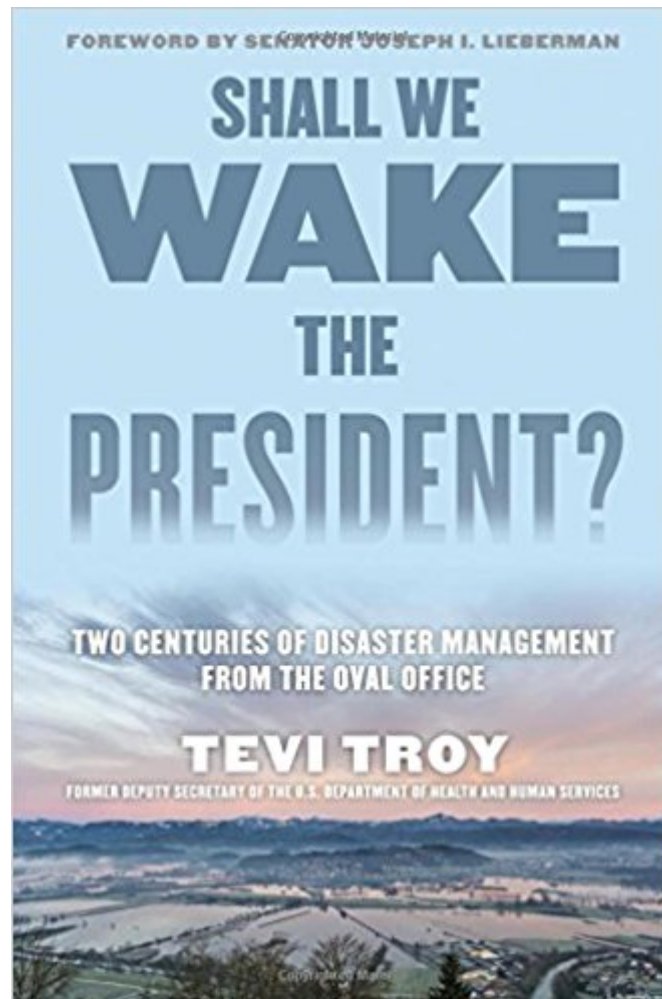


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# Shall We Wake The President?: Two Centuries Of Disaster Management From The Oval Office



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a great book. I am generally not a reader of history but liked Dr. Troy's earlier book : What Jefferson Read , Ike Watched and Obama Tweeted so felt compelled to read this as well and was not disappointed. The book not only gives a historians view of disaster management (or mis-management) by presidents over the last 2 centuries , it also provides a framework for how we can better manage these inevitable events in the future. It is chock full of great stories and anecdotes that are hard to find anywhere else and really draw the reader in to the text in a way that only Tevi Troy, the premier Presidential historian of our time, can do. For example, it was fascinating to learn that the decisions of President Wilson during World War I and may have inadvertently worsened the death toll and effects of The 1918 Flu and possibly the course of World War II as well leading to the deaths of dozens of millions of people in ways one never considered. The "Butterfly effect" comes to mind. I strongly recommend that everybody read this book as its lessons can only be effective if we are all prepared for future disasters by learning from the past.

With "Shall We Wake the President" Tevi Troy extends to three his books on discrete aspects of U.S. presidential history. This book presents the history of how presidents have managed or mismanaged disasters over the past two hundred years. As an historian, former adviser in the George W. Bush White House, and as a former Deputy Secretary of the US Dept of Health and Human Services, Dr. Troy has a unique insight which he parlays into an eminently readable book. Part of that readability is his use of anecdotes, which make the historical facts come alive. Included with the history are useful chapters on how individuals, their neighbors and communities can prepare for the early hours and days following a disaster, before federal and state bureaucracies can mobilize for the effort. This is not only a great read, it is also a "must-read."

Shall We Wake the President is well researched, written and edited. Not only does Dr Troy tell

interesting stories about Presidents and disasters, he gives readers survivalist tips as well! Although he is known to be a Conservative, Troy is even-handed in his recounting of history. As a non-history buff, this book would not normally appeal to me, but it is a very accessible and fast-paced romp through a specific niche that most can relate to.

I found this thoroughly researched book to be easily readable and engaging. It offers new insights into both disaster response and the judgment (good or bad) of several presidents. If you enjoy history, politics, the drama of the human condition, or just a good read, you'll enjoy this book.

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