

Should we rebuild?

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Averaging six feet below sea-level and surrounded by three massive bodies of water, the danger of flooding is well known in New Orleans.

Even as the city remains submerged in 20 feet of water mixed with raw sewage, oil, and toxic chemicals, plans to rebuild are underway. I do not think the city should be rebuilt. An *Associated Press* poll* reveals that 54 percent of Americans would agree with me.

New Orleans was established in 1718 as a major port city because of its location near the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River. According to

the 2003 World Port Rankings, the Port of South Louisiana is the largest in the United States in terms of cargo tonnage. The port was essential for exporting the nation's grain and importing petroleum.

New Orleans is surrounded by three massive bodies of water: Lake Pontchartrain, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Mississippi River. In 1910, engineer A. Baldwin Wood developed a plan to expand the city by using massive pumps to drain the water in surrounding areas. This allowed the city to build on land that was once a swamp.

New Orleans ranges between one and ten feet below sea level, the lowest city in Louisiana and the third-lowest in the nation. A

complex series of levees, pumps, and dikes keep the surrounding bodies of water from flooding the city. As we saw with Katrina, a major storm surge caused by a hurricane can cause flooding and massive devastation.

Katrina is not the first time New Orleans experienced large-scale flooding.

Hurricanes pounded the fragile city as early as 1722. Perhaps the most memorable hurricanes before Katrina were an unnamed hurricane in 1947 and Hurricane

Betsy in 1965 which both took 132 lives as reported by *Globalsecurities.org*.

City officials project that draining efforts will be complete by early October, and then the long process of rebuilding will begin. The only problems are that October and November are historically the most active months of hurricane season, and the levees were built only for protection from category-three hurricanes.

It is entirely possible that just as the draining finishes in October, another massive hurricane could bombard New Orleans, flooding it once again. It would not be unprecedented for

more than one hurricane to hit the same spot in a season. Last year, four hurricanes hit Florida within weeks of each other.

I argue that New Orleans should not be rebuilt in the same location.

The city was built on unstable ground, and the levees are in effect sinking. *Petitionspot.com* reports that the city should not

be rebuilt because the levees will require extensive and long-term work that will cost billions of dollars. The monetary concerns come only after the fact that it is potentially life-threatening to live there.

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Petitions.com notes that when it rains, water is pumped out of the city and into Lake Pontchartrain at a rate of one inch per hour. Should the rate of rainfall exceed one inch per hour, as in a hurricane, the city floods.

Rebuilding the city will only put more people in harm's way.

A Katrina-like catastrophe is certain to happen again. The value of life surely outweighs the historical significance and ambiance of New Orleans.

New Orleans is a bowl surrounded by water. There is practically a "flood me" sign right on top of the city.⌘

New Orleans is a very historic city. It has been controlled by the French, Spanish, and the United States, which have greatly influenced the city, and have all contributed to its unique culture.

The most important thing that we stand to lose is Mardi Gras. Mardi Gras is one of the most famous festivals in the world. New Orleans has the largest and most extravagant celebration of this holiday on the planet.

Losing New Orleans could end this traditional celebration.

New Orleans should be rebuilt not only to maintain Louisiana's economy, but also to preserve New Orleans' rich history, amazing culture, and timeless traditions.⌘

Curry Robison

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In 1803, Thomas Jefferson bought New Orleans as part of the Louisiana Purchase. Since then, New Orleans has been one of the most important cities in the southeastern economy. Despite the horrible effects of Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans should be rebuilt in its original location because of its wonderful history and its importance to the U.S. economy.

New Orleans has been rebuilt before. According to the novel *Rising Tide*, the great flood of the Mississippi River occurred in 1928. The flood ruined areas from St. Louis to New Orleans. New Orleans rebuilt after that great flood, and it can rebuild

again, after the great hurricane.

New Orleans is in one of the most dangerous locales in the United States, at the junction of the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. However dangerous, though, it is necessary to have a major city at that location in the United States. A large amount of shipping moves through the mouth of the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico.

If New Orleans were to move, all of the transport from this area would be abandoned. The country needs a city at the end of the Mississippi River to house water vessels and goods coming down the river from the north, and to regulate vessels entering and exiting from the Gulf of Mexico.

dictable, and government officials had to make the best decisions they could. No one predicted that the hurricane would be so catastrophic.

"That 'perfect storm' of a combination of catastrophes exceeded the foresight of the planners, and maybe anyone's foresight," said Chertoff.

Hurricane Katrina could be the worst natural disaster in the last century. With rising death tolls and thousands of homeless, we should be more focused on helping our fellow Americans than pointing fingers.

Even people who feel we should have been better prepared should concentrate on what is urgently important: helping those in need.⌘

flooding than you have."

The fact remains that the government was aware of the problems with the levees but was unwilling to spend the money. Whether or not it was simply because they felt the money was better spent somewhere else, the worst has occurred.

In an article in *The Washington Post*, Representative David Obey of Wisconsin questioned why officials were not fully prepared for the storm:

"How many times do we have to see disaster overwhelm our preparedness before we recognize that we are playing Russian roulette with peoples' lives, with their livelihoods, and with the life of whole communities?"⌘

