

SUPERSTORM SANDY

## Reality Shock for the Course of the Nation

by Marcia Merry Baker

Nov. 6—The impact of Superstorm Sandy on the United States is a reality shock in all respects. It is the end of the pretense that there is a functioning U.S. economy. It is the end of the pretense that apparent authorities—President Barack Obama, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and others—are anything but instruments of the very policies which brought about vulnerability to mass destruction to begin with: the British imperial policies of financial bailouts, industrial shutdown, food crises, mass unemployment, infrastructure takedown, subversion of science, green lies, and depopulation en masse.

There is no going back. Millions of people now realize the full horror of what has happened in Hurricane Sandy; and millions are proceeding to the next blow: There is no possibility or intention of this trio of office-holders to repair or rebuild anything, post-storm. Their words about being “in it for the long haul,” as Obama said alongside Christie in New Jersey, on Oct. 31, are just crass soundbytes.

The next day, Mayor Bloomberg, when asked for his view of the proposals for New York City sea surge barriers, like those protecting cities elsewhere, said, never. “I don’t think there’s any practical way to build barriers in the oceans.”

As of election eve, hundreds of thousands of people in the New York City boroughs, and nearby New Jersey and Connecticut, in particular, are in life-threatening conditions of frigid weather, no electricity, no food, no medical aid, no security, and a state of terror. The core



FEMA/Walt Jennings

*Devastation from Hurricane Sandy in Breezy Point, on the Rockaway Peninsula in Queens, New York. FEMA staff walk through the debris, to assess damage, aid survivors.*



U.S. Army

*U.S. Army servicemen rescue residents from floodwaters in New Jersey, Nov. 1.*

of the storm hit the most densely populated center of North America. There are over 20 million residents of Greater New York City.

Obama, Christie, Bloomberg, et al. used the very same cynical script—"I stand beside you"—last year, after Hurricane Irene hit this same region in August, after which no rebuilding program was launched. Moreover, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) welched on its reimbursement commitments to hundreds of localities, for even minimal repair expenses; and the civil works budget for the Army Corps of Engineers, already paltry, was cut even further.

In New Jersey, oversized Chris Christie speaks of ending Big Government and big projects—the very kinds of projects and skilled employment required nationally. Obama, doing the same, especially extols green jobs. Bloomberg, who has imposed mass employment cuts, officially endorsed Obama Nov. 1 for his greenness. Now the largest metropolitan area of North America is under water, and dying.

Behind the false rhetoric and evil policies stands the political/financial nexus behind Wall Street, the City of London, and decades of anti-nation-state operations, best known as the British Empire, and now acting with its Saudi Kingdom operation to foster and deploy terrorism and threaten thermonuclear war.

The only course of action which can rebuild the Sandy storm zone, is the same as required to restore the U.S. economy, and establish a new nation-serving in-



FEMA/Liz Roll

*Many backyards in Hoboken, N.J., still flooded Nov. 1.*

ternational system: 1) re-establish the Glass-Steagall law in banking; 2) initiate a development-based credit system; 3) launch NAWAPA XXI (North American Water and Power Alliance XXI) and a crash rebuilding program in the storm states, along with other priority projects.

It is from this vantage point, that we review the dimensions of the current storm devastation, and key elements of what defines the rebuilding process, in order to further political intervention for a revolutionary policy shift. A short look-back to what built New York City historically, especially in the FDR period, underscores the political system we must restore today: non-partisan emergency action for the public good.

The essential post-storm projects include what should have been in place all along: shoreline protection from sea walls, gates and diversion systems; dense rail grids with inland redundancy; abundant power, centered on nuclear generation; modernized electricity generation, distribution, and reserves; sound and plentiful housing, based on serving a productive population,

not real estate bubbles from shoreline speculation; secure water provision; in-depth public health and medical treatment capacity, and more. Most important is the space/satellite program, for advanced storm warning, for developing understanding of the universe, and for protection from planetary threats.

### **Scale of Devastation**

Hurricane Sandy was huge in energy, extent, and damage. At one point, 23 Eastern and Midwest states were under wind gust warnings, and nearly as many for flash flooding. After widespread devastation in the Caribbean, Sandy's northward path, which brought dangerous weather to Florida, northward through the Mid-Atlantic states, then veered westward, making landfall Oct. 29 in southern New Jersey, and proceeding to inundate and pummel the low-lying part of New York City and environs.

At this point, Sandy, re-classified from Hurricane to Superstorm, was some 1,000 miles across, bringing high winds and rain to the Great Lakes region, and a terrible "thunder snow" to the Appalachians, especially West Virginia. Sandy finally tailed off to the north, leaving destruction in its wake in Canada.

At the peak, 8.5 million customers—households and businesses—in 21 states, were cut off from electricity. The storm affected, in part or extensively, a 23-state area, with a population of over 60 million in the worst-hit zone. As Superstorm Week Two began, 1.3 million residents still lack power.

Records were set for flooding and destruction in the coastal areas. In Lower Manhattan, the sea surge crest topped 13 feet, far exceeding the prior record of 11-plus feet from Hurricane Gloria in 1985. Southern Manhattan and the low-lying areas of the boroughs were engulfed suddenly—Rockaway in Queens, Coney Island, Staten Island, along the Jersey Hudson Riverside towns, and coastline generally.

Vehicular and rail tunnels to Manhattan and other links in the boroughs and New Jersey were flooded. For a time on Oct. 30, the island of Manhattan was completely cut off from all connection to surrounding mainland. Bridges were closed due to wind, and tunnels inundated. The New York Subway System was flooded for the first time in its 108-year history, and closed.

Accordingly, with this sweep of damage, plus the lack of infrastructure and the lack of redundancy of vital supplies, all areas of basic life have been overthrown for millions of people, centered in the New

York/New Jersey coastal region, but affecting the nation. Forty-nine years of takedown since the death of President Kennedy have been brought home within 48 hours of a severe storm.

### **Vast Infrastructure Damage**

**Transportation.** All heavy and light-rail systems were hit in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area, from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) subway system, to the PATH trains, Long Island commuter lines, New Jersey Transit (NJT) rail, and AMTRAK interstate. Since only 50% of residents in New York City have private cars, compared with the 90% average nationally, the lack of rail transit is a crippling blow.

New Jersey Transit, averaging 276,000 daily rail commuters, has 35% of its locomotives damaged, and 23% of its rail cars. The U.S. no longer makes this heavy equipment, which NJT gets from Canada, with very long lead times and custom designing involved. The NJT operations center was flooded, ruining its electronic control systems. Very partial train service was resumed after a week, but there is no timetable for restoring full service.

Pre-storm, the MTA subway system averaged 5.5 million riders daily, on its nearly 210 miles of routes (650 miles of revenue track), interconnecting the New York City boroughs. A week later, a few lines have been put back into operation, with slower speeds, and fewer trains, but there is extensive damage, including washed-out shoreline tracks and control systems. The de-watering phase continues for several flooded subway tubes. There is severe damage to switches, electronics, and other vital components from the effects of standing, salty, toxic water. Sources and reserves for replacement and repair parts don't exist in the United States.

"Think of it as a 90- to 100-year-old patient that got into an accident and is in the hospital," MTA chairman Joseph Lhota told the media. "Things always happen when you get in the hospital that you don't expect. The amount of saltwater that is in the system, as we clean it out, we're finding other things."

For vehicular traffic, the chaos in the first week, from lack of gasoline, lack of electricity for gas stations, etc., is par for the course, considering who is in charge. One special irony concerns heating oil for homes and commercial buildings. On Oct. 1, Bloomberg's new greenie mandate went into effect, saying that 5% of all fuel oil used in the boroughs had to be

biodiesel. This was to be a national green trendsetter. Now, in the storm aftermath, that stupid decree is waived, as are all the FDA emissions rules and local ethanol mandates, given that reality has struck.

**Housing.** There are now thousands of households, that are either homeless, or in unlivable circumstances. This ranges from those who are safe, but displaced because their homes are demolished or uninhabitable, to those in unsafe apartment buildings, nursing homes, or temporary shelters, with no resources for where to go next.

There is no redundancy of housing anywhere in the Northeast, for interim accommodation. FEMA is signing people up who qualify to receive grants to cover 30 months of their rental expense, but the housing isn't to be had. In New York City alone, 40,000 people need long-term interim housing, according to the understated count released by the City Housing Authority, which said that 20,000 are from the low-income, public-housing rolls.

For the 400,000 New Yorkers resident in hundreds of the 2,600 public housing buildings operated by the Housing Authority, there were thousands, as of Nov. 1, stuck in 267 tenement buildings known to have no power, no security, no food, and many with no water. For infants, the elderly, diabetics, and others, these conditions mean sickness and death.

For example, as late as Day 8, in Red Hook, Brooklyn, a resident of a public housing high rise appealed for help to a reporter, "We can't live like rats." No relief had come at all for a full week. Many fearful residents had not left their rooms the whole time. The building was without electricity, water, and sanitation. The hallways were pitch black; the stairwell landings, full of human waste. Since the gas still worked, people resorted to using their stoves for heat, a terrible fire danger.

The public housing units hardest hit are on the shoreline areas: Coney Island (Brooklyn), Rockaway Beach (Queens), Alphabet City (Manhattan), and Long



U.S. Army/E.J. Herson

*Water pours into New York Harbor from pumps displacing floodwaters in the Battery Park underpass in Lower Manhattan, on Nov. 2. The Army Corps of Engineers 249th Batalion (Prime Power) continued its work of de-watering at 11 key sites throughout the island, in addition to pumping out tunnels.*

Island. For example, LaGuardia Houses and Vladock Houses on the Lower East Side of Manhattan have become houses of terror—for robbery, disease, and despair.

**Medical care.** Headlines covered the heroic, mid-storm evacuations of two Manhattan hospitals: 300 patients from the New York University Langone Medical Center on Oct. 29, and over 600 patients from Bellevue, on Nov. 1. These were necessitated by lack of reliable back-up electricity.

But behind these singular storm events are dozens of situations, where disabled people in nursing homes were left in danger; people needing treatment have no where to turn—all from both the Bloomberg and prior cuts to health care (with more to come from Obamacare). In Far Rockaway—known in advance to be in a high-target zone for the deluge, the City did not evacuate all nursing homes. Rockaway Care Center, Horizon Care Center, and a few others had residents taken to a school. But other facilities were left in extreme danger.

**Water, utilities.** Hundreds of thousands still have no safe water, and raw sewage is streaming amidst the flood waters at points throughout the five boroughs, and many parts of New Jersey.

**Food.** Thousands are without food, trapped in their

high-rise apartment buildings—confined by darkness, fear of assault, multi-story stairwells, no communications, and poverty. They have received no food relief for days. In addition, there are hundreds of localities where people can move about amidst the debris, but no food is to be had. Obama’s FEMA, Homeland Security, Christie and Bloomberg, set up no contingencies for high-volume, long-term food security. After a week, the Federal Agriculture Department began shipping in foodstuffs.

Moreover, the immediate food crisis associated with the storm, occurs in the context of shrinking food

output nationally, no food reserves, and a sharp contraction in farm capacity.

### **Flood, Sea Surge Protection**

Having the right infrastructure in place of all kinds, would have mitigated the damage toll, even from Superstorm Sandy. Such infrastructure includes coastal surge defense, inland flood control, power, water supply, transportation, health-care logistics, and food security. The principle involved is illustrated most dramatically by the question of barriers against sea surge. They must be there.

## **Lake Borgne Surge Barrier Now Protects New Orleans**

Nov. 6—In Summer 2011, the IHNC (Inner Harbor Navigation Canal) Lake Borgne Surge Barrier was completed, to protect the city of New Orleans from storm surge flooding. It is the largest single civil works project ever carried out by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; it performed to perfection in its first use, August 2012, when Hurricane Isaac hit the Gulf Coast.

The structure consists of a 1.8-mile-long barrier wall, with gigantic gates (seen in the middle distance), situated at the upper end of Lake Borgne (east of Lake Pontchartrain), at the confluence of the Intra-coastal Channel. The barrier, made of concrete and steel, is shown here, with a view of the Seabrook Floodgate in the foreground.

Locally, the barrier is referred to as “The Great Wall.” It forms the first line of defense to protect against tidal surge from the Gulf of Mexico moving inward through Lake Ponchartrain. The Great Wall protects the parishes hit so badly in 2005—the Lower Ninth Ward and St. Bernard Parish.

The Corps reports that the project took “enough steel to construct eight Eiffel Towers, enough concrete to fill one football field, 94 feet deep ... [and] involves 160 miles of piles.”

The photo shows the massive gates,

during installation in May 2011.

The concept of surge protection for New Orleans—long proposed—was finally acted upon after the deadly impact of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. As of 2006, upgraded flood defense systems were mapped out for the entire city region—much of it below sea level—including new floodwalls, pumping capacity, and other logistics—amongst which, the Lake Borgne Surge Barrier was a centerpiece. In 2008, the the Corps awarded a \$1 billion design-build contract to Shaw Environmental & Infrastructure, Inc.—the largest such contract in Corps history. Under Corps supervision, Shaw finished the barrier and gates in an unbelievable time of two years and two weeks.

*Marcia Merry Baker*



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The proposal has been present for decades to protect the New York/New Jersey Bay area by a sea wall and surge barrier system. But this was always shelved, for reasons of political opposition citing costs, and more recently, by greenie, bogus environmental objections. First, consider the success of these barriers, then the specifics for New York City.

The other Northeast coastal towns with such anti-surge systems, though on a smaller scale, were almost fully protected during Superstorm Sandy, and also during Hurricane Irene in August 2011. These are:

- Providence, R.I. The Fox Point Hurricane Barrier was built in 1960-66, authorized by the 1958 Federal Flood Control Act. It is a 3,000 foot (910 meter) tidal flood wall across the Providence River, with rock and earthen dikes, vehicular and canal gates, and a pumping station.

- New Bedford, Mass., is protected by the New Bedford Harbor Hurricane Barrier, built by the Army Corps of Engineers. It was authorized and begun in 1958, and consists of a 3 km-long, 20-ft high wall of rock and dirt, with a set of hydraulically-operated doors, to be closed against storm surge.

- Stamford, Conn. In 1966, the Army Corps of Engineers built the Stamford Hurricane Barrier, which it continues to operate. It functioned perfectly during Sandy, as it has in all past storms. Stamford Director of Public Safety Ted Jankowski told the press Oct. 30, “The surge never breached the hurricane wall. It wasn’t even close. The hurricane wall is 17 feet, and the highest ocean level was 11 feet, so we had 6 feet to go.”

In Europe, there is the model complex of storm barriers in The Netherlands, called Delta Works, protecting against a North Sea surge. The system has several surge barriers, one of which is the Maeslantkering, which protects Rotterdam, and the largest of which is the Oosterscheldekering, which has 62 giant steel doors. In east England, there is the Thames Barrier, downstream from London, on the Thames River, to protect against exceptionally high tides and surges from the North Sea. Protecting St. Petersburg, is a 9.9 mile (16 m) barrier separating the Gulf of Finland from Neva Bay. The “Saint Petersburg Flood Prevention Facility Complex” was begun by the U.S.S.R. in 1978, and finished in 2011.

But the world’s newest, large-scale anti-surge structure is in New Orleans—the Lake Borgne Surge Barrier, a \$1.1 billion project overseen by the Army Corps

of Engineers (see box). Completed in Summer 2011, this barrier was used for the first time, with full success, during Hurricane Isaac in August 2012. Ironically, it was commissioned in the wake of the Katrina-gate of the George W. Bush Presidency, then carried through to completion, ending with funding from the Obama Stimulus Act (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009).

But now, the Federal government refuses to even allocate funding to operate the big Lake Borgne Surge Barrier gates! On Nov. 6, local Louisiana residents of the Orleans Parish have a ballot referendum, on whether to approve raising their own tax rate, to pay for running the surge barrier, through the local Orleans Levee District.

### **Surge Barriers for New York/New Jersey**

There are several proposals for surge barriers to protect New York City and New Jersey. They involve different kinds of sea walls and gates, proposed for selected sites where the Outer Bay meets the Atlantic Ocean, and other critical, inland spans.

A strong advocate is Malcolm J. Bowman, Coordinator of the Storm Surge Group at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, on Long Island. “If we had implemented these barriers by now, there would have been no damage to New York City resulting from Sandy. By that I mean no damage coming from the ocean,” Bowman told ABC News on Nov. 2. He has commissioned two top engineering firms to propose refined designs. Bowman said, “I am not proposing we start pouring concrete next week. What I am proposing is a feasibility study. We need to do that if we are serious about protecting the city from further catastrophes.” He has stressed that this is not “far-out science or engineering.”

In 2009, a seminar, titled “Against the Deluge: Storm Surge Barriers to Protect New York City,” was held by the American Society of Civil Engineers’ (ASCE) New York Metropolitan Section Infrastructure Group and the New York Academy of Sciences. It was attended by New York City’s Office of Emergency Management and the Army Corps of Engineers. They all discussed the likelihood of an impending sea surge. Featured presentations on storm surge barriers for New York were given by four firms: Arcadis, Halcrow/CHM2 Hill, Parsons Brickerhoff, and Camp Dresser & McKee.

Arcadis, the Holland-based, international infra-

structure firm, has extensive experience with surge barriers in The Netherlands. For New York, Arcadis proposes a barrier situated in the Verrazano Narrows, connecting the Upper New York Bay with the Atlantic Ocean. The barrier would be 4,800 ft in length, with a large sliding sector gate of 860 ft. This would allow the largest vessels to pass through during normal weather, and it could be closed during a storm (**Figure 1**).

An Arcadis statement April 2, 2009 summarized: “Parts of the New York and New Jersey Metropolitan Area (20 million inhabitants) are below the maximum water level of a probable storm surge, resulting from Northeast storms and hurricanes. . . . Although the area is not below sea level, the risk of human casualties is also present, as tunnels and the subway systems may flood. The proposed barrier in the Verrazano Narrows, combined with two other barriers at the East River and the Arthur Kill, will minimize the danger of a storm surge entering from the Atlantic Ocean into the Upper New York Bay. The costs of the Verrazano Barrier, roughly estimated at 6.5 billion dollars, may prove economically preferable to accepting the chance of flooding.”

The CH2M Hill plan is for a levee-like barrier to run five miles from the Sandy Hook promontory in New Jersey, northward to the Rockaway Peninsula in Queens, on Long Island (**Figure 2**). This would leave Rockaway and Long Island exposed, but protect the entire Inner Bay. Gaps would permit passage of vessels, the outflow of river water, and tidal ebbs and flows. In the event of storm surge, movable gates would close off New York Bay. The barrier would protect from a 30 ft surge. Halcrow worked on the same kind of project to protect St. Petersburg, Russia, completed in 2010.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo concurs with the idea that now is the time to seriously consider sea barriers, because, he says, it is the responsibility of government. However, Mayor Bloomberg snarled his opposition repeatedly this past week. “We cannot build a big barrier reef off the shore to stop the waves from coming in,” he said Oct. 29.

FIGURE 1

### Verrazano Narrows Storm Surge Barrier, proposed by Arcadis



Arcadis

*The Verrazano Narrows Storm Surge Barrier, shown here in an artist's concept, next to the Verrazano Narrows Suspension Bridge, has gates that can be closed against Atlantic stormwaters flowing into the Bay of New York. They are part of a surge protection proposal by Arcadis, presented in 2009, at a flood defense seminar, hosted by the American Society of Civil Engineers, and the New York Academy of Science.*

### Do or Die

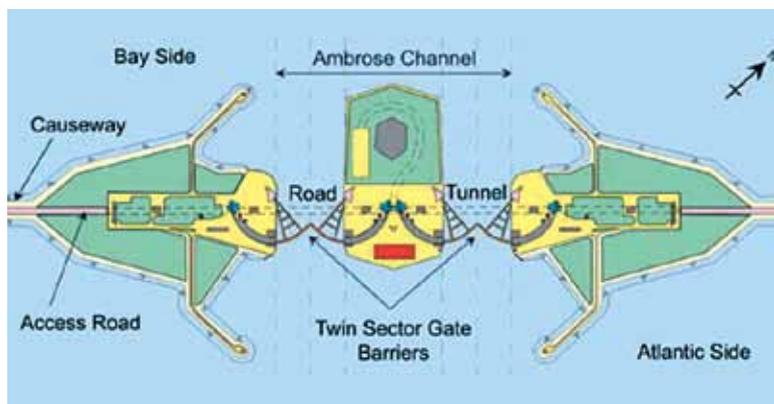
Building infrastructure, and building up the economy to do so, is now a do-or-die question. It was the implementation of a sequence of large-scale infrastructure improvements, which made New York City into a world metropole in the mid-20th Century. It is now critical to return to the American System outlook behind this, or the nation and civilization itself are doomed. Look at a few events in the buildup of the productive platform in greater New York by 1950, and then at its takedown.

In 1900, New York City, with an area of 305 sq miles, had a population density of 11,124 persons per sq mi. As of 1960, the density had more than doubled, to 24,000 persons per sq. mi. The basis for this increase included such infrastructure upgrades as new water supplies, modern rail and mass transit, health-care systems to battle infectious disease, and provision of decent housing.

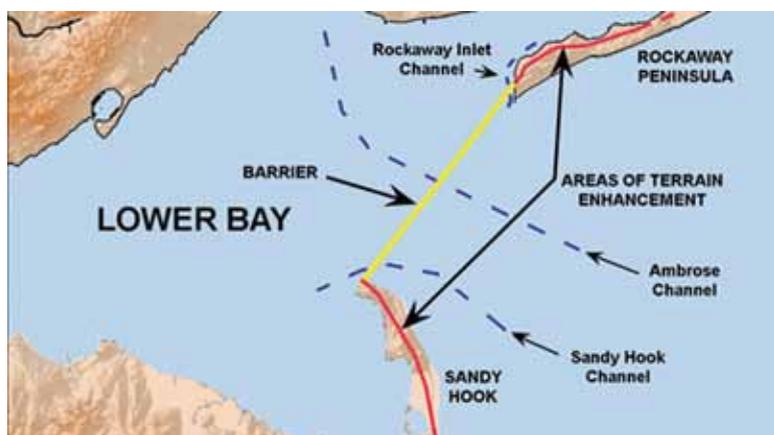
**Demographics.** As of the 1950s, 25% of the metro New York City workforce was employed in manufacturing, from food processing, printing, and other light industry, to highly skilled machining and medical equipment manufacture. From 1900 to 1960, the average life expectancy of a New Yorker rose from 43 to 69 years. The mortality rate went down, from 20.6 deaths

FIGURE 2

**The N.Y.-N.J. Outer Harbor Gateway—Flood Defense Barrier and Gates, proposed by Halcrow/CH2M Hill**



*A five-mile flood-defense barrier would be built between the Rockaway Peninsula, N.Y., and Sandy Hook, N.J. A system of twin sector gates, on the Ambrose Channel, can be closed to storm surge. The proposal was made at a 2009 seminar in New York, and is based on a completed surge-protection system in St. Petersburg, Russia.*



per 100,000 per year in 1900, to 11.4 per 100,000 in 1960.

**Transportation.** The New York subway system began with its first underground line in 1904. Over the decades, the subways expanded, including corporate changes, mergers, and eventual consolidation under the municipal Board of Transportation, and later the MTA. As of 1940, the amalgamated system had 237 miles of service—the most extensive in the world.

Interstate rail lines came in from all three land directions, connecting to the national grid, whose peak density was in the 1920s. Directly related to the rail system, was access to fresh, abundant food.

World-class seaport facilities were developed in New Jersey and New York, featuring the Brooklyn Navy Yard and other marine specialty centers.

The major downgrade during this period, was a mistaken 1930s shift into “city beautiful” highway and boulevard construction, instead of expanding high-tech

mass transit.

**Water.** In the 1930s, a new, large-scale water-supply system was initiated, to add to the existing, excellent Croton Dam and Aqueduct water source, which had opened in 1842. The new projects—finally completed in the 1960s—collected water in new dams in the Catskill watershed, and the Delaware River Basin, and piped it 85 miles into the City.

**Housing.** After 1936, when a new charter was voted in, the New York City Housing Authority, with the assistance of the FDR Federal government, moved to provide decent housing for those in need, as part of a general relief and public welfare program to counter the Depression.

**Health.** The City deployed its Departments of Health, Sanitation, and Hospital Services, to successfully roll back yellow fever, tuberculosis, and other widespread infectious diseases of early 1900s.

Then came the post-World War II decline, down to the present-day mass vulnerability to storm disaster, and economic wipeout. Over the past five decades, New York City was transformed into a center for financial activity, real estate speculation, and tourism, all while its productive base and infrastructure foundations were eroded. Hundreds of thousands of residents are now below the official poverty line.

Almost the only additional infrastructure project, was the completion of the Verrazano Narrows suspension bridge in 1964. The condition of rail and mass transit has been kept at a kind of museum-piece level of functioning. The number of hospitals and hospital beds per thousand residents has dropped drastically in all five boroughs.

As of the 1950s, manufacturers started re-locating out of New York City. Residents began leaving for the

suburbs, in a process of de-structuring of the urban and rural productive landscape of the nation. The population of New York City fell from 7.9 million in 1950 to 7.3 million in 1990, and only rose slightly again, up to 8 million in 2000, and 8.2 million in the 2010 census.

A key part of this process was the 1975 “Big MAC” episode, in which a contrived municipal debt crisis, was used as the pretext for coercing city leaders and the public to submit to a bankers’ dictatorship, called the Municipal Acceptance Corporation. Under the pretext of “making good on debt” in order to restore the

City’s credit rating, essential municipal staff, services, and assets were slashed and looted, from firemen and police, to hospitals and sanitation workers.

The leading figures in this 1970s Big MAC crime, such as Felix Rohatyn and Paul Volcker, are political forebears of today’s trio of Obama, Bloomberg, and Christie, who are acting to undermine the means of existence and future of the nation.

### Cuts to Army Corps of Engineers

In line with this, are the blatant cuts to the Army Corps of Engineers budget by the Obama Administration and Congress. The Corps is the Federal agency most needed in emergency relief, and for rebuilding and the construction of NAWAPA XXI, and selected other projects.

Under Obama, the overall national budget of the Corps has been cut all along. In 2010, the USACE annual allocation was \$5.5 billion—a pittance. But then, Obama cut it down further to \$4.6 billion for 2012, and now, for 2013, proposes a paltry \$4.7 billion. Some of the Corps’ current expenses for its storm relief operations in the pre-election period, will be paid for by its Federal contractor, FEMA, but that is beside the point.

The entire Army Corps of Engineers annual Civil Works budget line for its 14-state North Atlantic Division is a measly \$650 million a year under Obama! This



U.S. Marine Corps/Cpl. Bryan Nygaard

*A team of Navy and Marine Corpsmen work to repair a pier in Hoboken, N.J., Nov. 3.*

is for operations and maintenance to cover all activities, which include, in addition to its coastal and inland flood-control operations: navigation, municipal water supply, irrigation, recreation, fish and wildlife, “environmental stewardship,” and disaster relief.

In the North Atlantic Division, the Corps operates 53 dams, 63 miles of levees, and 22 storm and hurricane barriers. The North Atlantic Division encompasses all or parts of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, District of Columbia, West Virginia, and North Carolina—all immediately affected by Superstorm Sandy. The Division has 12 Coastal Storm Damage Reduction Projects, including sections of Long Island, N.Y., down to the Del-Marva Peninsula and Virginia coasts.

Making the Corps’ underfunding even worse, is the way it has been mis-deployed in recent years, onto infrastructure work to aid casinos and private real estate boondoggles, and not to serve its mission for the national interest. Hurricane Sandy exposed an instance of this scandal in New Jersey. Under Gov. Christie, the Corps did beach-defense work for the Atlantic City casino strip, after Hurricane Irene last year. Gambling is a state “development” strategy of Christie. The Atlantic City casinos then were able to re-open within two days of Hurricane Sandy, thanks to the Corps’ selective

coastal defense work.

However, the Corps' standing proposal to build a seawall nearby, to protect the inlet area, where there is low- to mid-income residential and business activity, and no beach, remains unfunded and on hold. The project was not built after Hurricane Irene; Hurricane Sandy completely inundated the inlet area, destroying homes and businesses, and causing at least one fatality. In the pre-election week, state officials made claims to the

media, that they now support building the seawall.

FEMA has been run as a shell game. On Oct. 29, FEMA Director Craig Fugate said at an Obama show-concern briefing, "We have plenty of cash in the short term. . . ." That's part of the pretense. The way it works is this. Whereas last September, at the time Hurricane Irene slammed the Eastern states, Fugate said, "We have plenty of money" (Sept. 13), this was, as he admitted at the time, only because he put dozens of previous

## FDR Knew How To Respond To a Monster Storm

Among the more brilliant accomplishments of President Franklin Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA) was the creation of a mobile workforce that could be deployed on a moment's notice to battle hurricanes, floods, and fires. Where Barack Obama, like his predecessor during Hurricane Katrina, told Hurricane-devastated New Yorkers and New Jerseyans, effectively, "Don't count on your government; you're on your own," FDR's right-hand man, Harry Hopkins, was immediately on the scene, deploying his WPA army of formerly unemployed and desperate men and women, as a strike force capable of heroic action.

In January 1937, a series of torrential rains pelted the Ohio River Valley and left a trail of disaster. Fifteen percent of Cincinnati was underwater; 70% of Louisville, and 100% of Paducah, Ky were inundated. Cities up and down the Ohio River were in panic and chaos. Five hundred were dead and a million were left homeless. Hopkins, who was FDR's flood relief commissioner, immediately arrived at the scene and oversaw relief, construction, flood control, and cleanup. He deployed more than 200,000 WPA workers to build sanitary privies, nail wooden catwalks to carry foot traffic over the swamps of mud, deliver relief supplies to the stricken population, clear refuse, remove garbage, and cook hot meals for the hungry.

Hopkins even deployed the Federal Theater Project to perform over 40 plays and shows in the flood-ravaged states.

### The Great New England Hurricane

In his 2008 book, *The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: American-Made*, Nick Taylor recounts the heroic response of WPA to the catastrophic Great New England Hurricane which struck on Sept. 21, 1938. The fast-moving monster storm killed at least 682 people, and injured more than 1,700. Nine thousand homes were destroyed and 15,000 damaged. The toll to infrastructure was massive.

According to Taylor, President Roosevelt learned at 6:30 the next morning about the extent of the destruction. By 9:00 a.m., "the WPA, along with the Coast Guard, the army, the navy, the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps], and the Red Cross, had field agents headed to Long Island and New England. Hopkins, in California, telephoned to say he was cutting his trip short, and would take the first available plane headed east."

The response of Hopkins and Roosevelt was impressive: Within 18 hours they had deployed 100,000 WPA workers on the scene to engage in everything from dam repairs (to prevent even more flooding), to sandbagging, evacuation of stranded victims, and cleanup. WPA workers produced new clothing for victims, staffed refugee centers, and orchestrated the cleanup efforts.

"[S]o swift and efficient was that recovery work that by late November, the storm debris had largely disappeared and much of New England was looking forward to a normal winter," Taylor wrote. The chairman of the Red Cross credited the WPA and the other agencies for "one of the most amazing disaster recoveries this organization has ever known."

—Stuart Rosenblatt

disaster-rebuilding commitments on hold.

Since then, those FEMA projects are not only still on ice, but a slew of new unmet Hurricane Irene commitments were added to the unpaid FEMA backlog. Then, along came Congress in the election year, and voted up expanded funding for FEMA (for one year), plus allowed FEMA to carry over year-to-year, any unspent funds. So Fugate can claim that he now has a neat \$7.1 billion to spend, plus another \$700 million he didn't spend last year, for a total of \$7.8 billion.

For FY 2013, Obama proposes reducing FEMA's Disaster Relief Funds by \$1 billion, down to \$6.1 billion. Romney and Ryan are proposing steeper, but unspecified cuts, even eliminating the agency altogether, under the deregulation excuse of making block hand-outs to states.

Look at the FEMA track record, in terms of a typical, local example. Fleischmanns, a very small town in the Catskills (Delaware County, N.Y.), had \$4 million of flood damage from Irene in 2011, and was hit again by Superstorm Sandy. Last Winter, FEMA stalled for months on its part of the \$4 million needed for rebuild-

ing, and therefore, the town could not obtain a municipal loan. In February 2012, an exasperated Deputy Mayor Todd Pascarella wrote to his New York Assemblyman, "We've got all these projects that need to be done. FEMA is taking its sweet time. What's Plan B [for getting funding, and getting started]? No one can tell me what Plan B is. Everybody's very sympathetic, but nobody can tell me how I can start the funding for these projects."

FEMA never came through for Fleischmanns. The same situation obtains for hundreds of localities in the many disaster zones, the Tornado Belt, the 2011 Missouri Basin flood zone, as well as Hurricane Irene.

To be sure, local FEMA staff are acting heroically, along with thousands of local responders, Red Cross personnel, volunteers, and 7,400 National Guardsmen, in the multi-state storm zone, where in many places, as in New Jersey, the harrowing rescue phase is still underway. But the Obama program at the top is: lie, cut, and kill.

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## LPAC-TV Weekly Report



Each Wednesday afternoon, Lyndon LaRouche sits down with LPAC-TV Weekly Report host John Hoefle and two guests from the "Basement" scientific team and/or the LaRouchePAC editorial staff, for an in-depth discussion of the most important issues of the week, be they political, economic, strategic, or scientific.

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