

"Hurricane Katrina has shown us that the country is no more prepared for a terrorist attack today than it was on Sept. 11, 2001. The question is what to do with that information.

"How do we protect ourselves and our families, knowing that the government is probably not going to protect us?... Preparedness now is more important than ever."

—Sally Quinn, *Washington Post*, 9/16/05

"We don't like anticipating disasters. It suggests pessimism and America is largely a nation of optimists. But when you look at the damage inflicted by an accidental storm, you have to think about the sheer havoc that an intentional terrorist attack may produce one of these days. We want to believe that no one will ever use a weapon of mass destruction against one of our cities. But it's almost inevitable that someone, someday will. We don't like to hear that. We certainly don't want to contemplate the consequences. But we need to talk about it and we need to plan for it. The very worst thing you can do when confronting a potential disaster is to take the position that it'll never happen to us."

—Ted Koppel, *Nightline*, 8/30/05

## From the Author

September 11, 2001 is a day that will forever be etched in my memory. I remember standing on my Cobble Hill, Brooklyn balcony with my three-year-old son, Amen, watching the second aircraft slam into the side of World Trade Center Tower Number Two.

Almost instantly, I knew we were under attack. I also understood that life in the city that I love, and our nation, would be changed permanently. The rough beast of terrorism that plagues most of the world had finally landed hard on our shores.

Despite the horror of it all, I wasn't shocked. The only thing that surprised me was that it didn't happen sooner. Our intelligence community had known for years that our nation would inevitably be hit with a large-scale terrorist strike.

And then came Hurricane Katrina. Once again Americans were painfully reminded of the thin veneer of civilization that separates our lifestyles of comfort and convenience from sheer wretchedness and devastation on a catastrophic level. Suddenly, we were faced with the realization that our government is woefully unequipped to protect and provide for its citizens in the midst of a major natural disaster.

As a son of a military man and the father of a young boy, I feel in my bones the potential for large-scale disaster in urban and suburban areas. I formed International Preparedness Network to help people and communities prepare themselves and work with each other to more effectively respond to emergencies.

There's nothing like the birth of one's child to drive home the point that life is a beautiful thing and worth the momentary inconvenience and cost of preparedness. I've also discovered that among life's great paradoxes, confronting dark possibilities and preparing for them diminishes their power to cause fear. If you are like many

Americans, a vague dread hangs over your head. Preparing for potential disaster gives you the psychological advantage of having some control over the worst-case situations, as well as significantly improving your odds for living through them. This knowledge provides you the ability to enjoy life more fully, whether or not you ever have to face a true emergency.

Being prepared is the conscious decision to become more aware of your surroundings on a local and global level and do all you can to protect yourself and your loved ones. Preparedness is understanding that the police, fire department, utilities, and the local supermarket cannot be relied on to protect or sustain you in the event of an emergency. Preparedness is not about living in fear, but rather honoring life, and having the courage and wisdom to responsibly face whatever challenges may come.

In our lifetime, we will likely see more devastating hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, powerful earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and the human-made tsunami, war. The current administration tells us that more terrorism is a *fait accompli*. Katrina exposed the weaknesses of our emergency response systems—a vulnerability that can only inspire those who feel the need to settle a score with our country. According to the Nuclear Threat Initiative headed by former senator Sam Nunn, Warren Buffett, and Ted Turner, future attacks are expected to include biological and chemical mass casualty weapons and nuclear weapons of mass destruction.

Infectious disease is also another serious threat. The World Health Organization along with the U.S. Center for Disease Control have both stated publicly that we are due for another global pandemic, and

bird flu is on a growing list of highly contagious ailments that we will encounter over the next few years.

You hear the phrases everywhere: “It’s not a question of ‘if,’ it’s a question of when.” “Prepare now.” “Are you ready?” This book provides practical, organized and time-tested information you need to educate yourself and put informed self-reliance into action.

The preparedness paradigm has already shifted. The time has come for you to shift with it. Not yesterday, not tomorrow: **PREPAREDNESS NOW!**

With sincere regards,  
Aton Edwards  
International Preparedness Network