Romney On FEMA : "Gov you've been asked 14 times, why are you refusing to answer the question?"

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"Gov you've been asked 14 times, why are you refusing to answer the question?"

asked tonight by a pool reporter in Ohio after Romney's Hurricane Sandy "storm relief" event

The basic question from the deep end of the Romney press pool?

"Gov are you going to eliminate FEMA?"

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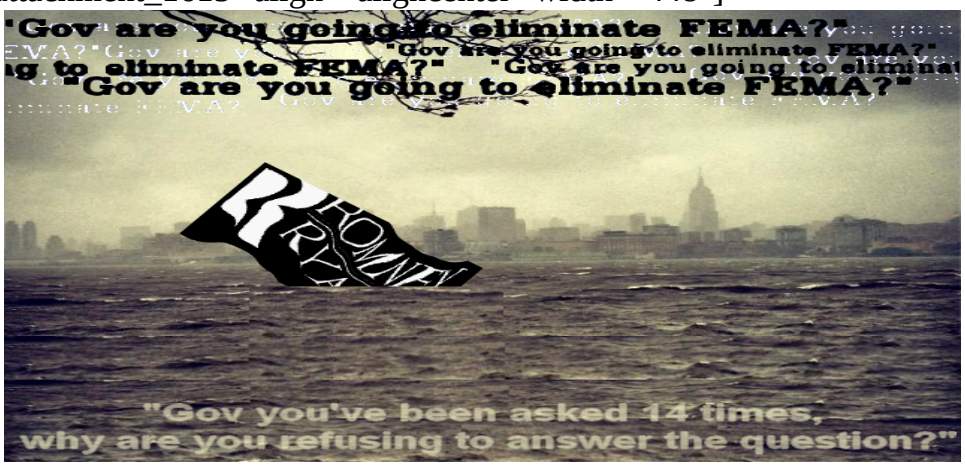

What question?[/caption]

This question, though, has been asked and answered. The GOP, with or without Mitt Romney, has been forthright in their public statements about their plans for agencies like FEMA: privatization, creative destruction, and just plain old destruction. During the GOP primary Romney himself supported the utterly irresponsible act of returning disaster management to the states, and, even better in his thinking, eventually to the private sector. Any role for the feds has since been left unexpressed, although the Romney/Ryan campaign last Sunday issued the usual codswallop:

> "Governor Romney believes that states should be in charge of emergency management in responding to storms and other natural disasters in their jurisdictions," said campaign spokeswoman Amanda Henneberg. "As the first responders, states are in the best position to aid affected individuals and communities and to direct resources and assistance to where they are needed most. This includes help from the federal government and FEMA."

Amanda, good God, our states are already "in charge" of these duties. And how's that working out? GOP-dominated state legislatures have cut and beheaded budget outlays for their own first responders while simultaneously trying to gut these brave souls' collective bargaining rights. The states, Ms. Henneberg, are of course "in the best position to aid affected individuals and communities and to direct resources and assistance to where they are needed most." Who would argue *that*? You've only described the status quo. We've grown accustomed these empty explanations, your restatements of the obvious.

So, *of course*, Mitt cannot answer the FEMA question, "Would you deep six FEMA?" Any Romney response would be rightfully attacked either by his Democratic opponents. Should Romney be dunce enough to advocate a vital future role for FEMA, he'd be skewered by his own base. In a broader sense, so inured are we to Romney's shuck and jive that *nothing* he would propose would be believed. Surely he knows *that* by now, and sensibly, he surely hopes to avoid any slip-ups during the next week through the simple act of keeping his yap shut.

As for Paul Ryan, he's somewhere in Melbourne, Florida. Imagine how resolutely the prayers of the campaign masters go heavenward for intercession to prevent Mr. Ryan from shooting off his big fat rat-a-tat mouth about privatizing FEMA while in *Florida*, a state in a near perpetual state of disaster, not to mention a swing state of mammoth importance and presently polling only slightly towards Romney.

So, here's a Halloween nightmare: a *President* Romney. What would his press conferences be like? This increasingly testy, secretive, and casually arrogant man, on the campaign trail, is a study in obfuscation and silence. One can only toss and turn at night wondering just how tyrannical he might become as President when he's no longer so cravenly motivated to garner votes. If Mitt gets comfortable like the CEO he once was . . .? Would we have any real idea of what's going on?

This is like trying to sleep on a dinghy in a perfect storm.