Lights Out: A Cyberattack, A Nation Unprepared, Surviving the Aftermath

Written by Ted Koppel

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By Ted Koppel

Lights Out Apparel

In this tour de force of investigative reporting, Ted Koppel reveals that a major cyberattack on Americaâ€™s power grid is not only possible but likely, that it would be devastating, and that the United States is shockingly unprepared.

Â

Lights Out Asia

 Imagine a blackout lasting not days, but weeks or months. Tens of millions of people over several states are affected. For those without access to a generator, there is no running water, no sewage, no refrigeration or light. Food and medical supplies are dwindling. Devices we rely on have gone dark. Banks no longer function, looting is widespread, and law and order are being tested as never before. Â

Lights Out And Away We Go

It isnâ€™t just a scenario. A well-designed attack on just one of the nationâ€™s three electric power grids could cripple much of our infrastructureâ€"and in the age of cyberwarfare, a laptop has become the only necessary weapon. Several nations hostile to the United States could launch such an assault at any time. In fact, as a former chief scientist of the NSA reveals, China and Russia have already penetrated the grid. And a cybersecurity advisor to President Obama believes that independent actorsâ€"from â€œhacktivistsâ€ to terroristsâ€"have the capability as well. â€œItâ€™s not a question of if,â€ says Centcom Commander General Lloyd Austin, â€œitâ€™s a question of when.â€ Â

Lights Out Angel Olsen Lyrics

And yet, as Koppel makes clear, the federal government, while well prepared for natural disasters, has no plan for the aftermath of an attack on the power grid.Â The current Secretary of Homeland Security suggests keeping a battery-powered radio.

Lights Out Album

In the absence of a government plan, some individuals and communities have taken matters into their own hands. Among the nation's estimated three million "preppers," we meet one whose doomsday retreat includes a newly excavated three-acre lake, stocked with fish, and a Wyoming homesteader so self-sufficient that he crafted the thousands of adobe bricks in his house by hand. We also see the unrivaled disaster preparedness of the Mormon church, with its enormous storehouses, high-tech dairies, orchards, and proprietary trucking company — the fruits of a long tradition of anticipating the worst. But how, Koppel asks, will ordinary civilians survive?

Lights Out Alex Shapiro

With urgency and authority, one of our most renowned journalists examines a threat unique to our time and evaluates potential ways to prepare for a catastrophe that is all but inevitable.

Nightline with Ted Koppel was a show that was on occasionally in my house when I was growing up. My family respected Ted Koppel, so I guess some of that was installed subconsciously in me. (So much stuff got inadvertently crammed into my small mind space-so stop the judging of me)

He has since retired and decided on try his hat as an author. He takes on somewhat the fear of a cyber-attack on America's electric/internet infrastructure. (I say somewhat-because I felt like he just glazed the surfac   Nightline with Ted Koppel was a show that was on occasionally in my house when I was growing up. My family respected Ted Koppel, so I guess some of that was installed subconsciously in me. (So much stuff got inadvertently crammed into my small mind space-so stop the judging of me)

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The book is broken down into three parts.
A Cyberattack: Where Koppel interviews some of the nations leading security people about the possibility and likely-hood of an attack.
In that aspect I think he comes away with not much info. Some people agree and some just shuffle his questions under the carpet.

He does manage to scare the crap out of me. I read a bunch of these types books. Reasons being-I'm nosey as hell, I want to know all I can. Even if I never (please hope to never) experience anything of the sort. I read lots of different stuff so again, don't go all judgey.
He managed to scare me because he explains how hard it would be to repair the grid after being hit. He explains how FEMA and other disaster relief areas would have to concentrate on bigger cities first.

But that's okay, the people in the cities are the ones that won't be able to get out of elevators, the grocery stores will be looted...etc, etc...

A Nation Unprepared:
This is a small section of the book where Koppel explains that we pretty much need to kiss our arses goodbye.

Surviving the Aftermath:
This part of the book was actually the one that gave me a bit of hope. Koppel goes out and interviews some preppers and some Mormons.
That sounds like an odd combination doesn't it?
Koppel actually made this book very readable and relate-able because he doesn't make fun of either group.
The preppers, He treats with respect. He does stress that not every person can afford to go to some of the extremes that some preppers do. He doesn't recommend trying. To that extreme. He does recommend that you do be prepared for some type of disaster supplies at all times. You just never know.

Then the Church of LDS, he treats this group with respect also. I didn't realize that they stockpile supplies as part of their faith. They actually make it very reasonable to do so. The biggest thing I took away from this book was from this section also. When asked would they help people that turned up at their doors..the church members said yes. Even if they knew they would suffer.
That's the frigging country I want to live in.

In the end of reading this book. My feelings are some small fear of this happening, however, the feeling I get is that we should not. Fear can be a form of terrorism too. I believe in being aware and thinking what can happen. I believe in not being stupid and not having some self reliance skills at your personal inventory. But maybe because I'm older..I'm just not caving in to the fear.

I will add that I'm pretty self reliant. I do and do admit that I think you should have some survival means in place. Don't be completely caught unaware.

I received a copy of this book in exchange for review from Blogging for books.

My super smart friend Tab's review really is what made me want to read this book so much. She always gives me food for thought and our conversations about books always warm my soul. She makes me think. That's a scary thing. :D   ...more

Lights Out Amazon

Darkness
 Extended periods of darkness, longer and more profound than anyone not living in one of America's great cities has ever known.
 As power shuts down there is darkness and the sudden loss of electrical conveniences. As batteries lose power, there is more gradual failure of cell phones, portable radios, and flashlights.
 Emergency generators provide pockets of light and power, but there is little running water anywhere…Emergency supplies of bottled water are too scarce to use for anything   Darkness
 Extended periods of darkness, longer and more profound than anyone not living in one of America's great cities has ever known.
 As power shuts down there is darkness and the sudden loss of electrical conveniences. As batteries lose power, there is more gradual failure of cell phones, portable radios, and flashlights.
 Emergency generators provide pockets of light and power, but there is little running water anywhere…Emergency supplies of bottled water are too scarce to use for anything but drinking, and there is nowhere to replenish the supply. Disposal of human waste becomes an issue within days…. - this goes on quite a bitForget the zombie apocalypse. Ted Koppel, a very level-headed newsman, has brought to light a glaring soft spot in our national defense that could very well be exploited by enemies of the USA. And we are not talking about something like the regional blackouts that have already occurred here.

This will not be your father's blackout, but the sort of scenario long imagined by writers and film-makers with an Armageddon fixation. How would America defend itself against an invasion if major portions of the country had been crippled? Would an enemy even need to invade? Or would it be enough for a dark force to enjoy the sight of the United States of America devolving into tribal packs vying for limited resources in a Mad Max milieu?

Ted Koppel - from The NY Daily News

In Lights Out, Koppel covers a considerable range, looking at the specifics of where the vulnerabilities lie, physically, economically and politically. He talks with military experts in the US Cyber Command, private cyber-security experts, emergency planning experts, power company experts, hackers, insurers, and others. Government cyber-security, for example, is charged with defending military assets, not private ones. What would it mean, constitutionally, were the DoD to be involved in providing domestic security for private companies?   There is scant consolation to be found in the fact that a major attack on the grid hasn't happened yet. Modified attacks on government, banking, commercial, and infrastructure targets are already occurring daily, and while sufficient motive to take out an electric power grid may be lacking for the moment, capability is not. And he does not limit his attention to internet-based attacks, offering consideration of other means by which a determined enemy could knock out significant portions of the grid with tech like EMPs, or even well-targeted, garden variety

munitions deployed by a small number of special forces type teams. There is evidence that this has already been practiced, by parties unknown.

As with most things, there is little public or industry support for the sort of large-scale work that would need to be done to bolster power grid security, the increase in regulation, and the corresponding erosion of civil liberties that would be entailed. This will continue until an actual attack takes place. Of course by then it would be too late.   A 2008 report predicts that only one in ten Americans would survive a year into a national blackout. Lights Out gives us some idea of just how uncentralized our electrical system is. Despite our sense that there are only a few large power companies in the country, there are in fact thousands. Add to that companies that distribute power without generating any. It will come as no surprise that one of the major problems is that companies will not, and in many instances cannot, invest in needed security tech, because of the impact on efficiency and profitability. Larger companies could. Smaller ones, often, could not spend the money needed and remain viable. Does this mean that the taxpayer should pick up the tab? Maybe smaller companies should be encouraged to merge with larger power companies in the interest of national security?

That there are vulnerabilities in our infrastructure should come as no surprise to anyone. I doubt that the USA is unique in this, but we tend to ignore problems until they are in our faces. And even then will often seek out short-term amelioration rather than long-term solutions. Cheaper is always better and when things go south, there is always someone else to blame. But one bit of Koppelâ€™s research offered a very large surprise. There is one community in the country that seems up to the challenge, well, not entirely, but to a greater degree than any other group, in government or out. And that is The Church of Latter Day Saints, Mormons to you and me. Koppel spends three chapters looking into their planning for whatever may come. And it is jaw-droppingly impressive. If the big one comes sometime soon, whatever the big one may be, Mitt Romney may get to be president of whatever remains of the United States.

For every fact that Koppel turns up, and there are many, one or more questions are raised, and implications and complications spread out from all of those. There is a vast array of uncertainty in considering how we might keep the lights on when they are attacked, or at the very least how to quickly recover from such an attack.   Q: How likely is an attack on our power grid?
Ted Koppel: Very. When I posed that question to former Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, she put the likelihood at 80 or 90 percent. General Lloyd Austin, who currently heads up the U.S. militaryâ€™s Central Command, told me that itâ€™s not a question of â€œif, but of when.â€•
Former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has warned of a cyber Pearl Harbor, and President Obama highlighted the threat to our power grid in his 2013 State of the Union address. In short, government and military leaders think itâ€™s likely, and I found no compelling evidence to the contrary. - From A Conversation with Ted Koppel - on his site for the bookSolution-wise, it seems to me that, in addition to developing and installing hardware and software on our power grid control and distribution systems that it designed to thwart hostile actions, there is a clear national security advantage to encouraging the development of decentralized power sources. The national interstate highway system that was proposed in 1944 was inspired by the autobahns of Germany. When General Eisenhower became

President Eisenhower, he saw to it that the proposal got funded. One rationale was a need to evacuate cities quickly, should a nuclear attack be expected. Of course, today that notion seems quaint, given how congested our urban roads are in the absence of panic mode. But the roads got built because the nation decided it needed to be done for the common defense. A similar argument might be made to secure the defense of our electric systems. Unlike any other kind of threat this country has ever faced, it can be very difficult tracking the source, the origin of a cyber attack. Given all of that you might assume that the government has formulated special plans to deal with the aftermath of such an attack. There are plans for hurricanes, and blizzards, and earthquakes, but this would be very different. The power outages caused by a targeted cyber attack would last longer and cover a much wider area than any of those natural disasters. So, is there a plan? No. - from Koppel's video intro to the book, on his siteIf the powers that be ever get around to putting a plan together, it could include a range of options, including supporting research to develop more efficient batteries, supporting research and development in promising renewable energy sources, with a focus on technology that can be implemented broadly, instead of relying primarily on major power plants. It would also be a useful thing for there to be an ability to manufacture transformer station hardware in the USA, something the country currently lacks. Enemies might be able to foul national or regional power distribution and communications, but it might be tougher to switch off every rooftop solar array, or neighborhood windmill. Government support for cyber defense (offense too, as Iran well knows) has already begun with the establishment of the United States Cyber Command in 2009. It seems clear that non-government players will need to be engaged as well to make certain that the USA, which is totally reliant on our electrical and internet infrastructure, keeps a step ahead of those who would do us harm.
   …as Mike McConnell [then director of national intelligence] said: 'For the record, if we were attacked, we would lose.' Koppel has done the nation a service by bringing this pressing security peril to light. It remains to be seen, of course, whether there is sufficient political will to actually do something about it. How ironic would it be if out power grid were left endangered by political gridlock?

You wanna hit that switch on your way out?

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----- 10/27/2015 - Hardcover
----- 10/16/2016 - Trade Paper

============================EXTRA STUFF

Koppel's vid intro to the book

The site for the book

Lights Out: A Cyberattack, A Nation Unprepared, Surviving the Aftermath

In case you missed it in the body of the review, here is the link to the 2008 EMP Commission report that offered a rather grim prediction for one-year blackout survivability

October 8, 2016 - A NY Times article by David Sanger and Nicole Perlroth about possible responses to Russia having hacked our 2016 election, includes relevant items of interest - What Options Does the U.S. Have After Accusing Russia of Hacks?Russia...turned off the electric grid in part of Ukraine last December, mostly to show that they could.andSecurity experts point to evidence that a well-funded Russian hacking group, known as Energetic Bear, has been probing the networks of power grid operators and energy and oil companies in the United States, Europe and Canada. That could be exploration â€" or it could be preparation of the battle space in the event of a future conflict.November 3, 2016 - a NY Times article by John Markoff on a related subject- Why Light Bulbs May Be the Next Hacker Target

July 6, 2017 - NY Times - Hackers are Targeting Nuclear Facilities, Homeland Security Dept. and F.B.I. Say - by Nicole Perlroth

 The Wolf Creek Nuclear power plant in Kansas in 2000. The corporation that runs the plant was targeted by hackers. Credit David Eulitt/Capital Journal, via Associated Press
Image was taken from the NY Times article
   ...more

In my online book collection I have a shelf assigned to dystopian novels such as The Stand, The Walking Dead, and The Day of the Triffids. Once, in a somewhat whimsical mood, I renamed it my we're all gonna die shelf. Lights out, Ted Koppelâ€™s Investigation into the threat that a cyberattack directed against our electrical grid, gets the dubious honor of being the first non-fiction book to be placed on that shelf.

Veteran newsman Koppel, with a consummate skill born of 42 years spent with ABC, lay   In my online book collection I have a shelf assigned to dystopian novels such as The Stand, The Walking Dead, and The Day of the Triffids. Once, in a somewhat whimsical mood, I renamed it my we're all gonna die shelf. Lights out, Ted Koppelâ€™s Investigation into the threat that a cyberattack directed against our electrical grid, gets the dubious honor of being the first non-fiction book to be placed on that shelf.

Veteran newsman Koppel, with a consummate skill born of 42 years spent with ABC, lays the groundwork for a story that is every bit as terrifying as anything Stephen King could imagine. What makes Lights Out: A Cyberattack, A Nation Unprepared, Surviving the Aftermath all the scarier is that it is not imagination. A week doesnâ€™t go by where we donâ€™t hear about hackers successfully compromising the computer systems of a company or government agency. The second page of the book describes the recent hacking of millions of federal employees' private information. On the very day I started it my wife, a national laboratory employee, received two rejection letters for credit cards she never applied for. As unpleasant as this kind of cyberattack is for us, it is just the tip of the iceberg

of what Ted Koppel's book is about.

The first half of the book describes in frightening detail the weaknesses that exist in America's three major power grids. It tells how likely it is that a concerted attack may black out large parts of the country for months or even years, and how ill-prepared the electrical power industry and the government is to prevent it or deal with the aftermath. If it does happen (and many experts say the word to use is 'when') the prediction is that fewer than ten percent of the population would survive a power outage of one year's duration. Solutions have been proposed and legislation has been introduced to address this but, and this should surprise no one, that legislation has never made it out of committee.

The second half of the book is called 'Surviving the Aftermath' and addresses how people are preparing for this and other catastrophic events. These options range from renting condos in a repurposed Kansas missile silo to hiring an ex-special forces soldier to hustle your family to a waiting speedboat stored at a secret mooring on the East River for escape to a yacht waiting offshore. About the only thing these plans have in common is that they cost a lot more than the average suburbanite has to spend on post-apocalypse preparation, or anything for that matter. It also devotes three chapters to plans the Church of Latter-day Saints and their comprehensive preparations for disaster. While this provides ideas of what society can do if we work together it gives little in the way of hope for individuals wanting to make preparations themselves.

The bottom line is that we, in pursuit of convenience, economic advantage, and the right to privacy, have created an open door to allow anyone with the know-how and the will to destroy the United States without firing a shot. The ability for hackers to cripple one or more of our three major power grids for an extended period of time already exists.

* The review book was based on an advanced reading copy obtained at no cost from the publisher in exchange for an unbiased review. While this does take any 'not worth what I paid for it' statements out of my review, it otherwise has no impact on the content of my review.

FYI: On a 5-point scale I assign stars based on my assessment of what the book needs in the way of improvements:
•5 Stars — Nothing at all. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
•4 Stars — It could stand for a few tweaks here and there but it's pretty good as it is.
•3 Stars — A solid C grade. Some serious rewriting would be needed in order for this book to be considered great or memorable.
•2 Stars — This book needs a lot of work. A good start would be to change the plot, the character development, the writing style and the ending.
•1 Star - The only thing that would improve this book is a good bonfire.
   ...more

Lights Out Actress

This reminded me of the adage about public
speaking: "tell them what you're going to say; say it; tell them what you just said; and then recap."

Koppel had one thing to say, "the power grid in the US is highly vulnerable to attack." And he said it and said it again and then said it again for about 175 pages. He obviously interviewed a lot of people, all of whom confirmed his fears about our vulnerability, but they all said the same thing.

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The last part of the book focused on the Mormons and on their "disaster prepardness" where they, each, have supplies stored for a full year. This doesn't really have anything to do with fears of terrorism, just their own concerns about needing to be prepared for any eventuality. And true to the style of the book, this went on and on and on for the final 60 or 70 pages, rehashing the same thing over and over again.

It was somewhat enlightening, but mostly disappointing due to the repetitive nature of the writing.
...more

Ted Koppel's expose on what will happen when we have a massive failure of the power grid. We all know that this could happen and it would be a disaster, I really didn't need Ted Koppel to tell me that. I think what irks me the most is that power companies are hesitant to do any disaster planning because it affects their bottom line. If the government (by which I mean we the people) force companies to have some sort of disaster recovery, it's called regulation and we have every politician vowing   Ted Koppel's expose on what will happen when we have a massive failure of the power grid. We all know that this could happen and it would be a disaster, I really didn't need Ted Koppel to tell me that. I think what irks me the most is that power companies are hesitant to do any disaster planning because it affects their bottom line. If the government (by which I mean we the people) force companies to have some sort of disaster recovery, it's called regulation and we have every politician vowing to have it repealed because it is a job killer.

There was something missing from this book. I never watched Nightline so I have not sense of what to expect from Mr. Koppel.   This review was originally posted on The Pfaeffle Journal   ...more

Lights Out Actors

Growing up in Oklahoma I experienced my fair share of power outages. Tornadoes, dust devils, heat lightening, hail the size of grapefruits, ice storms and whiteouts. You name it, sans hurricanes, if it's wild and crazy weather, it happens in Oklahoma. And when the lights go out, along with every other electronic device, life becomes a whole different ballgame.

A bit scary? Absolutely. Eerily quiet? Unnervingly so. Annoying and inconvenient? Darn right! If power remains out for more than a couple   Growing up in Oklahoma I experienced my fair share of power outages. Tornadoes, dust devils, heat lightening, hail the size of grapefruits, ice storms and whiteouts. You name it, sans hurricanes, if it's wild and crazy weather, it happens in Oklahoma. And when the lights go out, along with every other electronic device, life becomes a whole different ballgame.

A bit scary? Absolutely. Eerily quiet? Unnervingly so. Annoying and inconvenient? Darn right! If power remains out for more than a couple days, it can also become quite expensive: spoiled food, forced to shelter out of town or state, loss of income, jacked-up prices prompted by supply shortages and unethical gouging. Moreover, it can be life threatening for the disabled, elderly, infants, and those under medical care relying on treatments such as oxygen or dialysis.

Of course, let's not be overly-dramatic. Most folks, urban and especially rural, could fairly-easily survive a week to ten days without electricity. Our government may have its pitfalls (what government doesn't), but we are a nation that takes care of its own. We are equipped to render aid during times of disaster - federal, state-level, and/or privately through non-profits and religious organizations.

All that is fine and good, for a single catastrophic event, geographically contained and of moderate disruptive aftermath and/or duration. But what if a cyberattack took out the entire eastern seaboard's power? Or the west coast? or half of our entire nation?

Considering the breadth and depth of such a disaster, among other related snowballs-roll-down-hill issues, it could be months, yes, several MONTHS, before electricity could be restored.

It's one thing to watch apocalyptic movies on the big screen. It's entertainment for the price of a ticket. But it ceases to be entertaining, affordable, or innocuous if it happens for real.

Can you imagine the hysteria that would erupt? Not to mention: anarchy, loss of life, unsanitary conditions, looting, traffic woes, skyrocketing prices, lack of basic supplies, starvation....

Ted Koppel, one of the most revered journalists in the world who I have the utmost respect for, presents quite a case for the need to evaluate and prepare for possible (highly-likely) cyperattack(s) targeting electrical power-grids and related infrastructures. The realities of such an attack, and the aftermath, is staggering! I had no idea so many elements were at play during the generating and

transferring of electricity. Truly mind-blowing! And I was amazed at the depth and time Koppel put into researching the various angles of this topic; which obviously weighs heavy on his mind. And rightly so.

Lights Out: A Cyberattack, A Nation Unprepared, Surviving the Aftermath is an eye-opening book that every American needs to read. It's one thing to prepare for a hurricane, or earthquake, or twister, or fire…. Those incidents, though tragic, are reasonably manageable within our systems and agencies and preparedness plans currently in play. But an illusive cyperattack from a rogue nation or militant group, questionably traceable at best, that could knock out power for seven months or more?????

We, that's the royal collective we, from the president on down to the lowest peon of peons in the general populous, needs to shake off complacency and be MUCH BETTER PREPARED.

Full Disclosure: This review is based on a galley copy I received from Crown Publishing free of charge via Goodreads First-Reads. Much appreciated, to all involved in the giveaway process!   …more

After reading this book, I gave it to a friend, and I wish I had more copies to give away because I shouldn't have to be the only person worried. I think that is the main purpose of this book - to make a critical mass of people concerned about a possibly devastating cyberattack on our electric grid. It would seem wise to be extremely proactive about this. My takeaway is that we as a nation are pathetically unprepared in areas of both prevention and recovery. Sure Mormons, people in rural areas a   After reading this book, I gave it to a friend, and I wish I had more copies to give away because I shouldn't have to be the only person worried. I think that is the main purpose of this book - to make a critical mass of people concerned about a possibly devastating cyberattack on our electric grid. It would seem wise to be extremely proactive about this. My takeaway is that we as a nation are pathetically unprepared in areas of both prevention and recovery. Sure Mormons, people in rural areas and people with guns may fare slightly better than the rest of us, at least over the short term. However, it would be pretty naive to conclude that you could stockpile or shoot your way out of the results of a cyberattack that shuts down a significant portion of our electric grid. Koppel does not make this conclusion.

The book covers what constitutes a cyberattack, attacks that we have already experienced and vulnerabilities in our electric grid. It also touches on who might have the capability and motivation to stage a cyberattack. Although this is a short book, some of the discussion seemed repetitive, and I thought too much time was devoted to the preparedness of the Mormons.

By end of the book, I was mostly resigned that if there is a cyberattack I will probably die because the government will not save me, and I am really ill equipped to fight other people for food, so my cats and I will just starve to death. I think this is a well-researched and important book and I hope it does some good, but I'm not optimistic.

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher.   …more

Lights Out Age Rating

I finished reading this book a few weeks ago. It caused me to intensify my doomsday prepping. (No, I am NOT kidding.) For this and other reasons, I have been so busy that I cannot squeeze the time to write a review. I, therefore, urge everyone to read Will Byrnes brilliant review of this book. Here is the link:

https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...

P.S. After finishing reading the above book, I read "Electric Armageddon", by Dr. Peter Vincent Pry. Dr. Pry's book deals with the same nightmare, t   I finished reading this book a few weeks ago. It caused me to intensify my doomsday prepping. (No, I am NOT kidding.) For this and other reasons, I have been so busy that I cannot squeeze the time to write a review. I, therefore, urge everyone to read Will Byrnes brilliant review of this book. Here is the link:

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P.S. After finishing reading the above book, I read "Electric Armageddon", by Dr. Peter Vincent Pry. Dr. Pry's book deals with the same nightmare, that is, the failing of the grid. Yet, other than "Lights Out", which reports about the catastrophe resulting from a software destruction, "Electric Armageddon" reports about the catastrophe resulting from a hardware destruction, caused by an EMP. Both books come to the same conclusion. A failing of the grid (regardless wether caused by a massive cyberattack or a massive EMP) will be The End Of The World As We Know It and is likely to result in the death of 90% of the present American population. People will die the old-fashioned way, that is, by starvation, disease, and societal collapse.

I do not expect that doomsday prepping will let us survive, but I hope that it will let us die a bit more comfortably, that is, with water, some basic supplies, and, not to forget, with toilet paper.

Of all the dangers that we all are presently facing, I thought that a massive cyberattack or EMP were the most likely catastrophe to happen. This was until a few days ago. Following the recent political developments, I now consider a military interaction with North Korea (which might lead to a WWIII) even more likely to happen. I suppose you all are familiar with the topic of the movie "Wag the Dog".   ...more

It was good to hear Ted Koppelâ€™s voice again, but oh God, please donâ€™t let something like this happen. No electricity. No internet. No Goodreads!

Seriously, according to the book it is estimated that only 1 in 10 Americans would survive a year without electricity. Imagine all the equipment the infirmed require, imagine all the refrigeration required for food and drugs, imagine not being able to pump gas, imagine no generators for lack of fuel, no heat, no air conditioning, no flushing toilets, di   It was good to hear Ted Koppelâ€™s voice again, but oh God,

Lights Out: A Cyberattack, A Nation Unprepared, Surviving the Aftermath

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Seriously, according to the book it is estimated that only 1 in 10 Americans would survive a year without electricity. Imagine all the equipment the infirmed require, imagine all the refrigeration required for food and drugs, imagine not being able to pump gas, imagine no generators for lack of fuel, no heat, no air conditioning, no flushing toilets, disease becomes rampant. Gangs would rule, as starving people fight each other in a life and death battle for limited resources. Civilization as we know it would likely breakdown completely.

William R. Forstchen wrote a â€œfictionâ€• account of just this scenario in his book One Second After. The story details the impact of an electro-magnetic pulse (EMP) that takes down the electric system as opposed to hackers in Ted Koppelâ€™s account. In either case, communication is completely disrupted so that the people cannot obtain information as to what is happening or what should be done. Forstchenâ€™s account was so realistic that it was one of those books that disturb you to the point that you cannot help but stress over how you would protect your family if this would ever happen. I will admit it did keep me awake at night and Koppelâ€™s hypothetical account only exacerbates that fear.

So, what is the government doing? (view spoiler)[There are no plans for a "speculative attack" and through many interviews with government officials, it is clear there is no organized plan. They say that there are no coordinated efforts because it is â€œunlikely to happenâ€• . The government references Hurricane Sandy where large areas were impacted, yet the situation did not descend into chaos, so relax America. However, it should be noted that storms do not deliberately target the electric gridâ€™s critical weaknesses, cyber-attacks do. (hide spoiler)]

It was pointed out that the Internet was designed to be collaborative, not to keep people out. In fact, it is believed that both the Russians and the Chinese are already in the grid, and we are likely in theirs. Like a nuclear war that would assure the mutual destruction of the attacking and retaliating countries, taking down each otherâ€™s electric grids would have the same impact. Governments therefore, are unlikely to be the culprits. The Internet makes it easy to disguise from where an attack originated making it nearly impossible to place blame. As a result, an attack can come from anywhere, not necessarily from a formal government. That's the danger--we are susceptible to any individual with access to the web.

Everyday life is literally dependent upon electricity; electricity that is vulnerable. I found it extremely disturbing to learn how at risk we are and how even if individuals are prepared for this scenario with stores of supplies, they too would likely not survive as we regress back to survival of the fittestâ€”or those with weapons and the willingness to use them. Welcome to the Stone Age. Scary.   ...more