and areas much further east, such as the New Madrid Zone along the Missis-



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*The recent devastating tornadoes that struck the South and Midwest are more evidence of the extreme turbulence now characterizing our Solar System and galaxy, as seen in this EF-3 tornado as it bears down on Tushka, Okla., April 14, 2011.*

sippi, are considered of sufficient danger for the Administration to organize earthquake drills this Spring. Ironically, these drills were significantly disrupted by another “natural” disaster related to the extreme turbulence now characterizing our galaxy and Solar System, the wave of extraordinary tornadoes and driving rains that has struck the Midwest and South Central states.

Concern for the general welfare of our citizens should dictate that the President mobilize, as for war, a crash scientific campaign to study, and work on forecasting such extreme events, so as to move people out of harm’s way. Infrastructure in all these regions should be upgraded. But all of these moves require first putting our financial house in order by reinstating Glass-Steagall, and that, the President is not prepared to do.

### **Where Does Obama Stand?**

Indeed, the President stands *on record* as opposed to taking the necessary actions which could lead to greater understanding of the genesis of disasters such as earthquakes, and also the forecasting of their timing, so as to move to prevent significant loss of life.

Exemplary is a statement he made in the midst of budget negotiations with the Republican and Democratic leaderships of the House, on April 5. He said:

“There are some things that we can’t control. We

can’t control earthquakes; we can’t control tsunamis; we can’t control uprisings on the other side of the world. What we can control is our capacity to have a reasoned, fair conversation between the parties and get the business of the American people done. And that’s what I expect.”

This is not just a statement of “fact”; it’s a lie and statement of intent. Just think of what a President John Kennedy, or a President Franklin Roosevelt, would have said in such a situation, the mobilization of resources they would have set into motion. Also think of the fact

that President Obama is actually *cancelling* the programs which could permit us to forecast earthquakes and tsunamis—if not control them, or prevent them. What such work could indeed do, is to control the disastrous *effect* of such calamities, and save what could be thousands of lives, or more.

That is an endeavour which Barack Obama is not even interested in attempting. Rather, he finds it “easy” to sit down with legislatures and demand that they continue the policy of massive bailouts to the financial institutions which created the crisis of 2007-08, and are currently building up to a new, imminent blowout, and instead, to slash the budgets for vital services and infrastructure for the U.S. economy, particularly its cities and states.

Obama’s approach will kill you either way. It permits the “natural” disaster to proceed without human intervention, and then cuts the legs out from under the resources, like fire and health-care services, which are desperately needed to mitigate the effects. As the LPAC-TV April 28 special emphasized, 90% of the destruction in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake came from fires, not the quake. Would the city be any better prepared today?

The answer is clear: Not if President Barack Obama and the prevailing policy of valuing money over human lives persists. We are currently on course for Obama giving the Bay Area the “Haiti treatment.”