

BOOK REVIEW

Source: Wendy Steinhacker, Editor Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center, University of Colorado

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Beyond September 11th: An Account of Post-disaster Research

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The terrorist attack on September 11 2001, resulted in a disaster that was unusual in U.S. experience in a number of ways: the densely developed and populated disaster site (In New York City); the type of buildings and infrastructure that were damaged; the fact that the disaster was the result of an intentional act; and the sheer scope of the emergency response that was needed.

These characteristics provided an unprecedented opportunity for the natural hazard research community to help better understand what happened through programs such as the University of Colorado at Boulder's Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center's Quick Response research program and the National Science Foundation's Small Grants for Exploratory Research. Both programs enabled scholars to enter the field quickly to collect perishable data in the days and weeks after September 11.

This volume, *Beyond September 11th: An Account of Post-disaster Research* collects the findings lessons, and recommendations of this post-September 11 disaster research.



Consisting of 20 selections by researchers who received grants to investigate questions arising in the wake of the disaster, each piece takes a distinct view on topics ranging from engineering to behavioural science. Also included are a summary of what this post-September 11 research tells us, an overview of "quick response" as a research method, and a report of the preliminary observations made by researchers and first responders at a workshop held only a few months after the disaster.

Based on findings from these studies, the book includes numerous conclusions and recommendations for the improvement of public policy and disaster response. Some of the recommendations on ways to better cope with terrorist attacks include:

- law enforcement and investigative personnel need to be integrated into disaster planning, training and exercises because they will have a central role in terrorist disasters;
- more media attention to the broader political, social, religious, and other aspects of September 11 and similar disasters could help Americans better understand the terrorism risk and the consequences of preventative actions the country might take;
- researchers and practitioners need to communicate information on the best protective actions people can take in response to terrorism so proper warnings and instructions can be formulated; and
- a consistent policy is needed that balances the public's and the research community's need to know versus the need to keep information and databases about critical infrastructure systems secure.

Also available for electronic download at <http://www.colorado.edu/hazards/sp/sp39/>.

Editorial comment provided by the Editor, Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center at the University of Colorado.