

RELEASE IN
PART B6

From: Sidney Blumenthal [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, August 26, 2012 10:10 AM
To: H
Subject: H: FYI. In case you or Bill have use for this. Done quickly am in spirit of John Lennon ("I read the news today, oh, boy"). Sid

B6

CONFIDENTIAL

August 26, 2012

For: Jack Lew
From: Sidney Blumenthal
Re: Hurricane Isaac

1. The moment George W. Bush's popularity collapsed was in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. His decline was not the result of the Iraq War; instead, it was sudden, rapid and unrecoverable post-Katrina. Then and only then did his standing on every other issue disintegrate. He was washed away by the failure of the federal government to handle the crisis. Memories of Katrina are still vivid and searing.
2. Hurricane Isaac will hit the Gulf Coast and possibly veer to New Orleans. As it moves over warm water it will gain power.
3. Once the obvious landing zone of Hurricane Isaac is known, probably today, Sunday, the administration should immediately—that is, immediately—announce that it has set up a command post nearby. The director of FEMA should be sent there immediately to coordinate activities.
4. Not only should the FEMA director be on the scene before Isaac hits, but also Vice President Biden should be sent to help oversee. Sending Biden would achieve several missions: a. It would draw intense media attention to the administration's FEMA effort and maintain that focus for days; b. It would raise his stature as a can-do, hands-on, practical team player; c. He should be joined next weekend, after Isaac lands and the FEMA efforts are in full swing—after the Republican convention and on the eve of the Democratic one—by President Obama.
5. The theme of the Republican convention is the failure of President Obama, not only on the economy but also generally as an effective chief executive. The FEMA effort after Isaac will: a. Implicitly contrast with the Bush one after Katrina; b. Demonstrate that the Obama administration is effective and acts in the public interest by effectively managing government; c. Show the indispensability of the federal government without ever having to make an ideological case. And:
6. Once the FEMA effort begins, while the Republican convention is meeting, Democrats across the board should point out that the Romney-Ryan budget plans would slash FEMA. Even if not specified, as little is specified in their plans, drastic FEMA cuts would be inevitable. Put out

numbers, a range of numbers. Romney-Ryan would at once be forced on the defensive, make statements defending their plans, calling attention to the real consequences of their ideology, and by filling their message space with the hurricane and the administration's effective management the GOP convention message against Obama as ineffectual and for Romney as the crisis manager/proven-executive/fixer would be overwhelmed.