

Local Avian Flu Scare

OFFICIALS ATTEMPT TO CALM WORRIED CITIZENS' FEARS



...New Orleans are
except for lower Plaquemine

The \$2.5 billion can be broken
out into two distinct tasks; it
allow the Corps to raise levee
heights, in some cases as much
as 7 feet, and complete other
levee work, at a cost of \$0.9 bil
lion; and it will allow the
or replacement of ex
I-walls with T...

...tion of respiratory birds, is spreading and
the spread of avian influenza continues
across continents.

Wildlife experts and public health officials
have been monitoring the spread
of the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus since
it first appeared in Hong Kong in 1997.
Since 1998, the Department of Agr...



MORE HURICANE DAMAGE

(CONTINUED FROM A1)

Strock, FEMA Director
litigation and Administration
of the National Flood Insur
Program

Relief Efforts Stalled

MORE VICTIMS FOUND ON THIRD DAY

Federal Coordinating
guidance to communities for better
and stronger rebuilding.
announced the release
of Engineers



★ POLITICAL SCIENTIST SAYS GOVERNMENT CAN'T FIX 21ST-CENTURY PROBLEMS WITH 20TH-CENTURY TOOLS LISTEN UP, WASHINGTON

BY LARRY TEITELBAUM • ILLUSTRATION BY JASON HINEBAUGH

POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR DON KETTL GREW UP IN A TOWN DEEPLY DIVIDED ALONG RACIAL LINES.

York, Pa., just north of the Mason-Dixon Line, seethed with tension. Race baiting by the cops didn't help. Nor did the steady drip of violence, the crumbling industrial base and the loss of jobs. This nasty brew simmered until one day, like a valve releasing steam, York blew its top.

Two years after riots in Detroit and Newark, York had its racial reckoning. For five days in July 1969, the town burned. Sixty people were injured and two — a white police officer and a black woman visiting from the South — were shot to death. Kettl, then a high-school student, watched columns of smoke rise from the city center, and it left an impression: things fall apart. He brooded and wondered what went wrong. Why had the city's leaders failed to turn down the temperature?

Motivated by the troubling experience of watching his burg spin out of control, Kettl, the Stanley I. Sheerr Endowed Term Professor in the Social Sciences and director of the Fels Institute of Government, has devoted his life to studying public policy. He wants to know why bad government happens to good people. That is why, on a brisk day last December, exactly 100 days after Hurricane Katrina, he is in the Cannon Caucus Room in Washington, D.C., to sift through the wreckage of another monumental failure: the federal government's fractured response to the deluge.

He and his compatriots — academics, policy analysts, journalists and insurance executives — have gathered for a symposium, co-sponsored by Penn. They are roiling the waters, asking hard questions and offering unsolicited advice on how to better manage risk so that the next time — rest assured, there will be a next time — the response is, shall we say, crisper. Kettl is leading a discussion on rebuilding the gulf. He puts this out there: Should the whole country pay for a local catastrophe just to cover the people who did not buy insurance? In his view, it might make more sense for people in danger zones to pay into an insurance pool, which could induce insurance companies to lower premiums. Then he goes on to criticize federal, state and local governments for being more interested in protecting bureaucratic turfs than in protecting the citizens of New Orleans.

KETTL BLAMES RIGID BUREAUCRACIES AND INFLEXIBLE LEADERS WHO INSIST ON PAINT-BY-NUMBERS GOVERNMENT FOR OUR TRAVAILS.

"The institutions that we have don't line up very well to the problems that we have to solve," he says during an interview in his office, located in what was once industrialist Samuel Fels' home. "And that's one of the lessons of Katrina. That's one of the lessons of 9/11. And so, we either have to redesign our institutions radically, or we have to find much smarter ways of making them work a lot better."

And there you have, in sum, the Kettl manifesto: government cannot tackle 21st-century problems with 20th-century tools. The issues are too complex, the dangers too diverse for one agency or jurisdiction to handle alone. "It's clear that we're facing a much larger class of issues ... things that come at us in unpredictable kinds of ways," he observes. "It may be a terrorist attack; it may be Hurricane Katrina; it may be an earthquake; it may be avian flu." In such trying times, officials must stop posturing and share power.

He makes these points in a recent report, *The Next Government of the United States: Challenges for Performance in the 21st Century*. The document uses 9/11 and case studies of the anthrax attacks and SARS epidemic to illustrate the right way to respond to emergencies. One example: Arlington County's police chief, who ceded control of the Pentagon crime scene to firefighters so they could fight the September 11 blaze. Kettl writes, "People want their problems solved; they don't fuss over who solves them." Listen up, Washington. Results matter more than process and protocol. "The challenges demand a higher level of truth telling ... and a commitment to engage citizens in a frank debate about the realities of what government should and should not seek, and what it can and cannot do."

Public administration, in all of its vainglorious fallibility, has been the subject of Kettl's impressive output. The Yale graduate is the author or editor of a dozen books and monographs, two of which,



Don Kettl

Anna Kaplan

The Transformation of Governance and *System Under Stress*, were named best books by the National Academy of Public Administration. This urge to commit scholarship has taken Kettl on a Baedeker’s tour of college campuses — with stops at Columbia, the University of Virginia, Vanderbilt and the University of Wisconsin. Two years ago, he was recruited to Penn to head the Fels Institute, one of the country’s premier leadership-development academies. He thus returned to Pennsylvania after 34 years in exile.

During the intervening years, as Kettl prospered, York, his hometown, descended further. If anything, the divisions have become worse, if more dispersed, with whites abandoning the city for the suburbs. Meanwhile, the economy has continued to falter. Kettl remains quite interested in his hometown. Fels is conducting a research project there. Researchers have compiled

he’s built a national reputation as a perceptive observer of government.

John DiIulio, the Frederick Fox Leadership Professor of Politics, Religion, and Civil Society who headed President Bush’s faith-based program, has watched Kettl up close. They collaborated on a study of the Clinton-Gore reinventing-government initiative at the Brookings Institution in the early 1990s. DiIulio declares, “There’s no question that Don is the country’s leading scholar of public administration. ... He’s easily not only the best but also the most influential. No one has published more books and articles that are more widely cited.” And the kicker: his prodigious scholarship “is matched by an incredible humility and kindness and generosity that are somewhat rare in academia.”

It’s true. Kettl’s aw-shucks manner belies his prominence. He projects a Jimmy Carter-like earnestness,

partnerships. The latter, an ambitious effort that was billed as a mini-constitutional convention to restructure government, stalled, as did campaign finance reform. The legislature failed to enact the campaign commission’s call for tougher enforcement of spending limits and public financing of elections. That failure led to scandals and convictions of several state legislators. The man who appointed Kettl, former Governor Tommy Thompson, shares Kettl’s taste for good government and innovation and has nothing but praise for him.

“HE LISTENS TO ALL SIDES. HE’S EXTREMELY PATIENT.

He lets everyone have their day in court,” says Thompson, who resigned as secretary of Health and Human Services in the Bush administration at the end of 2004. “To this day, I don’t know what his political leanings are.” For the record, Don Kettl identifies himself as nonpartisan. Utmost, he’s a wonk, a label he embraces. To him, government is the ultimate fixer-upper, a grand self-improvement project. Which is why he loves the opportunity to write a column in *Governing* magazine, a must-read among politicians and public administrators nationwide. Every two months, Kettl gets to uncover emerging issues and road test ideas. Invariably, his columns touch on an aspect of federalism, another major interest.

Listen to him on Medicaid: “If you think Social Security’s finances are bad, experts are saying, wait until you see Medicare. In the states, they’re whispering that if you think Medicare is bad, wait until you see Medicaid. ... Medicaid is a different program in every state.”

On the U.S. Supreme Court: “the Court has seemed to back

★ HE WANTS TO KNOW WHY BAD GOVERNMENT HAPPENS TO GOOD PEOPLE.

data on abandoned property and are looking into what can be done to help neighborhoods in transition before they reach the tipping point. Read: encourage stabilizing development. Even though he is not doing the work himself, the approach is vintage Kettl. He gravitates to problems. He’s an inveterate troubleshooter and the definitive multitask-forcer, testifying before Congress 10 times and serving on innumerable panels and commissions, studying everything from nuclear waste disposal to air pollution generated by coal-fired power plants. Denmark once asked him to advise the country on the global forces shaping government. Gradually, he has built more than a resume:

inherited from his mother, Mary, a woman of social conscience. His accountant father, Raymond Kettl, W’47, bequeathed a taste for detail.

On this day, as he chats in his office, the bespectacled Kettl is wearing a black and gray tweed Lands’ End sport coat — made in Wisconsin, just like Kettl. That is to say, Kettl made his bones at the University of Wisconsin. He spent the longest stretch of his career there, 1990 to 2004 — long enough to become the director of the Robert M. LaFollette Institute of Public Affairs and a shareholder of the Green Bay Packers. While in Wisconsin, he chaired two commissions, one on campaign finance reform, the other on state-local

away from a strong states' rights commitment. In addition to reining in state power over wine sales, the justices overruled state efforts to legalize medical marijuana and to contest clean-air standards."

The work appeals to Kettl. "It's the effort of improvement, as opposed to simply conducting autopsies on failed programs, that engages me most," he says. A self-described newspaper junkie, Kettl's insights come mostly from reading and retail reporting. He likes to put his boots on the ground, as he did on a recent trip to New Orleans, which continues to resemble a post-op patient: disheveled and disoriented. He talked to regular people and to mayoral candidates. "I heard some of the most stirring calls to citizenship" from mayoral candidate, Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu. "One of the things he says, 'It would be a serious mistake to rebuild New Orleans. What we need to do is re-imagine New Orleans.'" And, Kettl reports, ordinary folk who stayed on share Landrieu's optimism. "They're not going to let the storm beat them, and they're going to come back. ... That's a spirit that's remarkable and inspirational."

JUST LIKE THOSE CITIZENS, KETTL REFUSES TO BECOME DISPIRITED, despite a lack of faith in leaders, as voiced by a 17-year-old in New Orleans who told Kettl he will never trust his government again. To Kettl, New Orleans, like America, like York, is a work in progress: nothing that a little imagination and grit can't fix. "The challenges are huge, but there are people who are trying their very best to rise to them," Kettl says. "And that's one of the hopeful things in the country right now." ■

Larry Teitelbaum is editor of the Penn Law Journal.

CLOSE TO THE CAPITAL

You don't need a cartographer to notice how close Penn is to the centers of power in the nation's capital — 130 miles, give or take, from the Schuylkill Expressway to the Beltway. This proximity had been on Don Kettl's mind since he came to Penn. He believes the University ought to capitalize on its location and increase its presence in D.C. So he and other academics in the School of Arts and Sciences caucused and proposed the Washington Internship Program.

At bottom, the program represents Penn's bid to become a voice at the table when the president, Congress and government agencies deliberate issues such as homeland security, energy dependence and global warming. "The closest great university to the capital is Penn," says Kettl. "It's our goal to have a greater impact on national politics."

Placing students in strategic internships is one vehicle for achieving such dominance. As Kettl sees it, in addition to the stock placements of political science majors on the Hill, there are transparent benefits to posting pre-med students at the Food and Drug Administration or chemistry majors at the Environmental Protection Agency or economics majors at the Federal Reserve Board. Once students observe the drug approval process or see how regulatory policy gets made, they'll get turned on and resolve to return after graduation. "They will become sought after by people who are looking for future leaders, and that's an opportunity to improve the quality of governance in Washington," says Kettl.

Penn is flush with Washington area alumni — 12,000 to 14,000. So there are plenty of people, inside and outside of government, with whom to make connections. After serving the internship over the summer, students will take a course in the fall when they will compare notes and discuss experiences.

And while students are the focus, they are by no means the only game in town. Kettl sees ancillary benefits for faculty too as the Penn brand proliferates. "As you look around this campus, the thing that I've been struck by is just the vast reservoir of talent," he says. "You can't take any question that matters and spend more than 30 seconds without coming up with an absolute army of some of the world's best thinkers on any subject. A lot of what we're doing here either is, or ought to be, of keen interest to the people framing policy."

To learn more about Washington internships or to offer internship opportunities, contact Deirdre Martinez at 215-746-3849 or martined@sas.upenn.edu.

—LARRY TEITELBAUM

