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978-1-107-02586-8 - Disasters and the American State: How Politicians, Bureaucrats,
and the Public Prepare for the Unexpected

Patrick S. Roberts

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Disasters and the American State

Disasters and the American State offers a thesis about the trajectory of federal government involvement in preparing for disaster, shaped by contingent events. Politicians and bureaucrats claim credit for the government's successes in preparing for and responding to disaster, and they are also blamed for failures outside of government's control. New interventions have created precedents and established organizations and administrative cultures that accumulated over time and produced a general trend in which citizens, politicians, and bureaucrats expect the government to provide more security from more kinds of disasters. The trend reached its peak when the Federal Emergency Management Agency adopted the idea of preparing for "all hazards" as its mantra. Despite the rhetoric, however, the federal government's increasingly bold claims and heightened public expectations are disproportionate to the ability of the federal government to prevent or reduce the damage caused by disaster.

Patrick S. Roberts is an associate professor in the Center for Public Administration and Policy (CPAP) in the School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Polytechnic and State University (Virginia Tech). He is the associate chair and program director for CPAP, Northern Virginia. Roberts holds a PhD in government from the University of Virginia and spent two years as a postdoctoral Fellow, one at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University and one at the Program on Constitutional Government at Harvard University. He spent 2010–2011 as the Ghaemian Scholar-in-Residence at the University of Heidelberg Center for American Studies in Germany. He has also been a reporter for the Associated Press. Roberts's work has been published in a variety of scholarly and popular journals including *Studies in American Political Development*, *Public Administration Review*, *Journal of Policy History*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *Publius*, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *Administration & Society*, *Public Organization Review*, *National Affairs*, *Policy Review*, *American Interest*, and *USA Today*. His research has been funded by the National Science Foundation, the United States Naval Laboratories, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Social Science Research Council.

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Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University



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Acknowledgments

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