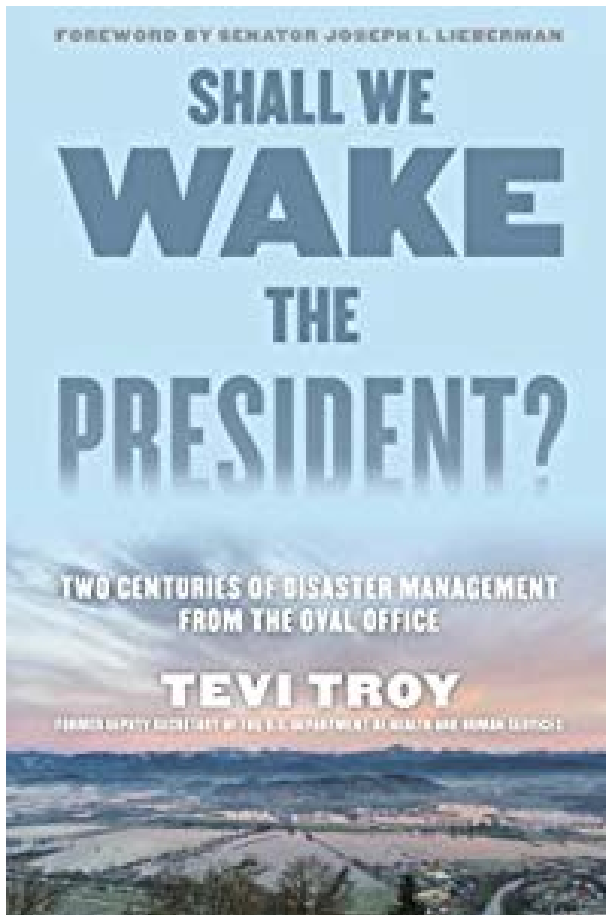


Shall We Wake the President?: Two Centuries of Disaster Management from the Oval Office



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The history of presidential dealings with disasters shows that whatever their ideology, presidents need to be prepared to deal with unexpected crises. In recent years, the expectations have grown as the disasters seem to appear to be coming more frequently. Since 2001, numerous unpredictable crises, including terror attacks, massive storms, and an economic collapse, have shaken Americans to their core. It seems as if technology, for all of its beneficences, also provides mankind with increasingly powerful ways to wreak destruction, including nuclear explosions, bioterror attacks, and cyber-attacks.

In addition, instantaneous and incessant communications technologies send us word of disasters taking place anywhere in the nation far more rapidly, giving disasters an immediacy that some may have lacked in the past. In 21st century America, the eyes of the American people look to the president to lead the response to whatever disasters happen to strike. President Obama and his team learned this and were taken aback by the sheer number of crises that a president needed to deal with, including swine flu, BP's Macondo oil spill, and the Somali pirates who attacked an American ship. Many of these did not quite reach disaster status, but Obama's reaction to the constant stream of crises was both revealing and unnerving: -Who thought we were going to have to deal with pirates?- In Shall We Wake the President?, Tevi Troy, a presidential historian and

former senior White House aide and deputy secretary of the Department of Health & Human Services, looks at the evolving role of the president in dealing with disasters, and looks at how our presidents have handled disasters throughout our history. He also looks at the likelihood of similar disasters befalling modern America, and details how smart policies today can help us avoid future crises, or can best react to them should they occur. In addition, he provides information on what individuals can do to prepare for disasters. This book includes sections on how American presidents have dealt with a variety of disasters, including health crises, terror attacks, economic upheaval, bioterror and cyber-attacks, natural disasters, and civil breakdown. In doing so, *Shall We Wake the President?* will provide lessons from presidents of the past that will inform policy strategies for presidents of the future.