

ORIGINAL

HEARING ON FEMA PREPAREDNESS
IN 2007 AND BEYOND
Tuesday, July 31, 2007
House of Representatives,
Committee on Oversight
and Government Reform,
Washington, D.C.

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Committee Hearings

of the

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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8 and Government Reform,

9 Washington, D.C.

10 The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m. in
11 room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, the Honorable Henry
12 A. Waxman [chairman of the committee] presiding.

13 Present: Representatives Waxman, Towns, Kucinich, Davis
14 of Illinois, Clay, Watson, Higgins, Norton, Murphy, Sarbanes,
15 Davis of Virginia, Shays, McHugh, Westmoreland, McHenry,
16 Foxx, Sali, Jordan.

17 Also Present: Representative Jindal.

18 Staff Present: Phil Barnett, Staff Director and Chief
19 Counsel; Kristin Amerling, General Counsel; Greg Dotson,
20 Chief Environmental Counsel; David Leviss, Senior

21 Investigative Counsel; Erik Jones, Counsel; Susanne Sachsman,
22 Counsel; Daniel Davis, Professional Staff Member; Earley
23 Green, Chief Clerk; Teresa Coufal, Deputy Clerk; Caren
24 Auchman, Press Assistant; Zhongrui ``JR`` Deng, Chief
25 Information Officer; Leneal Scott, Information Systems
26 Manager; Jaron Bourke, Staff Director, Domestic Policy
27 Subcommittee; Noura Erakat, Counsel, Domestic Policy
28 Subcommittee; Jean Gosa, Clerk, Domestic Policy Subcommittee;
29 Evan Schlom, Intern, Domestic Policy Subcommittee; David
30 Marin, Minority Staff Director; Larry Halloran, Minority
31 Deputy Staff Director; Jennifer Safavian, Minority Chief
32 Counsel for Oversight and Investigations; Keith Ausbrook,
33 Minority General Counsel; Steve Castor, Minority Counsel;
34 Grace Washbourne, Minority Senior Professional Staff Member;
35 John Cuaderes, Minority Senior Investigator and Policy
36 Advisor; Larry Brady, Minority Senior Investigator and Policy
37 Advisor; Patrick Lyden, Minority Parliamentarian and Member
38 Services Coordinator; Brian McNicoll, Minority Communications
39 Director; Benjamin Chance, Minority Clerk; Ali Ahmad,
40 Minority Deputy Press Secretary; and Meredith Liberty,
41 Minority Staff Assistant Correspondence Coordinator.

42 Chairman WAXMAN. The meeting of the Committee will
43 please come to order.

44 Today the Committee is holding its second day of
45 hearings on the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Less
46 than two weeks ago, the Committee examined the Agency's
47 response to reports of formaldehyde in FEMA trailers on the
48 Gulf Coast. Our hearing revealed an inexcusable indifference
49 within FEMA to the suffering of displaced hurricane victims
50 living in the contaminated trailers.

51 As good oversight should, the hearing also served as a
52 catalyst for reform. FEMA announced that it would reverse
53 its policy and begin testing occupied trailers for dangerous
54 levels of formaldehyde.

55 Today's hearing will focus on FEMA's preparedness going
56 forward. We will take a broader look at the Agency and ask
57 whether the Federal Government is better prepared now for
58 natural disasters than it was when Hurricane Katrina struck.

59 These hearings are part of a series of hearings in this
60 Committee on how to make Government work. The goal of these
61 hearings is to spotlight deficiencies in Government and
62 restore public confidence in key Government agencies. FEMA
63 used to be widely admired for its effectiveness, but, as
64 Hurricane Katrina showed, cronyism, under-funding, and lack
65 of leadership turned FEMA in to the most-ridiculed agency in
66 Government.

67 The question we will ask in today's hearing is a simple
68 one: has FEMA restored its capacity to serve the public
69 effectively in times of crisis?

70 I would like to thank two Members in particular for
71 their work on this hearing. Ranking Member Davis requested
72 this hearing and worked closely with us in selecting the
73 witnesses and organizing the hearing. As the Chair of the
74 House Select Committee on Hurricane Katrina in the last
75 Congress, he looked in detail at what went wrong at FEMA.
76 His expertise and perspective will benefit all Committee
77 members.

78 I also want to thank the Chair of our Domestic Policy
79 Subcommittee, Dennis Kucinich, for his leadership. Oversight
80 of FEMA falls within his Subcommittee's jurisdiction, and he
81 and his staff have devoted many hours to examine FEMA and
82 preparing for today's hearing.

83 We have two panels of witnesses today and I look forward
84 to their testimony on the important issues of FEMA's
85 preparedness.

86 [Prepared statement of Chairman Waxman follows:]

87 ***** INSERT *****

88 Chairman WAXMAN. Mr. Davis, I want to recognize you at
89 this point.

90 Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Thank you very much, Mr.
91 Chairman. Good morning.

92 Before embarking on their summer travels, every American
93 family kicks the tires, checks the oil, and makes sure their
94 vehicle is ready for the ride. Before Congress heads home
95 for the August recess, it is important that we do the same:
96 we check under the hood of the Federal Emergency Management
97 Agency, the vehicle meant to carry us safely through the
98 hazards in our path.

99 Disasters are indiscriminate, completely nonpartisan,
100 purveyors of devastation and grief. Reflecting that hard
101 reality, this hearing is also a nonpartisan review of FEMA's
102 readiness to perform its vital mission.

103 Chairman Waxman and Domestic Policy Subcommittee
104 Chairman Kucinich agreed with our request to continue the
105 Committee's active oversight of post-Katrina preparedness
106 issues. We appreciate their working with us to frame this
107 experience as a constructive examination of reforms underway
108 at FEMA.

109 Hurricane Katrina laid bare devastating dysfunction in
110 the Nation's catastrophic response capabilities. We saw
111 critical failures in essential response functions, personnel,
112 planning, logistics, communications, and fiscal stewardship.

113 | The Select Committee on Katrina, which I chaired, produced 90
114 | substantive findings to guide the reforms and restoration of
115 | national emergency systems. A White House report made 125
116 | recommendations. The Administration acknowledged the need to
117 | strengthen FEMA and untangle the crossed wires that left
118 | States and localities wondering who was in charge and when
119 | needed help would arrive.

120 | Many attributed FEMA's problems to the organizational
121 | and fiscal price the Agency paid when it was merged into the
122 | Department of Homeland Security. Preparedness programs were
123 | separate from response planning. Logistic systems atrophied.
124 | Budget constraints took a toll. Key personnel with essential
125 | skills and institutional memories left. And communications
126 | with State and local stakeholders got muddled passing through
127 | layers of bureaucratic filters.

128 | Some of us thought FEMA had to be independent again,
129 | liberated from the strangling, all-terrorism myopia at DHS
130 | and empowered once again to pursue a proven all-hazards
131 | approach.

132 | To cure what the Select Committee characterized as a
133 | failure of initiative, Congress enacted the Post-Katrina
134 | Emergency Reform Act so that future catastrophes would
135 | trigger a far more proactive, robust, and coordinated
136 | response to those in need of help. The new FEMA to emerge,
137 | although not fully independent, was to be autonomous enough

138 | within DHS to take charge when disaster struck. Preparedness
139 | grants and training were brought back home to FEMA.
140 | Pre-positioning plans and logistics systems were modernized.
141 | Lines of authority and accountability were clarified.

142 | Today we take a timely look at how those reforms are
143 | being implemented and what still might prevent FEMA from
144 | functioning effectively as the Nation's trusted agent and
145 | premier catalyst for disaster preparation, response, and
146 | mitigation.

147 | As we head into the heart of what is still predicted to
148 | be a very active hurricane system, we see troubling signs
149 | that key reforms have not yet taken hold, and that FEMA may
150 | still be hobbled with the larger DHS structure.

151 | Specifically, lines of authority still seem blurred and
152 | local officials remain frustrated over high-handed,
153 | indecisive, and slow answers from Washington, when they get
154 | any answers at all. The recent appointment of principal
155 | Federal officials and Federal coordinating officers by
156 | Secretary Chertoff appears to have bypassed FEMA altogether.
157 | Governors were told to direct any questions about these key
158 | positions to DHS directorate not even in the emergency
159 | response chain of command.

160 | The new logistics systems may not be ready for prime
161 | time, and the Government Accountability Office reports FEMA
162 | still lacks a strategic workforce plan and a related human

163 capital strategy to attract and retain the right people with
164 the requisite skills and experience to sustain effective
165 response operations.

166 These are all indications DHS may again be following
167 what one of today's witnesses cites as ``the spare tire
168 theory of emergency management.'' Under that discredited
169 premise, disaster response capabilities could be left locked
170 away and forgotten, on the assumption they will work just
171 fine when we need them. But when Katrina struck and we dug
172 FEMA out from under all the terrorism manuals in DHS' trunk,
173 those critical tools had gone dull and flat from neglect.
174 That can't happen again.

175 Like maintaining the family sedan, keeping the Nation's
176 emergency response vehicle running requires regular
177 lubrication and frequent road tests. Today's oversight
178 hearing is our part of the new FEMA's maintenance program.

179 I join the Chairman in welcoming our witnesses. We look
180 forward to their testimony and to a candid discussion of our
181 Nation's readiness to overcome the predictable and the
182 unexpected hazards on the road ahead.

183 Thank you.

184 [Prepared statement of Mr. Davis of Virginia follows:]

185 ***** INSERT *****

186 Chairman WAXMAN. Thank you, Mr. Davis.

187 Chairman Kucinich?

188 Mr. KUCINICH. Thank you very much, Chairman Waxman,
189 Ranking Member Davis. I appreciate the opportunity to work
190 with you and cooperate with you on these important hearings
191 regarding the Government's lack of appropriate response to
192 post-Hurricane Katrina.

193 The totally inadequate response to and the problems
194 plaguing the recovery and reconstruction from Hurricane
195 Katrina has spawned numerous reports, recommendations, and
196 legislation. We would all like to believe that the Executive
197 Branch's response to all of that oversight deserves its
198 preferred name, the new FEMA. Today we will examine whether
199 the new FEMA lives up to its moniker.

200 On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf
201 Coast. It devastated the region, destroying homes,
202 businesses, and properties, flooded New Orleans with more
203 than 100 billion gallons of water. In total, the storm took
204 the lives of more than 1,500 people.

205 This vast swath of destruction across the Gulf Coast
206 tested all levels of government. State and local first
207 responders were almost immediately overwhelmed, and Federal
208 agencies led by FEMA struggled to respond to the hurricane's
209 impact. FEMA's response displayed a shocking lack of
210 disaster preparation and response capabilities.

211 As we approach the two-year anniversary of the Country's
212 last catastrophic disaster, we are taking a look at FEMA and
213 seeing if FEMA has learned the lessons from Hurricane
214 Katrina, and we will be looking to see if the so-called new
215 FEMA is not just preparing for the last disaster but for the
216 next national emergency, whatever that might be, whether from
217 an earthquake or influenza pandemic or some other type of
218 natural disaster.

219 The Government Accountability Office has stated that
220 there are three fronts necessary to prepare for, respond to,
221 and recover from a catastrophic disaster. Those areas are
222 leadership, capabilities, and accountability. The Federal
223 Government's response to Hurricane Katrina demonstrated a
224 failure on all three fronts. Roles, responsibilities, and
225 lines of authority were not clearly defined. The adequacy of
226 the Government's capabilities for communication, evacuation,
227 search and rescue, mass care, and sheltering and logistics
228 were challenged, and FEMA likely made between \$600 million
229 and \$1.4 billion in improper and possibly fraudulent
230 payments.

231 These failures spawned a number of Federal
232 investigations, findings, and recommendations, and, following
233 in-depth investigations, reports were published by the House
234 Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate Preparation for
235 and Response to Hurricane Katrina, the Senate Homeland

236 Security and Government Affairs Committee, the White House
237 Homeland Security Council, the Inspector General of the
238 Department of Homeland Security, and FEMA, itself. These
239 reports identified a variety of successes, failures, and
240 recommendations for improving the Federal response to a
241 catastrophic disaster.

242 These reports were not the only Federal response. We
243 had the Post-Katrina Emergency Management and Reform Act of
244 2006, assessed by Congress, signed into law by the President
245 in order to strengthen FEMA and ensure that it is better
246 prepared for the next catastrophic disaster. We know that
247 FEMA has begun implementing the Post-Katrina Act. We know
248 that it has made significant changes. We are to evaluate
249 whether or not the new FEMA, as it now stands, is capable of
250 handling the next disaster, and we have learned that, despite
251 the strides FEMA has made, many challenges still remain.

252 Some of those challenges include the following: FEMA has
253 not released the National Response Plan, and the Country is
254 already two months into the 2007 hurricane season.

255 State and local officials have raised concerns about
256 FEMA's lack of independence and its ability to provide
257 assistance and coordination.

258 FEMA does not appear to be tracking which
259 recommendations it has and has not implemented from the
260 reports published by the White House, Congress, and other

261 Federal agencies.

262 It is not clear whether or not FEMA is ready to
263 coordinate large-scale evacuations or mass care and
264 sheltering. FEMA has created over 180 mission assignments
265 with over 20 Federal agencies, but it is not clear whether
266 proper FEMA oversight exists to effectuate those missions in
267 the case of a disaster.

268 As of July, 2007, 24 of 77 of executive positions at
269 FEMA were not filled, and as this Committee learned two weeks
270 ago at its trailer hearing, FEMA is still making tragic
271 mistakes in the Gulf Coast.

272 To be sure, FEMA's lack of preparing for and responding
273 to a catastrophic disaster is daunting. The evacuation of an
274 entire metropolitan area following a disaster is very
275 complicated. It is expensive and difficult. The task of
276 coordinating mass care and sheltering thousands of people is
277 very complicated. It is expensive.

278 FEMA has a tough mission, but no one, as far as I know,
279 has told us the assignment is too tough and that the mission
280 cannot be accomplished, so FEMA has a tough but doable job,
281 and this Committee's duty is to conduct oversight to ensure
282 that FEMA can lead a disaster response; prepare for, prevent,
283 and help areas recover from disasters. So today this
284 Committee will examine whether FEMA is achieving that
285 function.

286 Again I want to thank Mr. Waxman and Mr. Davis for
287 suggesting today's hearing. Mr. Davis, of course, has
288 chaired the House Select bipartisan Committee to Investigate
289 Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina, conducting
290 important oversight on disaster preparedness.

291 I want to thank Mr. Waxman and Mr. Davis. Thank you.

292 [Prepared statement of Mr. Kucinich follows:]

293 ***** INSERT *****

294 Chairman WAXMAN. Thank you, Mr. Kucinich.

295 I now want to call on the Ranking Member of the Domestic
296 Policy Subcommittee, Mr. Issa.

297 Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member
298 Davis.

299 This is the type of oversight the American public
300 expects of us, and what we discovered today, needless to say,
301 cannot be nearly as much as we have already seen here.

302 What we do want to find out today is whether or not at
303 all levels of government we are prepared post-9/11, when we
304 clearly were not prepared. The Katrina response pointed out
305 weaknesses we had in disaster preparedness and disaster
306 response.

307 I want to join with my colleagues in recognizing the
308 Ranking Member and my friend, Tom Davis, who spent countless
309 hours as the chairman of the Bipartisan Select Committee to
310 Investigate the Response to Katrina, and the excellent work
311 he did on a bipartisan basis to expose the flaws in our
312 Country's disaster preparedness regime. His work led to what
313 we will be talking about today, post-Katrina reform
314 legislation, and today we are here to find out if anything
315 has changed in the world of disaster preparedness.

316 I feel strongly that it is likely that we will be told
317 we are ready. I feel equally strongly that we on the dias
318 will have a responsibility to figure out how we fill in the

319 | gaps that clearly, clearly exist but, in fact, have either
320 | not been recognized or have been down played as to their
321 | importance.

322 | Specifically, we need answers to the following: is there
323 | a new FEMA, and how is it different than the one that
324 | responded so poorly in the Gulf Hurricanes? What is the
325 | relationship between the Federal Government, State
326 | governments, and local governments? Is it stronger? Is it
327 | ready? Are they partners, or is one government calling the
328 | shots and the others expected to fall in line?

329 | Disaster preparedness and response should not be the
330 | sole responsibility of the Federal Government. State and
331 | local governments should be first in line of defense when it
332 | comes to preparedness and response and should be listened to
333 | by Federal agencies. The bully tactics that were clearly in
334 | place cannot be accepted, nor can, in fact, a refusal to
335 | cooperate, both of which, as well reported, we saw in the
336 | post-Katrina report.

337 | The Federal Government needs to supplement State and
338 | local governments, not supplant them. But, as was evidenced
339 | in Hurricane Katrina, when the Federal Government is needed,
340 | they need to be there swiftly and in coordinated fashion and
341 | instill the confidence to those affected by the disaster.

342 | I hope that at the end of today's hearing I can tell my
343 | constituents that we can count on the government at all

344 | levels--I repeat, all levels--to be there for them in the
345 | time of disaster.

346 | Clearly, the disaster like happened after Hurricane
347 | Katrina will not happen in California. I am also going to be
348 | very concerned about not are we ready for Katrina II, but are
349 | we ready for an earthquake, a sizeable earthquake, a
350 | Northridge Earthquake times two in California? California
351 | has had a long history of events that are more catastrophic
352 | in the initial stages and often followed by fire than
353 | anything we saw in New Orleans.

354 | So, although I very much want to see what we have done
355 | post-Katrina, it is my obligation and I am sure the
356 | Chairman's obligation as California Members to ask about
357 | other disasters and other responses not previously in the
358 | report.

359 | Mr. Chairman, once again I thank you for your continued
360 | interest and yield back.

361 | [Prepared statement of Mr. Iсса follows:]

362 | ***** INSERT *****

363 Chairman WAXMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Issa.

364 We are pleased to welcome for our first panel Mr. R.
365 David Paulison, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency
366 Management Agency; Major General Terry Scherling, Director of
367 the Joint Staff National Guard Bureau; and Mr. Matt Jadacki,
368 Deputy Inspector General of the Office of the Inspector
369 General, Department of Homeland Security.

370 We are pleased to welcome you to our hearing today.
371 Your statements will be made part of the record in full. We
372 are going to have a clock that will time five minutes. We
373 would like you to try to keep as close to the five-minute
374 period as possible.

375 It is the practice of this Committee to swear in all
376 witnesses, so if you would, please stand and raise your right
377 hand.

378 [Witnesses sworn.]

379 Chairman WAXMAN. The record will show that the witnesses
380 answered in the affirmative.

381 Mr. Paulison, why don't we start with you.

382 STATEMENTS OF R. DAVID PAULISON, ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL
383 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY; MAJOR GENERAL TERRY SCHERLING,
384 DIRECTOR OF THE JOINT STAFF NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU; MATT
385 JADACKI, DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL, OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR
386 GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

387 STATEMENT OF R. DAVID PAULISON

388 Mr. PAULISON. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Ranking Member
389 Davis, and other distinguished members of the Committee. I
390 do welcome the opportunity to appear before this Committee to
391 discuss how FEMA has prepared for the 2007 hurricane season
392 in the wake of our recent reorganization.

393 Based on the many lessons learned, FEMA instituted
394 numerous reforms to improve our ability to respond to and
395 recover from disasters. In addition to FEMA's internal
396 transformation that we embraced to improve this Agency, the
397 Department of Homeland Security and FEMA have been working
398 together closely to implement adjustments included in the
399 Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act. The result is a new FEMA
400 that is strong, it is more nimble than it was just a year
401 ago. It has improved our preparedness posture for the 2007
402 hurricane season.

403 You can see the impact of these changes in our recent

404 | response this year to Florida, Georgia, Alabama, the Kansas
405 | tornados, the nor'easter that affected the States across the
406 | mid-Atlantic and New England, and recent flooding in the
407 | Plains.

408 | In each of these cases, FEMA quickly was an engaged
409 | partner with the State. We deployed operational and
410 | technical experts. We rolled logistics and communication
411 | capabilities, and we did this even before disaster
412 | declaration. We also coordinated with the governor's office
413 | to facilitate the Presidential declaration.

414 | It was also FEMA that supported and helped facilitate an
415 | effective, unified command system amongst the many Federal,
416 | State, and local partners involved in the responses. We call
417 | this an engaged partnership. Our response to these diverse
418 | and numerous events across the breadth of this great Country
419 | are evidence of the new FEMA's readiness for the 2007
420 | hurricane season.

421 | Today I will focus on our advanced preparations, our
422 | plans for operations during the storm, and our improved
423 | ability to help with the short-and long-term recovery.

424 | Local governments will always be the first to respond,
425 | but FEMA does have an important role to play. The old
426 | paradigm of waiting for State and local governments to become
427 | overwhelmed before providing Federal assistance simply does
428 | not work. We have to go in as partners. This engaged

429 partnership with FEMA will strengthen our relationship with
430 key State and local partners, and we will also recognize that
431 one size does not fit all when it comes to responding to
432 States.

433 FEMA is helping each State analyze its strengths and
434 weaknesses; thus, our planning is more informed and we can
435 better anticipate specific needs and quickly move to support
436 each State.

437 The reorganization has provided additional strength to
438 these efforts. The Post-Katrina Reform Act establishes ten
439 regional administrator positions. This spring we have filled
440 all ten, and not just with anyone, but with solid,
441 experienced managers, each with 20 and 30 years of hands-on
442 experience dealing in emergency management.

443 We have added senior staff at the national level, with a
444 new Disability Coordinator, Lou Daniel; the new U.S. Fire
445 Administrator, Chief Greg Kay; our Logistics Management
446 Assistant Administrator, Eric Smith; and the pending
447 confirmation of Assistant Administrator for Preparedness,
448 Dennis Schrader.

449 I would like to highlight one office that has joined
450 FEMA in the new reorganization, the Office of National
451 Capital Region Coordination, whose mission is to oversee and
452 coordinate Federal programs for the relationship to State,
453 local, and regional authorities and the National Capital

454 | Region. Chris Geldhart, Director of the Office, will be
455 | speaking to you today in a later panel about this important
456 | office's role in the new FEMA and the NCR.

457 | With these new and experienced leaderships in place,
458 | FEMA will be ready to act. As part of our improved reform
459 | operation, we have pre-arranged contracts, an approved and
460 | improving logistics system, and other elements already in
461 | place to expedite this response. FEMA can surge its own team
462 | and assets into an area in anticipation of an approaching
463 | storm.

464 | This forward-leaning new FEMA is evidence in our
465 | response to the tornado that devastated Greensburg, Kansas,
466 | this past May. In the first 72 hours, FEMA coordinated the
467 | efforts of numerous Federal agencies. FEMA had an urban
468 | search and rescue team on the ground the same day Kansas
469 | asked for the support. Supplies were rolling in within
470 | hours. Mobile support vehicles moved in early. I am proud
471 | of the response by our team. Federal, State, and local
472 | partners all together responded to this tragedy.

473 | Once the storm is passed, FEMA is also better organized
474 | and better prepared to help in the recovery. FEMA's Disaster
475 | Assistance Directorate has expanded its capabilities to
476 | assist with mass care; sheltering; debris removal; victim
477 | registration, including enhanced protections against waste,
478 | fraud, and abuse; and coordination among Government and

479 private sector entities all moving to provide assistance.

480 One example of FEMA's response is the storms in the
481 northeast this spring. FEMA had staff on the ground before
482 the rain stopped, evaluating damage and registering victims.
483 Mobile assistance centers were available in the immediate
484 wake of the storm. The first individual financial aid was
485 activated, delivered less than 24 hours after the President
486 signed the first declaration. This fast, efficient,
487 multi-State response shows the type of action you can expect
488 from FEMA during this year's hurricane storm.

489 In conclusion, we have made real progress with FEMA and
490 are much better aligned and prepared for the 2007 hurricane
491 season. By leaning further forward to coordinate the Federal
492 response, which is more informed through assessments and
493 communications with our partners, we can better serve all
494 Americans.

495 To wrap up, Mr. Chairman, today FEMA has created engaged
496 partnerships with State and local governments. We
497 facilitated and supplied an effective, unified command across
498 all levels of government. We have engaged hurricane-prone
499 States to gain a better understanding of their
500 vulnerabilities. We have improved logistics, communication
501 capabilities to improve response, and enhanced disaster
502 assistance capabilities to recovery efforts.

503 We are not done yet, Mr. Chair, but if our progress over

504 | the past year is any indication, I believe we are on the
505 | right track for fulfilling our vision of becoming the
506 | Nation's preeminent emergency management agency.

507 | I am proud of the men and women of this Agency. They
508 | have put their hearts and souls into rebuilding this Agency.

509 | Thank you for your continued support, and I thank you
510 | for the opportunity to appear in front of this panel.

511 | [Prepared statement of Mr. Paulison follows:]

512 | ***** INSERT *****

513 Chairman WAXMAN. Thank you, Mr. Paulison. We appreciate
514 your testimony.
515 Major General Scherling?

516 STATEMENT OF GENERAL TERRY SCHERLING

517 General SCHERLING. Good morning, Chairman Waxman,
518 Ranking Member Davis, and distinguished members of the
519 Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before
520 your Committee to discuss the role of the National Guard in
521 support to civil authorities during disasters.

522 I am here on behalf of Lieutenant General Steven Blum,
523 Chief of the National Guard Bureau, who is currently at
524 Northern Command with a number of Adjutants General from the
525 Homeland Security Committee, continuing our efforts to
526 improve planning, communication, and coordination between the
527 active component and the National Guard.

528 Mr. Chairman, this is not the first time key leaders
529 have gathered to address the Nation's domestic response
530 capabilities. Earlier this year, representatives from FEMA,
531 Northern Command, and the National Guard Bureau and Adjutants
532 General from the hurricane-affected States met to address
533 ways to better integrate our capabilities necessary for an
534 effective response to domestic emergencies.

535 Mr. Chairman, these ongoing deliberations are indicative
536 of the Department of Defense's and FEMA's determination and
537 commitment to ensure military support to domestic emergencies
538 is timely, sufficient, and integrated in such a way as to

539 | maximize effectiveness. When lives and property are at
540 | stake, every second counts, and the National Guard, as first
541 | responders, will be ready to respond when a State requests
542 | assistance.

543 | I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before the
544 | Committee today and welcome your questions.

545 | Thank you.

546 | [Prepared statement of General Scherling follows:]

547 | ***** INSERT *****

548 | Chairman WAXMAN. Thank you very much.

549 | Mr. Jadacki?

550 STATEMENT OF MATT JADACKI

551 Mr. JADACKI. Good morning, Chairman Waxman, Ranking
552 Member Davis, members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the
553 opportunity to be here today.

554 I will focus my remarks on FEMA's plans to meet the next
555 catastrophic incident. The five critical areas I will
556 discuss are: coordination of disaster response efforts,
557 catastrophic planning, logistics and acquisitions, housing,
558 and evacuation.

559 FEMA's efforts to support State emergency management and
560 to prepare Federal response and recovery in national
561 disasters are insufficient for an event of Hurricane
562 Katrina's magnitude. Reports issued by Congress, the White
563 House, Federal Office of the Inspector General, and the GAO,
564 among others, identified issues, including questionable
565 leadership decisions and capabilities, organizational
566 failure, overwhelmed response and communications systems, and
567 inadequate statutory authorities. As a result, Congress
568 enacted a number of changes to enhance the Federal
569 Government's response capabilities for emergency management.
570 In total, six statutes enacted by the 109th Congress contain
571 changes that apply to future Federal Emergency Management
572 actions.

573 While most of the new laws contain relatively few
574 changes to Federal authorities related to disasters and
575 emergencies, the Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act of 2006
576 reorganizes FEMA, expands its statutory authority and imposes
577 new conditions and requirements on the operation of the
578 Agency.

579 In responding to a catastrophic event, it is important
580 to keep in mind that response and recovery are not solely a
581 FEMA responsibility; it is inherently the Nation's
582 responsibility. The National Response Plan was established to
583 marshal all the Nation's resources and capabilities to
584 address threats and challenges posed by disasters, both
585 natural and manmade.

586 A successful response to and recovery from a
587 catastrophic event can be directly tied to the resources and
588 capabilities of citizens, local and State governments, the
589 Federal Government, non-governmental organizations, and the
590 private sector.

591 FEMA is the face of our Nation's response to large-scale
592 disasters and is charged with coordinated deployment of our
593 Nation's resources and capabilities, but success can only be
594 realized when all stakeholders are fully prepared and willing
595 to contribute.

596 FEMA is largely dependent on other Federal, State, and
597 local agencies and outside resources in executing many

598 | activities that take place. To be successful, FEMA needs to
599 | plan and conduct exercises with all its partners.

600 | Budget constraints remain a concern for many entities.
601 | Some that should participate may not have the resources to do
602 | so. Congress recently appropriated \$20 million for
603 | catastrophic planning. FEMA needs to continue to develop
604 | plans and exercises for high-risk scenarios and include all
605 | its emergency management partners. Strong logistical and
606 | acquisition management capacity is necessary.

607 | FEMA is responsible for coordinating delivery of
608 | commodities, equipment, personnel, and other resources to
609 | support emergency or disaster response efforts to affected
610 | States; therefore, FEMA's ability the track and acquire
611 | resources is key to fulfilling its mission. Recent events,
612 | including the Kansas tornado, indicate improvements in FEMA's
613 | response and logistics capability; however, whether these
614 | improvements will work for a catastrophic event are largely
615 | untested.

616 | FEMA also has not been well prepared to deal with the
617 | kind of acquisitions support needed for a catastrophic
618 | disaster. Their overall response efforts have suffered from
619 | inadequate acquisition planning and preparation; lack of
620 | clearly communicated acquisition responsibilities among FEMA,
621 | other Federal agencies, and local State governments; and
622 | insufficient numbers of acquisition personnel to manage and

623 | oversee the contracts.

624 | Pursuant to the Post-Katrina Act, FEMA has undergone
625 | significant reorganization; however, with the hurricane
626 | season upon us, a number of acquisition readiness concerns
627 | remain. FEMA has yet to finalize a process to ensure that the
628 | Federal pre-negotiated contracts for goods and services are
629 | coordinated with Federal, State, and local governments. FEMA
630 | acquisition process did not fully participate in strategizing
631 | and identification of goods and service for which
632 | pre-negotiated contracting may be needed in a catastrophic
633 | event, and FEMA and other Federal agencies may not have
634 | enough trained and experienced acquisitions personnel in
635 | place to manage and oversee the vast number of acquisitions
636 | that follow major catastrophic events.

637 | An effective and efficient disaster housing strategy is
638 | required for successful response. Some components of FEMA's
639 | housing strategy were not well-planned or coordinated in
640 | response to Katrina. Basically, after Katrina, FEMA used a
641 | traditional housing strategy for a non-traditional event. As
642 | a result, the housing programs and policies were not
643 | effective, and housing problems persist in the Gulf area. A
644 | comprehensive catastrophic housing plan and new and
645 | innovative housing approaches are needed for such events.

646 | The fiscal year 2007 Homeland Security Appropriation Act
647 | mandated FEMA to develop a national disaster housing

648 strategy. FEMA has coordinated with other Federal agencies
649 and the National Council on Disability to develop a strategy
650 to address housing needs for future disasters. These are
651 important first steps to improve disaster housing. To be
652 successful, FEMA needs to look to other Federal agencies and
653 State partners to take a bigger role in disaster housing.
654 While these efforts should improve housing coordination, they
655 remain untested.

656 Hand in hand with housing is well-executed evacuation
657 strategy. Evacuation plans are complex and must consider a
658 number of scenarios. Recent reports have indicated that,
659 despite warnings and mandatory evacuation orders, a
660 significant number of individuals would not leave their
661 homes. Others may not have the ability to evacuate because of
662 health reasons or lack of transportation. Local and State
663 officials are in the best position to develop evacuation
664 plans based on local demographics; however, it is critical
665 that the Federal Government coordinate with State and locals,
666 because in a catastrophic event it is likely they will play a
667 major role in evacuation.

668 Let me end my statement by reiterating our goal, which
669 is to take lessons learned from response to Hurricane Katrina
670 and assist DHS/FEMA to form the foundation for necessary
671 improvements to effectively respond to the next catastrophic
672 events.

673 | That concludes my opening remarks. I am happy to answer
674 | any questions.

675 | [Prepared statement of Mr. Jadacki follows:]

676 | ***** INSERT *****

677 Chairman WAXMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Jadacki.

678 I am going to start off the questions.

679 Administrator Paulison, in the written testimony you
680 submitted to the Committee, you discussed everything that
681 FEMA has done since Hurricane Katrina to ensure that it is
682 ready for the next catastrophic disaster. In fact, I think
683 the first 20 pages of your testimony were dedicated to
684 explaining everything FEMA has done, and I appreciate that
685 FEMA has made changes. However, toward the end of your
686 submitted testimony you state, "Of course, we are not done
687 yet. There is still much work to do."

688 I am happy to see that you acknowledge this in your
689 statement, because it is important that FEMA acknowledge that
690 work still needs to be done. Your statement didn't elaborate
691 on what FEMA still needs to do, and I would like to hear you
692 explain which areas FEMA still needs improvement and why.

693 Mr. PAULISON. Yes, sir. First of all, that won't ever
694 be done. There is always room for improvement. But
695 specifically, we have done some gap analysis for hurricane
696 States from Texas all the way to Maine to give us a very
697 clear assessment of what the needs are in those States and
698 working with them very closely to fill those gaps. We have
699 not done the rest of the Country, but we want to make that
700 gap analysis tool that we have developed with the State of
701 New York and the State Emergency Management available to the

702 rest of the States to deal with that.

703 The logistics system has been improved significantly and
704 is improving. We still have a lot more work to do to make
705 sure that I have an end to end view of where those
706 commodities are from the time it is ordered until it is
707 absolutely delivered to where it needs to be. We have done a
708 great job of being able to track that, and we can track our
709 supplies pretty much across the Country.

710 But I want to move more to what we call a
711 3PL--third-party logistics--type system. We have hired some
712 exceptional people from the Defense Logistics Agency to run
713 logistics, and we are not quite where I want to be yet. I am
714 very comfortable that we can provide the supplies we need,
715 but I still want to bring it into the 21st century to make
716 sure that we have what we consider one of the best logistics
717 systems in this Country. And we are looking at other private
718 partners and how the Defense Logistics Agency does it, how
719 does Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Lowe's, all those people, move
720 supplies around. We are bringing those in to help us do
721 that.

722 Those are just two examples of where we are not done
723 yet. We have done a lot, but we have more work to do.

724 Chairman WAXMAN. One concern I have is whether FEMA is
725 taking on too much responsibility. After Hurricane Katrina,
726 one of the recommendations was that other agencies become

727 more involved in their areas of expertise. In the draft
728 national framework, FEMA has been named as the primary
729 Federal agency for housing and emergency services; however,
730 the Lessons Learned Report issued by the White House
731 recommended that other Federal agencies and organizations
732 take the lead in these critical functions.

733 For example, recommendation number 69 stated,
734 ``Designate HUD as the lead Federal agency for the provision
735 of temporary housing.'' However, FEMA and not HUD will take
736 the lead for housing, according to the draft response
737 framework.

738 I am not sure that the White House was correct when it
739 made the recommendations, but I would like to understand
740 FEMA's view of the matter. Why has FEMA decided not to
741 follow the recommendations made by the White House report
742 with respect to temporary housing?

743 Mr. PAULISON. Actually, we are going to be leaning very
744 heavily on HUD for this long-term housing. FEMA should take
745 the lead in the short-term emergency housing, but we have
746 been working with an MOU with HUD right now to take over all
747 of these people that are in rental assistance places like
748 apartments. That does belong to HUD, and we are looking to
749 transfer all of that this fall to HUD, who are the experts in
750 this type of housing. So it takes both of us together,
751 working with HHS and other agencies to make sure that we can

752 | spread the workload, the expertise around the Federal
753 | Government, as opposed to all of it falling in FEMA's lap.
754 | Put it where the expertise is, and right now that long-term
755 | housing place, nobody does it better than HUD, so we are
756 | working with them to do that.

757 | Chairman WAXMAN. In the national draft framework, FEMA
758 | was also designated as the primary Federal agency for human
759 | services; however, recommendation number 63 in the White
760 | House report states, ``Assign the Department of Health and
761 | Human Services the responsibility for coordinating the
762 | provisions of human services during disasters.``

763 | The American public doesn't care what agency provides
764 | the response to a disaster, they just want the response to be
765 | done correctly, and that is our goal, of course, as well.
766 | But I am concerned that this tug of war about who will
767 | perform what functions will impede an effective response and
768 | undermine effectiveness. What is your response to that?

769 | Mr. PAULISON. The response framework is not finished
770 | yet. We are adjudicating some final comments this week, and
771 | hopefully we will be able to get the draft to you within a
772 | week or so, hopefully within a week, to make sure you have
773 | that.

774 | We are not going to fight over responsibilities. We are
775 | going to make sure that we know who is responsible for what.
776 | Those are some clear lessons learned in Katrina, so I can

777 | assure you that we will sort this out, putting those
778 | responsibilities exactly where they belong, working as a
779 | partnership.

780 | We are one Federal Government and we are going to start
781 | acting like that.

782 | Chairman WAXMAN. Thank you very much.

783 | Mr. Davis?

784 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

785 | I want to start my question with Administrator Paulison
786 | and the issues related to command and control.

787 | I know you are familiar with the Select Committee
788 | report. In that report the Select Committee found command and
789 | control was impaired at all levels, which delayed relief, and
790 | noted contributing factors including lack of communications,
791 | situational awareness, personnel training, and funding.

792 | In a July 16, 2007, letter from Secretary Chertoff to
793 | Louisiana's Governor, describing prescribed assignments of
794 | the principal Federal officials--the PFO, the deputy PFO, and
795 | the Federal coordinating official, the FCO--the letter stated
796 | that the PFO is the DHS' Secretary's representative in the
797 | field during a disaster and helps ensure smooth coordination
798 | among other senior officials.

799 | What are the roles of the PFO and the FCO, and how to do
800 | you contribute to seamless command and control if one reports
801 | to you and the other to Secretary Chertoff?

802 Mr. PAULISON. First of all, very seldom will there be a
803 PFO named unless it is some type of catastrophic event or
804 something that is not necessarily a Stafford Act event. For
805 instance, if we had several small terrorist attacks across
806 the country that did not raise to the level of disaster
807 declaration in any particular State, you wouldn't have an
808 FCO. The PFO would be that primary Federal official out
809 there.

810 The PFO is the Secretary's representative out there, and
811 the PFO will help coordinate all of those Federal groups
812 together, but the FCO handles the operational piece. The PFO
813 does not have line authority. The FCO does not report to
814 that person. So I don't see a conflict here at all.

815 Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. What would Brown have been? Would
816 he have been the PFO or the FCO? How would you have
817 considered Michael Brown in a case like that?

818 Mr. PAULISON. One of the things that happened during
819 Katrina, and maybe rightfully so, was the PFO and the FCO
820 were pretty much the same person. That is not going to
821 happen again. They are two different jobs, two different
822 entities. But, regardless, we are all going to work through
823 the joint field office. What we won't have is the PFO giving
824 information. The Secretary does not go through the joint
825 field office and does not come to me also, so we are working
826 it out where the PFO and the FCO have totally different jobs,

827 | but will coordinate together and work together very closely.

828 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Have State and local preparedness
829 | officials bought into this concept of the PFO and the CFO?
830 | Can you ensure the Committee these roles will contribute to
831 | better communications?

832 | Mr. PAULISON. Yes, sir. One of the major failures
833 | inside during Katrina was the breakdown in communication
834 | between the local and the State government, and between the
835 | State government and the Federal Government, and even inside
836 | the Federal Government, itself. Our unified command system
837 | that we set up and have tested and have actually had
838 | exercises all the way up including the President's Cabinet
839 | will stop that from happening again.

840 | The joint field office will be the focal point of that
841 | unified command system, so we are all sharing information.
842 | We all know what each other knows, and there are no
843 | stovepipes. That was one of the biggest failures during
844 | Katrina.

845 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Let me go back to the July 16th
846 | letter from Secretary Chertoff to Governor Blanco. It
847 | described the prescribed assignments of the PFO, the Deputy
848 | PFO, the CFO. The lieutenant states that ''States should
849 | contact DHS' Risk Management Analysis Unit within the
850 | National Programs and Protection Directorate,'' the NPPD.
851 | Why is this being run by the NPPD and not by FEMA?

852 Mr. PAULISON. That is just for the administrative part
853 of the PFO. In fact, in the 2008 budget that will transfer
854 to the Director of Operations, Admiral Roof, to oversee that
855 part of it. But as far as managing the Federal assets on the
856 ground, deciding which supplies go where, that will be
857 handled by FEMA through the FCO.

858 Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Why is the NPPD even involved
859 with this in the first place ?

860 Mr. PAULISON. I think that seemed like a good place to
861 put it at the time. Again, transferring that over to the
862 Director of Operations, and that is who will manage the
863 administrative part of the PFO. But the PFO reports directly
864 to the Secretary, does not report through any body else.

865 Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. The Post-Katrina Emergency Reform
866 Act of 2006 and the Stafford Act doesn't appear to designate
867 NPPD as part of the authorities involved in emergency
868 designation and leadership, so how do they get in it?

869 Mr. PAULISON. Well, they needed someone to oversee the
870 training, the selection of the PFOs. The PFOs and the NCOs
871 are selected. FEMA is part of that system selecting the
872 FCOs. We do all the FCOs and also sit on the panel for the
873 PFOs. We also participate in the training of the PFOs. They
874 just needed somebody in the Secretary's office to coordinate
875 that. That is why it was the NPPD. That, again, will be the
876 Director of Operations will coordinate that for the

877 Secretary.

878 Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Our theory, of course, is for
879 FEMA, that you can go and conscript the resources of
880 Government from anywhere in Government. That is where it is.
881 A lot of us thought it ought to be right there in the White
882 House at a time of emergency. Instead, it is sitting under
883 DHS, and now we see NPPD and other groups getting into it.
884 Frankly, this makes me a little nervous.

885 I just want to ask one last question. Last week, as you
886 know, we had a hearing on the problems of formaldehyde in the
887 FEMA trailers. FEMA was caught off guard in its mass housing
888 strategy. In his written testimony, Al Ashwood, Oklahoma
889 State Director of Emergency Management, who is on our second
890 panel, he is highly critical of your post-Katrina housing
891 strategy.

892 Just to remind everybody, the Select Committee report
893 states, "FEMA failed to take advantage of the Department of
894 Housing and Urban Development's expertise and large-scale
895 housing challenges.

896 So my question is: how does FEMA plan the coordination
897 of short, medium, and long-term housing? What is different
898 now in the post-Katrina environment, and is Mr. Ashwood
899 overreacting, or is housing still a major concern?

900 Mr. PAULISON. Mr. Ashwood is not over-reacting. We did
901 not take advantage of HUD's capabilities in the aftermath of

902 Katrina. One of the lessons learned. We know we are going
903 to do that now. We are working very closely with HUD. If
904 the MOU is not signed now, it will be signed very shortly to
905 make sure that we move that long-term housing piece over to
906 HUD and just use FEMA for the emergency housing to get people
907 immediate help, put them in immediate safe housing, and then
908 transfer it over to HUD. That will take place this fall.

909 Mr. KUCINICH. [Presiding] Major General, I would just
910 like to ask some questions about the readiness of the
911 National Guard. Do you have enough Guardsmen and Guardswomen
912 to be able to respond to a national emergency if another
913 hurricane was to, let's say, hit the Gulf Coast and cause
914 tremendous damage and dislocation to people? And could you
915 tell this Committee the degree of preparation the Guard has
916 made with respect to the number of personnel, the kinds of
917 equipment, and whether you are truly ready, aside from any
918 paper plans?

919 General SCHERLING. Yes, sir. To focus first on
920 personnel, I will tell you that the personnel availability
921 within the States is very good at this time. While we have
922 approximately 50,00 personnel deployed overseas, we have
923 approximately 10,000 personnel day to day here in the United
924 States involved in domestic operations. That leaves us
925 approximately 390,000 personnel to be available in the event
926 of another disaster here in the United States.

927 Mr. KUCINICH. Thank you, Major General. Now I would
928 like you to square your response that you just gave this
929 Committee with the response that the Senate Committee heard
930 on U.S. disaster response earlier this month from Army
931 Lieutenant General Steven Blum, head of the U.S. National
932 Guard, who stated that in the case of a major disaster
933 without advanced notice, that the National Guard is
934 unprepared to respond? He said, ``In a no-notice event we
935 are at risk, and we are at significant risk.'' I would like
936 you to square the statement that you just gave to this
937 Committee with the statement of Lieutenant General Blum.
938 Thank you.

939 General SCHERLING. Yes, sir. I believe that General
940 Blum was referring in particular to equipment, sir. And the
941 reason I say that is, because of the first of the year, the
942 equipage rate of the National Guard was approximately 40
943 percent, and it has been our policy within the National Guard
944 that if a State has an equipment requirement and the National
945 Guard has equipment available in our inventory, we will make
946 sure that they have it. In order to prepare for this
947 hurricane season, what we have done is focused on the
948 hurricane States, and in doing so we have held several
949 hurricane conferences which FEMA has participated in and
950 conducted our own gap analysis on the equipment available to
951 each and every State.

952 What we have done subsequent to that is to also
953 determine where we would match shortages with availability
954 from other States. So, for example, the State of Louisiana
955 may have particular shortages and we have actually used the
956 emergency management assistance compacts to determine which
957 States would be most available to provide equipment to match
958 their shortages.

959 Mr. KUCINICH. Thank you. And let me ask you this. Are
960 you saying that you have enough manpower?

961 General SCHERLING. Yes, sir.

962 Mr. KUCINICH. And are you saying you have enough
963 equipment?

964 General SCHERLING. Sir, we have enough manpower. The
965 National Guard is short of our dual-use equipment.

966 Mr. KUCINICH. So you are saying that Lieutenant General
967 Blum was speaking only about equipment and wasn't speaking
968 about the issue of whether or not you have enough people?

969 General SCHERLING. Yes, sir. I believe that to be the
970 case.

971 Mr. KUCINICH. But if you have enough people and you
972 don't have enough equipment, what does that say to the
973 overall preparedness of the National Guard?

974 General SCHERLING. Sir, while we may not have enough
975 equipment in particular States, what we have done is prepare
976 for the upcoming season by making available other equipment

977 | from other States to cover those shortages, and that would be
978 | General Blum's response, I believe, as well.

979 | Mr. KUCINICH. So your response is that you only have
980 | shortages of equipment in certain States?

981 | General SCHERLING. Yes.

982 | Now, Mr. Paulison, are you in close contact with the
983 | National Guard relative to their level of preparedness?

984 | Mr. PAULISON. Yes, sir. In fact, we have the closest
985 | relationship with the Department of Defense, the National
986 | Guard than we have ever had. We meet with them on a regular
987 | basis. We have weekly videoconferences that they participate
988 | in. We have developed an extremely good relationship and are
989 | working hand in hand together. We are doing exercises
990 | together, making sure we know where the shortfalls are in
991 | particular States. Like I said, we did the gap analysis
992 | already.

993 | Mr. KUCINICH. Shortfalls? Have they given you a budget
994 | for equipment?

995 | Mr. PAULISON. No, sir, they have not given us a budget
996 | for equipment.

997 | Mr. KUCINICH. Do you know if they have needs for
998 | equipment that have not been met?

999 | Mr. PAULISON. The system that we use is the emergency
1000 | management assistance compact, so if they have a disaster in
1001 | a particular State and there is something lacking, we can

1002 | move that very quickly from one State to another.

1003 | Mr. KUCINICH. Now, I want to go back to what Army
1004 | Lieutenant General Blum said to a Senate committee. He said
1005 | that in a no-notice event we are at risk, we are at
1006 | significant risk. You are just telling this Committee that
1007 | you seem to have no problems about whether they have the
1008 | equipment they need, but you haven't really been submitted a
1009 | budget. You are saying that you have some equipment needs
1010 | but you can move them around from State to State. Since
1011 | no-notice events really limit mobility, but by common sense I
1012 | am just, again, asking you--and we are going to go back to
1013 | another round on this--about what equipment needs are out
1014 | there that haven't been met. Has there been a budget? Is
1015 | there communication on real, practical matters?

1016 | I am going to go to the next questioner. This is the
1017 | Ranking Member of the Domestic Policy Subcommittee, a person
1018 | who I serve with, who serves with distinction, and who I am
1019 | glad to work with today, Mr. Issa.

1020 | Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think this
1021 | epitomizes a bipartisan hearing, and I am going to follow up
1022 | right where you left off.

1023 | General, we all know what hangar queens are, especially
1024 | I am an Army aviator, so we only know about helicopters we
1025 | can't get out, but when we look at your shortfalls in
1026 | equipment, as the chairman was asking, what is the net number

1027 | that you can deploy? If you have 360,000 people
1028 | potentially--and we all know there will be sick, lame, and
1029 | lazy that will fall out of that. We all know there are
1030 | people whose skill sets would be inappropriate, or for some
1031 | other reason be inappropriate to deploy, so you get a lesser
1032 | number.

1033 | Let's say, for argument's sake, that is 300,000. Now we
1034 | talk about the equipment you have that is appropriate for
1035 | dual use. How many people with full equipment can you put on
1036 | a target, let's just say in each of the four regions in a
1037 | twenty-four hour basis? So take the southeast, the
1038 | southwest, the northwest, the northeast, and let's just
1039 | assume for a moment that a hurricane hits and the Fort Dix
1040 | guys do something on steroids, what can you put in each of
1041 | those zones?

1042 | General SCHERLING. As I mentioned earlier, we have
1043 | approximately 390,000 people that would be available. Now,
1044 | being a planner, one might put 100,000 in each of the four
1045 | zones. What I would tell you is that the availability of
1046 | equipment is much like living in a small town like I grew up
1047 | in in North Dakota, where you may have a fire in your house,
1048 | and say it is a two-truck fire, where you would typically
1049 | need two fire trucks to put this fire out, and you only have
1050 | one fire truck available, but you have to get the fire truck
1051 | from the neighboring town to get the fire out.

1052 Mr. ISSA. General, I understand that, and I think we all
1053 understand that, exactly like forest fires--and I am from the
1054 west, so we understand that there has never been a forest
1055 fire fought in California that wasn't fought with
1056 out-of-Staters, and there has never been anything else in the
1057 west that wasn't fought with California firefighters.
1058 However, my question really is: how many people with full
1059 equipment can you put to the next Katrina? And let's assume
1060 that 24 hours into that disaster, whatever amount you give
1061 me, you have an equal disaster in one of the other four
1062 quadrants. What is your reserve? When do you run out of
1063 people in each of those four regions?

1064 The reason we are asking is that the likelihood of
1065 another Katrina may be low, but the likelihood of two more
1066 events is what we have been asking FEMA to be ready for for a
1067 long time.

1068 So have a Katrina, then have the bad guys take advantage
1069 of that situation and do something catastrophic. Let's just
1070 divide it in four. How many people can you have in four
1071 regions with equipment?

1072 General SCHERLING. Congressman, the reason that I would
1073 separate equipment and personnel is really that when we
1074 respond to disasters we do so with ten essential different
1075 areas of equipment, to include transportation, logistics,
1076 aviation, and it requires different numbers of people to

1077 sustain each different type of equipment, so--

1078 Mr. ISSA. Okay. Let me change to another subject then.

1079 I think I will go to the IG, because I am a little

1080 frustrated. If I need 100,000 temporary dwellings in the

1081 southeast today without formaldehyde, do you believe that

1082 these agencies are prepared to deliver those today? And we

1083 are not talking about the ones that are already there. I

1084 think that is clear.

1085 Mr. JADACKI. I don't think we can buy 100,000 temporary

1086 dwellings, whether they are travel trailers or mobile homes,

1087 without formaldehyde. I don't think there is any guarantee

1088 to do that. I think, as some Members alluded to before, the

1089 fact that there are other agencies out there that probably

1090 have better capability to do that.

1091 There is Housing and Urban Development. Housing is in

1092 the name. They should be doing housing. And I think, under

1093 the National Response Plan, and when there is a catastrophic

1094 event, FEMA needs to look at these other Federal agencies

1095 where the expertise is. There is Stafford Act authorities

1096 that can be used early on to provide temporary housing until

1097 the situation is stabilized. I think, mid-to long-term, I

1098 think they do need to look for the experts in the Federal

1099 Government to do that, including going out and buying 100,000

1100 housing units.

1101 Mr. ISSA. I only have time for two quick follow-ups. One

1102 | would be for the IG, and that is basically: what effect do
1103 | you believe the global war on terror, which is translated
1104 | into preparedness by FEMA, has affected its ability to deal
1105 | with other routine--I hate to say hurricanes are routine, but
1106 | they do happen more often than terrorist attacks. How much
1107 | has been diverted because of that portion of preparedness?

1108 | And, Mr. Paulison, so that I don't leave you out, in
1109 | Hurricane Katrina we had a de minimis amount of need for
1110 | hospitals, by comparison to other forms of disaster. It
1111 | wasn't there it was none, but on a scale most ever had to do
1112 | with people who didn't have power, didn't have food, or whose
1113 | medical emergencies were not caused directly by the
1114 | hurricane. What are you doing to change that to be prepared
1115 | in the next disaster, hospitalized?

1116 | In either order, quickly.

1117 | Mr. PAULISON. We have particularly worked very closely
1118 | with our gap analysis in looking at hospitals, which
1119 | hospitals can shelter in place, what do they need to do that,
1120 | and just particularly in Louisiana we have put six huge
1121 | generators down there, installed them, fueled them for those
1122 | hospitals that can shelter in place and are not part of a
1123 | flood zone.

1124 | Some cannot shelter in place, and those we make sure
1125 | that, working with the State, we have very good, rock solid
1126 | evacuation plans. Where are they going to go? How are they

1127 | going to get there? Who is going to take them? Who is
1128 | responsible for that? And not only the hospitals, but the
1129 | nursing homes, where we had some of the issues down there.

1130 | Those are the types of things we have put in place for
1131 | hospitals.

1132 | Am I answering your question?

1133 | Mr. ISSA. Yes. Thank you.

1134 | Just on the IG quickly, because my time is expiring.

1135 | Mr. JADACKI. Yes. After 2003 when Homeland Security
1136 | formed, a lot of the emphasis was on terrorist attacks and
1137 | those types things. I think the focus on natural disasters
1138 | really was minimal.

1139 | After 2004, the hurricanes hit Florida. That was a
1140 | little taste of the capability of the Federal Government, but
1141 | I think that Katrina was the eye-opener. I think it brought
1142 | to the attention to the American public, to everybody, that
1143 | we can't ignore.

1144 | The consequences are the same, whether it is a natural
1145 | disaster or it is a man-made disaster. There is still that
1146 | response and recovery capability that is needed by the
1147 | Federal Government and the State and local government.

1148 | Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank the Ranking Member on our
1149 | Subcommittee and just to comment to you that this line of
1150 | questioning I hope other Members are going to pick up between
1151 | the disparity between having enough people and equipment,

1152 | because if you are a truck driver and you don't have a truck,
1153 | hello. So I want to thank the gentleman for exploring that.

1154 | I am asking for unanimous consent for the Committee to
1155 | permit the inclusion in this hearing of our good friend from
1156 | Louisiana, the distinguished gentleman, Mr. Jindal, to
1157 | participate in this hearing as a member of the Committee and
1158 | to be able to ask questions. Without objection, so ordered.

1159 | The Chair at this point will recognize Eleanor Holmes
1160 | Norton, the distinguished representative of the District of
1161 | Columbia.

1162 | Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

1163 | I have a question about DHS dominance and the attending
1164 | dominance of terrorism over natural disasters. I do want to
1165 | say, for Mr. Paulison and Mr. Jadacki, perhaps, I do want to
1166 | say to Mr. Paulison you are getting a great deal of
1167 | oversight, including by my own Subcommittee, which has the
1168 | primary jurisdiction over FEMA and will be doing a
1169 | comprehensive hearing in New Orleans on the Katrina
1170 | anniversary in late August. You have had hearings here in
1171 | this Committee on formaldehyde most recently. We have had
1172 | hearings on ice and food. There has been a tendency on the
1173 | part of Katrina to respond to under-preparation and Katrina
1174 | to over-preparation. It suggests the absence, even given the
1175 | difficulties of calibrating, it really does suggest the
1176 | absence of skilled personnel in these matters.

1177 My question, though, goes in part to my membership on
1178 the Department of Homeland Security and my membership on this
1179 Committee and, of course, our Subcommittee. We passed the
1180 Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act to deal with DHS dominance,
1181 to try to give FEMA more independence, and yet I really don't
1182 see evidence of that.

1183 Let me give you an example. First of all, apparently to
1184 declare a national emergency one has to still go through
1185 bureaucracies all the way to OMB, suggesting DHS is still in
1186 charge, no matter whether the expertise would naturally flow
1187 to FEMA. But let's look at what is happening with emergency
1188 exercises, as a case in point. We know we are dealing with
1189 all hazards, and, indeed, it is a failure if you have to
1190 attune to disaster. You should be able to handle disasters
1191 across the board.

1192 In the national emergency exercises for the hypothetical
1193 emergency scenarios, isn't it interesting that, although you
1194 can expect that there will be floods and hurricanes and
1195 earthquakes and snow storms, although that is clearly the
1196 expectation, in your hypothetical emergency scenarios, where
1197 you have 15 scenarios in total, 12 of the scenarios are
1198 terrorist attacks.

1199 I can understand post-9/11 everybody would want to, in
1200 fact, make sure that we could do something in the event of
1201 terrorist attack, but that kind of dominance of a terrorism

1202 | approach makes you wonder whether you understand what
1203 | American people have to deal with every single year. Why are
1204 | there only three scenarios that deal with natural
1205 | disaster--an earthquake in California, an earthquake on the
1206 | New Madrid Fault Line, and a pandemic flu outbreak?

1207 | I would like to know why there aren't more real-time
1208 | disasters. For example, the District of Columbia on July the
1209 | 4th does a very simple real-time, putting all the red lights
1210 | on just to make sure everybody can stop and go. They go on
1211 | for a longer period of time than usual. You know, that
1212 | really comes out of the District of Columbia.

1213 | I wonder, for example, whether you have had anything to
1214 | do with real-time exercises any place else. Suppose you had
1215 | to evacuate San Francisco or the District of Columbia. Could
1216 | we do that? Would people know to stay in place or evacuate?
1217 | How would FEMA respond? And why are there so many scenarios
1218 | for terrorist disasters and so few for natural disasters?

1219 | Mr. PAULISON. First of all, that is an excellent
1220 | question. We are making sure that we don't go one way or the
1221 | other. I know FEMA gets accused sometimes of focusing
1222 | strictly on natural disasters and not the terrorist events.
1223 | We have just taken over, just this last spring, all of the
1224 | exercises, and I can tell you that I have done tabletop
1225 | exercises for hurricane seasons. We did preparedness
1226 | workshops and exercises in region two at the Caribbean

1227 office, region two, region six, the Pacific area office,
1228 through March to June. I did hurricane preparedness
1229 workshops in several different areas.

1230 Ms. NORTON. I am really talking about the Presidential
1231 Security Council. Are you doing those? Are you now doing
1232 the fifteen scenarios and not the Presidential Security
1233 Council, which had twelve terrorist and three natural?

1234 Mr. PAULISON. Yes. The 15 scenarios are out there for
1235 people to train to, to do those types of things. I feel like
1236 we do enough natural disaster exercises across this Country.
1237 All of our catastrophic planning--

1238 Ms. NORTON. What about real-time exercises?

1239 Mr. KUCINICH. The gentlelady's time has expired.

1240 Ms. NORTON. Could he just answer that about real-time
1241 exercises, like the one that was in the District of Columbia?

1242 Mr. PAULISON. We do that on a regular basis,
1243 particularly with hurricanes and things like that, and
1244 earthquakes. We do the evacuation piece.

1245 Ms. NORTON. Where have you done real-time exercises?

1246 Mr. PAULISON. It has to be table top.

1247 Ms. NORTON. Where have you done real-time exercises?

1248 Mr. PAULISON. If you are talking about real-time
1249 exercises, every State has a hurricane exercise, and we
1250 always participate in those with the States, because that is
1251 where the impact is. Those are either real time or tabletop.

1252 For a hurricane it is tough to do a real-time type of
1253 exercise for that type of thing, because you can't evacuate
1254 people. You don't want to ship supplies, so you do a
1255 tabletop to make sure you have things in place. That seems
1256 to work best for us.

1257 Mr. KUCINICH. The gentlelady's time has expired.

1258 I am going to recognize Mr. Shays from Connecticut.

1259 Mr. SHAYS. I had the opportunity to serve on the Select
1260 Committee under the guidance of Chairman Davis. It was a
1261 hard-hitting report. I think that my reaction to Katrina was
1262 that we could deal with an Administration that was being
1263 arrogant and competent, but it was tough to deal with an
1264 Administration that was being arrogant and incompetent, and
1265 Katrina looked so incompetent to all of us. I realize it was
1266 a 500-year storm, so nobody is going to be able to deal with
1267 it in the way we would want, but I would have at least liked
1268 someone of authority to have gone into the Superdome and
1269 said, I am not leaving this place until all our fellow
1270 Americans are out safe. It was almost like everybody avoided
1271 going in there. It was a very shameful feeling for me.

1272 By the way, Mr. Paulison, thank you for your work and
1273 your work as the Acting Director and now as the Director, but
1274 what I am hearing is that we are looking at this in a
1275 strategic way, which is good, but I would like you to kind of
1276 outline some of the tactical and operational areas that you

1277 are looking to improve. Not all of them, because it would
1278 take you a long time, but just give me an outline.

1279 Mr. PAULISON. First of all, what happened at Katrina
1280 should not happen in this Country, and I am going to do
1281 everything in my power to make sure it doesn't happen again.
1282 I am going to make sure that this organization is capable of
1283 responding.

1284 We have taken all of those lessons learned from the
1285 reports that came out of the House, out of the Senate, out of
1286 the White House, the IG's report, GAO--I mean, there is a ton
1287 of them. There were similar themes to every one of them:
1288 tremendous breakdown in communications; not having visibility
1289 on the ground in what is really happening and getting all
1290 those multiple stories back; not having a good victim
1291 registration in place; having people scattered across this
1292 Country and not knowing where they are or who they were or
1293 what their needs were; not being able to provide the right
1294 kind of logistics, having the right things in the right
1295 places at the right time. So we are taking those and
1296 focusing on those major issues that were a breakdown in the
1297 system.

1298 Right now we can register over 200,000 people a day that
1299 we could not do before. We have put five mobile registration
1300 vans in place where we can go out to where people are,
1301 because they could not come to our registration centers, and

1302 | they are equipped with satellite-based laptop computers and
1303 | satellite-based cell phones. We saw this work very well in
1304 | Greensburg, Kansas, where people actually sat down at a table
1305 | and sat on a computer and registered themselves or pick up
1306 | the phone and call that 1-800-621-FEMA number to get
1307 | registered, putting a logistics system in place that brings
1308 | it into the 21st century.

1309 | I know Eleanor Norton Holmes has helped us with that and
1310 | recognized very clearly that we cannot continue to stockpile
1311 | millions and millions of dollars worth of ice and just let it
1312 | go away; we have to bring in a third-party logistics systems,
1313 | which is what we have done as--

1314 | Mr. SHAYS. Let me use that as a transition. One of the
1315 | things that I found most astonishing was how bureaucratic
1316 | FEMA was and how we had let out contracts. I have in
1317 | Connecticut some of the largest producers of bottled water.
1318 | They were willing to give it below cost, and in some cases
1319 | free. They had to go through some individual who didn't have
1320 | an office in Georgia, I think it was, who had a contract, who
1321 | basically was kind of trying to direct this out of what
1322 | seemed like his kitchen. That was an absolute absurdity. My
1323 | folks came to me and said, Forget it. We are not going to go
1324 | through this individual.

1325 | I hope we are looking at how we give out contracts and
1326 | have the capability, if they are not instantly able to

1327 | perform or if there is an overwhelming effort, to be able to
1328 | nullify those contracts.

1329 | Mr. PAULISON. There is no question that a tremendous
1330 | amount of bureaucracy built up over the 30 years that this
1331 | organization has been in existence, and we are trying to very
1332 | quickly get rid of some of that to move much faster and be
1333 | much more nimble. It has been tough, I have to tell you, be
1334 | honest with you. It has been difficult at times to do some
1335 | of that. The Stafford Act needs to be looked at again to
1336 | make sure it gives us better tools to do what we need to do.

1337 | But what you are saying should not happen.

1338 | Mr. SHAYS. Right.

1339 | Mr. PAULISON. We should be able to use the supplies
1340 | where they are.

1341 | Mr. SHAYS. Right. And instead of bringing them all the
1342 | way from Connecticut, if they are already down close to the
1343 | area. But I particularly have concerns about these contracts
1344 | which seem to me like all they do is skim from the top.

1345 | Let me just make this final point to you. When this
1346 | Committee helped create the Department of Homeland Security,
1347 | we wanted the Department of Homeland Security to be added
1348 | value to FEMA. I have told this to the Secretary. I was
1349 | dumbfounded that he basically stood back and said, I want
1350 | FEMA to be FEMA. We wanted FEMA to be FEMA plus have a
1351 | Department of Homeland Security adding value, to be able to

1352 | call in all the other resources that the Department has.

1353 | Mr. KUCINICH. The gentleman's time has expired.

1354 | Mr. SHAYS. I would just like to know, Do you feel there
1355 | is a better working relationship with the Secretary, et
1356 | cetera?

1357 | Mr. PAULISON. Yes, sir. I have a great relationship
1358 | with the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary. Being inside of
1359 | Homeland Security has given me access to assets that I may
1360 | not have. I meet every week with the operational components
1361 | of Homeland Security. That gives me access to people on a
1362 | first-name basis that I can just pick up the phone and ask
1363 | for assistance.

1364 | I feel like I get a tremendous benefit out of what is
1365 | inside Homeland Security.

1366 | Mr. SHAYS. Terrific.

1367 | Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank the gentleman for the
1368 | practical line of questioning that is being asked here. It
1369 | is really essential.

1370 | The Chair recognizes Representative Clay from Missouri.
1371 | Mr. Clay?

1372 | Mr. CLAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for
1373 | conducting this hearing.

1374 | You know, FEMA failed Americans during Hurricane
1375 | Katrina, and they continue to fail those who were displaced
1376 | by the storm. Last week's hearing did not reassure me that

1377 FEMA is anything short of a dysfunctional agency that
1378 epitomizes mismanagement and waste.

1379 In addition to potentially putting the health of
1380 displaced hurricane victims at risk by exposing them to
1381 formaldehyde, reports of disaster ice being stored for two
1382 years at a cost of 12.5 million to taxpayers was
1383 irresponsible.

1384 Mr. Paulison, is it true that FEMA contracts require
1385 disposal of the ice three months after its purchase date?

1386 Mr. PAULISON. We are disposing of all that ice we
1387 purchased in 2005 and 2006 at a cost of \$3.5 million to get
1388 rid of the ice. We are no longer going to store ice. We are
1389 using a third-party system with the Corps of Engineers. They
1390 can deliver 3.5 million pounds of ice within 24 hours, and
1391 then whatever else we need within 72 hours.

1392 This is a new system that we are going to. If we had
1393 not stored ice and food and had the type of hurricane season
1394 that was predicted to have in 2006, we would have not had the
1395 supplies we needed to do the job we did, like we learned at
1396 Katrina.

1397 Mr. CLAY. Wait a minute. Who advised FEMA to go against
1398 its own policy and store this ice for two years?

1399 Mr. PAULISON. The ice was still good. We had it tested
1400 on a regular basis. We kept it for as long as we could. We
1401 recognized that we could not keep it any longer, and we did

1402 | not want to use it, so we are disposing of the ice. It is an
1403 | expendable commodity, like anything else that has a shelf
1404 | life, so we are getting rid of it.

1405 | Again, we learned from those lessons. Since we cannot
1406 | depend on predictions for hurricane seasons--we were supposed
1407 | to have a heavy hurricane season last year and it did not
1408 | happen. So instead of storing those massive quantities of
1409 | food and ice, we are looking at a just-in-time delivery
1410 | system, like the rest of the business community uses. I want
1411 | to bring FEMA into the 21st century logistics, and that is
1412 | why we are bringing top-notch logistics people in who know
1413 | how to operate in this type of a system.

1414 | Mr. CLAY. Okay. I have a limited amount of time, Mr.
1415 | Paulison. So apparently cost is no object here? I mean,
1416 | that is what it seems like, and it seems like in your
1417 | response you indicated that that was the policy then and you
1418 | kept storing the ice for almost two years. So apparently
1419 | cost is no object when it is the taxpayers' dollars.

1420 | Mr. PAULISON. No, sir, that is not accurate. I am
1421 | sorry, I can't let that go. We stored what we thought was
1422 | enough supplies to get us through that 2006 hurricane season.
1423 | We didn't have any hurricanes, so we had excess supplies.
1424 | Learning from that, we are no longer going to do that.

1425 | Mr. CLAY. Okay. Let's go to the next one then, Mr.
1426 | Paulison. GAO estimated that FEMA, in responding to

1427 | Hurricane Katrina, made between \$600 million and \$1.4 billion
1428 | in improper and possibly fraudulent payments. How has FEMA
1429 | addressed concerns over these payments that were made in the
1430 | aftermath of Hurricane Katrina?

1431 | Mr. PAULISON. A couple of things. I don't know about
1432 | the dollar amount, but GAO is correct: FEMA did a lot of
1433 | payments that they should not have done. They did not have a
1434 | system in place to accurately identify a person were who they
1435 | said they were and they lived where they said they lived. So
1436 | we have put a system in place where we can now do that. We
1437 | have an identity verification company, a system in place so
1438 | when you come for payment we can tell you are who you said
1439 | you are and you lived where you said you lived.

1440 | The second piece of that is some of the contracts that
1441 | FEMA did during Katrina were done on the fly, and we don't
1442 | want to do that. We have those contracts in place ahead of
1443 | time. We are negotiating from a position of strength, as
1444 | opposed to negotiating from a position of weakness when you
1445 | are in the middle of a storm and you need that type of
1446 | assistance.

1447 | Mr. CLAY. And at that time, again, taxpayer money was
1448 | no object here. Let me--

1449 | Mr. PAULISON. No, sir. That is why I was brought in, to
1450 | fix those issues, and that is what I am doing.

1451 | Mr. CLAY. And I hope you do.

1452 Mr. PAULISON. Thank you, sir.

1453 Mr. CLAY. Let me go on to Mr. Jadacki.

1454 Mr. Jadacki, an agency like FEMA cannot properly prepare
1455 for nor respond to a disaster without effective leadership.
1456 What personnel changes have been made to address ineffective
1457 leadership within FEMA since the hurricane?

1458 Mr. JADACKI. Some of the changes that were made in FEMA,
1459 we have been providing a lot of oversight over contracting
1460 and those types of things. There was a goal by the Director
1461 to achieve 90 to 95 percent of the vacancies would be filled
1462 by the beginning of hurricane season. They recently achieved
1463 that goal. There is a number of industry experts that are
1464 now working for FEMA in senior leadership positions that have
1465 practical disaster management experience from the outside
1466 that they are bringing in to FEMA right now. But, again, a
1467 lot of these new initiatives aren't tested, so it remains to
1468 be seen what is going to happen when a major disaster occurs,
1469 but the signs are encouraging. We have seen some of the
1470 leadership positions are being filled and some of the
1471 capabilities along with those positions are coming in place.

1472 Mr. KUCINICH. The gentleman's time is expired.

1473 Mr. CLAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1474 Mr. KUCINICH. I thank the gentleman.

1475 The Chair recognizes my colleague from Ohio,
1476 Representative Jordan. Thank you.

1477 Mr. JORDAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the
1478 panel being with us.

1479 I had underlined the same sentence that Congressman Clay
1480 just pointed out in the memorandum that was prepared for us
1481 by the majority and the minority staff members, highlighting
1482 the \$600 million to \$1.4 billion in improper and potentially
1483 fraudulent payments.

1484 Mr. Paulison is that an accurate estimate, or is it more
1485 or less? Can you elaborate more? And also talk about some
1486 of the things you said in response to Congressman Clay's
1487 question. What checks? What balances? What auditing
1488 mechanism do you have in place so that if, in fact, that is
1489 accurate, it doesn't happen again?

1490 Mr. PAULISON. The estimate of the amount of dollars of
1491 \$1.4 billion, we don't think it was that high, but
1492 regardless, there were not good systems in place to stop that
1493 waste, fraud, and abuse that we saw, so we put several things
1494 in place. One, the identity verification. It was going to
1495 help us tremendously, being able to give the right people the
1496 amount of money they are due and not give it to the people
1497 who don't deserve it.

1498 The second piece is having contracts in place ahead of
1499 time, where we are negotiating the contract as opposed to the
1500 contractor. FEMA put in place a tremendous amount of
1501 contracts in the middle of the hurricane, and we did not get

1502 | a good deal, quite frankly, on a lot of those contracts.
1503 | They were no bid. The contracts were not written into the
1504 | best interest of the taxpayer or the best interest of FEMA,
1505 | the Federal Government.

1506 | So what we have done now is put those contracts in place
1507 | ahead of time, what we call readiness contracts, where they
1508 | are sitting on the shelf ready to go. We had the upper hand
1509 | negotiating them. They are bid out, they are not no bid, to
1510 | make sure we can stop that waste, fraud, and abuse. We want
1511 | to be good stewards of taxpayers' money. Disasters cost a
1512 | lot of money, but we should be able to spend it wisely, and
1513 | that is what we are trying to do.

1514 | Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Jadacki, would you care to comment at
1515 | all?

1516 | Mr. JADACKI. Yes. One of the problems they had after
1517 | Hurricane Katrina was the capacity of the system to accept
1518 | applications, as Mr. Paulison alluded to. It had the
1519 | capacity to take in about 100 registrations a day. So in
1520 | order to increase capacity, some of the controls were
1521 | dropped, and one of the critical controls was validating
1522 | Social Security numbers, whether they were valid or not.
1523 | Depending on how you applied for assistance, they would
1524 | either check it or wouldn't check it. In some cases we found
1525 | a lot of Social Security numbers were all zeroes or
1526 | sequential and those types of things, but the system accepted

1527 | them and provided checks to those individuals.

1528 | Some of the other items that GAO pointed out in its
1529 | report were checks going to Federal prisons and those types
1530 | of things. In some cases, yes, they were fraudulent and we
1531 | are looking into it. We have active investigations. In some
1532 | cases, some of the prisoners actually had residences that
1533 | were destroyed and they are eligible for those types of
1534 | things.

1535 | So the numbers appear to be a little high from GAO, but,
1536 | nevertheless, there was a pretty good amount of fraud, waste,
1537 | and abuse, a lot of because there were citizens that were
1538 | fraudulently applying for assistance, but in some parts the
1539 | checks and balances on the back end just weren't there.

1540 | Mr. JORDAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back the
1541 | balance of my time.

1542 | Mr. KUCINICH. I thank the gentleman. The Chair
1543 | recognizes Representative Murphy.

1544 | Mr. MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1545 | Welcome, Mr. Paulison.

1546 | I wanted to talk a little bit about how we get to the
1547 | point of a disaster being declared. No doubt when you talk
1548 | about an incident such as Katrina, about that declaration,
1549 | but there are dozens if not hundreds of smaller disasters
1550 | that happen all around the Country on a yearly basis. I come
1551 | from an experience in Connecticut where we had, I think, a

1552 fairly unfortunate interaction with FEMA this spring when we
1553 had, on April 15th and 16th, some historic, major flooding in
1554 northwestern Connecticut and throughout the State. The next
1555 day our governor was in touch with FEMA to ask for a disaster
1556 declaration, and it took nearly a month before that disaster
1557 was declared. It took, in fact, two months before homeowners
1558 and individual businesses were allowed to even apply for
1559 disaster assistance.

1560 Representative Shays inquired about some of the
1561 bureaucratic hurdles that exist within FEMA in relation to
1562 disaster response. It certainly seems that, at least in this
1563 case, there remain some fairly significant and troubling
1564 bureaucratic hurdles, even for the declaration of a disaster.

1565 In Connecticut we simply couldn't understand, as we
1566 stood outside and looked at flooding that we had never seen
1567 before, why it would take a month in order for the Federal
1568 Government to declare what we knew overnight: that a major,
1569 unprecedented disaster had hit our State.

1570 I have some specific questions on that but first want to
1571 ask you in general whether you still see bureaucratic hurdles
1572 to disaster declarations within FEMA and the Department of
1573 Homeland Security.

1574 Mr. PAULISON. We do have still a lot of work to do on
1575 the declaration process. No question about it. The ones
1576 that are really obvious and overwhelming are easy. We have

1577 | been turning those around in less than 24 hours. The ones
1578 | like in Connecticut and some other areas where, although it
1579 | maybe devastated you, the thresholds that we set down for
1580 | individual and public assistance sometimes aren't quite there
1581 | and we have to do what we call preliminary damage
1582 | assessments.

1583 | We worked very hard with Connecticut, with the State, to
1584 | get to yes. And it took a while, probably longer than it
1585 | should, but at least we finally got there.

1586 | We have to do something to streamline the process even
1587 | better to make it move faster, and in some cases the general
1588 | guidelines that we have that we are applying across the
1589 | country don't necessarily work for smaller States, and that
1590 | is why we are bringing in the small State and rural advocate
1591 | into FEMA, to help us come up with some of those things.

1592 | For instance, 100 homes damaged in Texas is a lot
1593 | different than 100 homes damaged in Connecticut or a smaller
1594 | State out there, but that is kind of like some of the rough
1595 | guidelines we use. So we need to re-look at that whole
1596 | system, look at that individual assistance piece, and how do
1597 | we make it equitable from one State to another based on size,
1598 | based on population, all those types of things.

1599 | Those are things we are looking at. What happened with
1600 | Connecticut, with taking two months for that, we don't want
1601 | to happen again.

1602 Mr. MURPHY. That is the second question. How long is
1603 too long? A disaster is a disaster. In Connecticut we have
1604 small towns that simply didn't have the resources available
1605 to them on a short-term basis in order to make some of the
1606 immediate emergency infrastructure improvements that they
1607 needed to make. I mean, in your mind how long should it take
1608 in order for a disaster to be declared, even if it is a
1609 smaller, more localized disaster like we had in the
1610 northeast?

1611 Mr. PAULISON. As quick as we can do the preliminary
1612 damage assessments and get the numbers that we need. Again,
1613 it goes back to the thresholds that we set down to either
1614 declare a disaster or not, and I am not comfortable that
1615 those are where they need to be, again particularly with the
1616 smaller States. So we have to work very hard. Sometimes it
1617 takes longer to find all of the damage. We go back to the
1618 State, which we did with Connecticut, and say, look, the
1619 numbers aren't there. We do the preliminary damage
1620 assessments together. FEMA doesn't do them by themselves.
1621 We do it hand-in-hand with the State to go out and do that.

1622 Something that is major we have been turning around in
1623 one or two days, and my goal would be to not take more than a
1624 week or so to get those declarations through the process and
1625 give you a yes or a no so that--

1626 Mr. MURPHY. Before my time is up I want to ask one more

1627 | question. It is my understanding that one of the hurdles is
1628 | that right now, in order to declare a disaster, you have to
1629 | check with the White House's Office of Budget and Management.
1630 | It concerns me that a budgetary agency is having input on
1631 | decisions as to whether a disaster occurred. It seems like
1632 | that is a wholly separate question. As we have moved FEMA
1633 | into DHS, it seems to me that some of the independence of
1634 | those decisions is being compromised.

1635 | Do you have to check with OMB before you make a disaster
1636 | declaration?

1637 | Mr. PAULISON. We don't check with OMB. I make my
1638 | recommendation to the President, and that does go through the
1639 | Office of Budget and Management. They are the receiver of
1640 | that for the president.

1641 | Mr. MURPHY. Do you have to wait for--

1642 | Mr. PAULISON. But we don't pick up the phone and check
1643 | with them and say, Gee is this right? I send my
1644 | recommendation over to them, and then they process it for the
1645 | president.

1646 | Mr. MURPHY. If OMB comes back and gives a negative input
1647 | or feedback on your requests, can you still declare a
1648 | disaster?

1649 | Mr. PAULISON. The President has to sign the declaration.
1650 | All I do, I make a recommendation to the President.

1651 | Mr. KUCINICH. The gentleman's time has expired.

1652 Mr. MURPHY. Thank you.

1653 Mr. KUCINICH. I thank the gentleman.

1654 The Chair is pleased to recognize Mr. McHenry.

1655 Mr. MCHENRY. I thank my friend for recognizing me, and I
1656 yield a 15-second intervention.

1657 Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Paulison, I think Mr. Murphy and I are
1658 very grateful that you responded to our concerns. It took a
1659 little longer, but ultimately we got what we needed. We are
1660 very grateful to you on that.

1661 I think, though, there is another little point that we
1662 realized. You need to look at metropolitan areas, because it
1663 may be the State is divided up in a way that neither side has
1664 enough, but the area has critical mass. I hope you pursue
1665 that. I don't want to comment now on that because the
1666 gentleman has yielded to me, but thank you.

1667 I thank our other two witnesses, as well.

1668 Mr. MCHENRY. I thank my friend, Mr. Shays.

1669 Mr. Paulison, we appreciate your leadership. You have
1670 had an enormous record of public service. This is a
1671 culmination of a career well trained for you.

1672 There are a couple of things that I think are important
1673 as you have an ongoing rebuilding FEMA, ensuring that not
1674 only the National Guard but State and local authorities are
1675 incorporated and the private sector. Located in my District
1676 is Lowe's Home Improvements. Well, they have a financial

1677 interest in making sure two by fours and rakes and shovels
1678 and chain saws get to affected areas, and they do this very
1679 well. They have a whole facility dedicated to this. I am
1680 sure Home Depot, as well as the big box retailers like
1681 Wal-Mart, all have that facility up and running.

1682 What have you done to coordinate the private sector
1683 response?

1684 Mr. PAULISON. One of the biggest issues that I see in
1685 hurricanes, particularly being raised in south Florida, is
1686 getting those businesses back up and running as quickly as
1687 possible and building that resiliency. The Stafford Act does
1688 not allow us to assist private businesses. What we can do is
1689 work with them and lecture to them and talk to them how do
1690 they build resiliency into their business so they can get
1691 back up and running.

1692 Mr. MCHENRY. With all due respect, Mr. Paulison, that is
1693 not the issue. I am asking if you are asking them for help.

1694 Mr. PAULISON. I misunderstood.

1695 Mr. MCHENRY. I will tell you--

1696 Mr. PAULISON. We are. Yes, sir. Can I finish?

1697 Mr. MCHENRY. I will tell you that they have the
1698 capability, they have the technology, they have the ability,
1699 and, based on what I have seen out of FEMA prior to your
1700 service, FEMA doesn't have it, but these private sector
1701 entities do.

1702 So I am not asking you to assist a private sector
1703 company; I am asking if you are asking them to assist you,
1704 because I will tell you this: Wal-Mart could get bottled
1705 water there. They could get those trucks of ice that were
1706 never delivered, the tens of millions of dollars we spent on
1707 ice for Katrina that was never delivered. I am sure Wal-Mart
1708 could get it there. I am sure Yellow Freight could find a
1709 way to get it there. What are you doing to incorporate them?

1710 Mr. PAULISON. Yes, sir, we are, and what we are trying
1711 to do is to bring FEMA into the 21st century logistics-wise
1712 and use some of those business models that you just talked
1713 about.

1714 We are meeting with the business roundtable, with the
1715 National Chamber of Commerce, with other groups like that to
1716 tap into that expertise. We are working with a couple of
1717 groups now to bring perhaps some interns from the private
1718 sector into FEMA to help us learn from them of how they move
1719 these types of logistics. The people that I am hiring in the
1720 logistics area have that type of expertise.

1721 We are definitely looking to that business model. We
1722 are talking with them. We are talking to the Home Depots, we
1723 are talking to the Wal-Mart's about how do we do that, how do
1724 we do a better job of providing logistics and not necessarily
1725 taking it all on ourselves but use that third-party logistics
1726 where we can tap into what they already do and what they do

1727 | best as far as moving supplies.

1728 | Mr. MCHENRY. The thought I have is that, instead of
1729 | trying to rebuild what is out there in the private sector,
1730 | utilize the private sector, whether it is Lowe's or Wal-Mart
1731 | or even grocery stores that have an interest in getting
1732 | products to the marketplace. They just need some assistance.

1733 | To that end, what about first responders' ID cards? For
1734 | instance, if the home improvement store, like Lowe's that I
1735 | am familiar with, if they have employees that are trying to
1736 | get to the facility, if we had an ID card for first
1737 | responders they would be able to get through maybe two or
1738 | three jurisdictions in order to get to the facility that
1739 | otherwise they couldn't get to because they don't have an
1740 | identification card that refers to them as first responders.
1741 | Same for local fire departments, volunteer fire departments.
1742 | Where are we in this process for a first responder ID card?

1743 | Mr. PAULISON. We are looking at a credentialing system
1744 | for this Country for first responders--nurses, doctors,
1745 | paramedics, all those types of things. Mr. Geldhart, who is
1746 | going to testify on the next panel on the National Capital
1747 | Region about what they are doing is a prototype system here,
1748 | to see if this system is going to work and how we are going
1749 | to use that.

1750 | But what you are saying is actually right on target.
1751 | That is where we want to go. We want to credential people so

1752 | if I am going to the disaster scene if I am the local fire
1753 | chief or the local mayor I know who is coming into my
1754 | district and I know what credentials they have.

1755 | Hurricane Andrew, I had 3,500 fire fighters show up to
1756 | help out. I didn't know who they were or were they really
1757 | fire fighters. At the World Trade Center we had the same
1758 | type of thing--people crawling on that rubble pile that we
1759 | don't know who they were. That has got to stop.

1760 | The national credentialing system is where we really
1761 | need to go, and we are working on that right now.

1762 | Mr. MCHENRY. Thank you. I appreciate your comments.

1763 | Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1764 | Mr. KUCINICH. I thank the gentleman.

1765 | As I think everyone is aware now, there is a vote on.
1766 | We are going to entertain questions from Mr. Towns of New
1767 | York, then the Committee will recess for the vote. I am
1768 | going to ask the witnesses to return because we have more
1769 | questions.

1770 | Mr. Towns, would you proceed? Thank you.

1771 | Mr. TOWNS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

1772 | Mr. Paulison, on May the 15th Chairman Thompson of
1773 | Mississippi, who is the chairman of the Homeland Security
1774 | Committee, held a hearing on hurricane season preparedness.
1775 | During that hearing, Mr. Paulison, you were asked for an
1776 | approximation of the NRP, when would it be ready, the

1777 National Response Plan. Let me quote. This is what you
1778 said: ``I can tell you that we are working hard to get it
1779 done in the June time frame and not in July.'' Now, Mr.
1780 Paulison, this is the last day of July, the last day. My
1781 question is: what is the problem?

1782 Mr. PAULISON. It is not a problem; it is the issue of
1783 trying to make sure we get it right. We set some artificial
1784 time lines for ourselves to get this thing done. That is
1785 when I testified in front of Mr. Thompson's Committee, and I
1786 was sincere about that, but I was not going to put it out
1787 just to meet an artificial date.

1788 We are now distributing the National Response Plan among
1789 the rest of our Federal partners. We will have a copy to
1790 this Committee hopefully within a week, and then we are going
1791 to put it out for review to the first responder and emergency
1792 management world out there on a 30-day review very shortly.
1793 So we are going to do that.

1794 Yes, it is not where I wanted it to be, but we do have
1795 an actual response plan in place. It is not like we are
1796 operating without a plan. The plan is there. The one we are
1797 reviewing now brings some of the Post-Katrina Reform Act
1798 issues into it. We wanted to make it less bureaucratic, more
1799 readable. We wanted to make it smaller, take some of the
1800 annexes out and put them on the web so it wasn't such a bulky
1801 document.

1802 Mr. Towns, I just want to make sure that when it goes
1803 out it is as right as I can get it, and that is the reason
1804 for the delay. But those dates were artificial. I set up to
1805 really push myself and our team to get it out. We didn't
1806 meet those dates, but we are going to get it out very
1807 shortly.

1808 Mr. TOWNS. We are into the hurricane season already, so,
1809 Mr. Jadacki, could you comment on that? I mean, here we are.
1810 We entered the hurricane season. The States have to prepare
1811 for incorporating into their plans. I mean, there has to be
1812 coordination here. This has not happened. I would like to
1813 get your comments on that.

1814 Mr. JADACKI. We did a lot of work immediately after
1815 Hurricane Katrina. We spent about five weeks on the ground
1816 down in the Gulf area. One of the things that we found was
1817 that there was a lot of confusion that was created as a
1818 result of the National Response Plan being rolled out really
1819 for the first time with some of the names and incident
1820 command system and those types of things. There was a lot of
1821 confusion. I think a lot of the reports that have been
1822 written as a result of that, lessons learned, identified the
1823 need to revise the National Response Plan so the clear roles,
1824 the roles of the FCO versus the PFO and those types of
1825 things, are clearly defined so people know.

1826 The fact that the National Response Plan is not issued

1827 | yet doesn't clarify those roles yet. As we are in the midst
1828 | of hurricane season, I think there may still be some
1829 | confusion if there is another catastrophic event.

1830 | Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Chairman, I know we have a vote so I am
1831 | going to yield back.

1832 | But I want to let you know, Mr. Paulison, that this is
1833 | very disturbing. I think that if there is a need for
1834 | additional help or resources or whatever it is, I think you
1835 | need to yell out and let us know, because we are talking
1836 | about the lives of people. Of course, as you heard from the
1837 | comments coming from the various members of this Committee,
1838 | we are troubled by what is going on. Of course, I must say
1839 | that you did not relieve my pain.

1840 | With that, I yield back.

1841 | Mr. KUCINICH. I thank the gentleman. I want to just say
1842 | to the gentleman that when we come back after the votes we
1843 | are going to continue this line of questioning. Staff has
1844 | provided us with some additional information that is critical
1845 | to being able to establish where we are at this moment.

1846 | I thank the gentleman.

1847 | The Chair recognizes the distinguished gentlewoman,
1848 | Congresswoman Virginia Foxx, for questions, and then as soon
1849 | as you are complete we are going to go right to the vote.

1850 | Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this. I
1851 | am not going to be able to come back afterwards because of a

1852 meeting I have to go to.

1853 I want to say to you, Mr. Paulison, that I share Mr.
1854 Towns' comments and his concerns. You used the word you are
1855 trying to get it right. Do me a favor, try to pick up that
1856 cup in front of you. You picked it up. You didn't try. You
1857 did it. This issue of the plan is a metaphor for what is
1858 wrong with FEMA, and the fact that you are not getting your
1859 plan done in a timely fashion does not give me or the
1860 American people any comfort that you have learned lessons at
1861 FEMA and that you are doing things differently.

1862 When you set that deadline, I respectfully say to you
1863 that you could have done a lot to help the image of FEMA, and
1864 perhaps not just the image but the impact of FEMA, had you
1865 stuck to the deadline, because by not being able to mobilize
1866 within your own Agency, plus with the other agencies to get a
1867 plan done, what does that tell the American people about the
1868 effectiveness of FEMA doing its job? I am not sure why you
1869 couldn't understand that, again, as a metaphor for the whole
1870 problem with FEMA.

1871 You have used words, "We are going to start acting
1872 like," "hopefully," "trying." I would again
1873 respectfully say to you that those are words that indicate in
1874 the future something is going to happen; it is not happening
1875 now. It has been a long time since the failures of FEMA with
1876 Katrina, and I think that it is time for action, not trying.

1877 Mr. KUCINICH. Would the gentleman like to respond?

1878 Mr. PAULISON. Again, the National Response Plan is in
1879 place. We are simply making it a document much easier to
1880 use.

1881 Mr. KUCINICH. The Chair would like to observe that the
1882 gentlelady's remarks are quite perceptive, because when you
1883 listen to the language about whether there is preparedness,
1884 it is one thing to say you are going to try, you are hoping,
1885 but it is another thing to be able to do. So when the
1886 Committee comes back we are going to go to a second round of
1887 questions quite specific about the level of preparation, and
1888 so I want to thank the members of the panel. I would ask
1889 that you remain in the vicinity. The Chair is going to
1890 declare a one-half hour recess and we will return for
1891 questions immediately after votes.

1892 Thank you very much.

1893 [Recess.]

1894 Mr. KUCINICH. The Committee will come to order.

1895 I want to thank the witnesses for remaining, and we are
1896 going to begin a second round of questions. We just had a
1897 series of votes, but Members may be rejoining us. They will
1898 also be entitled to ask some questions.

1899 I would like to begin by sharing with the members of the
1900 panel a story, and it is a story that relates to
1901 preparedness.

1902 About 30 years ago I had the honor of being elected
1903 mayor of the city of Cleveland. At that time there was a
1904 very short transition to the office. The election was on a
1905 Tuesday, and the following Monday the new mayor was sworn in.

1906 A few weeks into my term we were visited by an
1907 unexpected snow storm. One of the worst storms of the
1908 century hit the city of Cleveland. I was the new mayor, and
1909 I was intent on demonstrating to the people that the city was
1910 ready, because we had a wonderful workforce in the service
1911 department that operated the snow plows, and the personnel we
1912 had were just the best. So I called my new service director,
1913 Morris Pettis, and with the feeling of a new general I called
1914 and I said, Director, Pettis, get those snow plows out on the
1915 road. Clear those streets. We are going to show the people
1916 of Cleveland that we can do the job. He said, Yes, sir.

1917 About two-and-a-half hours later I got a call from
1918 Director Pettis, and he said, Mayor, we don't have any snow
1919 plows. We had the manpower, but they didn't have the plows,
1920 because the previous administration had sent all the plows
1921 out to be repaired and didn't provide that the city would
1922 have equipment to be able to move the snow. The result? Our
1923 city was buried in snow for weeks.

1924 Now, I am sharing this story with you for an obvious
1925 reason. We had terrifically prepared workers that could do
1926 the job. They didn't have the equipment.

1927 Now, Mr. Jadacki, your job is to review this
1928 preparedness that the Department asserts. Is the United
1929 States prepared for the next catastrophic disaster?

1930 Mr. JADACKI. We are better prepared than we were two
1931 years ago.

1932 Mr. KUCINICH. That is not saying a lot, my friend.

1933 Mr. JADACKI. Right.

1934 Mr. KUCINICH. You don't want to use that as a benchmark.

1935 Mr. JADACKI. Right.

1936 Mr. KUCINICH. I will give you another shot at it.

1937 Mr. JADACKI. Okay. We are not there yet. A lot
1938 remains--

1939 Mr. KUCINICH. Where are we not yet? I want you to be
1940 quite specific.

1941 Mr. JADACKI. I don't think we will ever get to an end
1942 point. It is always evolving. There are always new threats.
1943 There are always new types of disasters, always changes. So
1944 if you are looking for an end point, I can't say when that is
1945 going to be.

1946 Mr. KUCINICH. You know what I am looking for? I am
1947 looking for you to be quite specific. Plan, logistics,
1948 equipment, manpower, womanpower--I want specifics. This is
1949 part of your job. You are, in fact, the Deputy Inspector
1950 General in the Office of the Inspector General, Department of
1951 Homeland Security. You are the person that Congress counts

1952 | on to oversee and look over the level of preparedness.

1953 | Mr. JADACKI. Okay. I will tell you that in catastrophic
1954 | planning more needs to be done. We are not there yet. I
1955 | will tell you in logistics that a lot more needs to be done.
1956 | There are systems that are getting into place, but more needs
1957 | to be done.

1958 | Mr. KUCINICH. Where are we not that we should be? Please
1959 | be specific. This is too general, and the whole idea of
1960 | emergency preparedness is to be quite specific. We have had
1961 | a bipartisan hearing where Members are looking for specifics.
1962 | Generalities won't do. Please be specific.

1963 | Mr. JADACKI. I don't think the Nation is ready for the
1964 | next catastrophic event or series of events if it occurs
1965 | because of some of the issues that were discussed before.
1966 | The National Response Plan is still an issue that is
1967 | evolving. There is communications, there is confusion.

1968 | There is a draft that is out right now, but I think that
1969 | if we had another catastrophic event right now there would be
1970 | some improvement but we are not there yet. I can't give you
1971 | a percentage of how close we are, but we are not there yet in
1972 | a number of areas, probably hundreds of areas: acquisitions,
1973 | pre-positioning supplies, logistics, the National Response
1974 | Plan, staffing--I think FEMA is making strides in getting
1975 | staffing. We are not there yet--State communication. I
1976 | still think there are issues that can be resolved in all

1977 | those areas, and more.

1978 | Mr. KUCINICH. Catastrophic disaster exercises, are we
1979 | there yet?

1980 | Mr. JADACKI. We are not there yet.

1981 | Mr. KUCINICH. Okay. Information technology
1982 | capabilities, are we there yet?

1983 | Mr. JADACKI. There are improvements there, but we are
1984 | not there yet.

1985 | Mr. KUCINICH. Funding, are we there yet?

1986 | Mr. JADACKI. No, we are not there yet.

1987 | Mr. KUCINICH. Leadership, are we there yet?

1988 | Mr. JADACKI. No.

1989 | Mr. KUCINICH. Okay. We are not there yet.

1990 | Mr. JADACKI. Right.

1991 | Mr. KUCINICH. Okay. I think it would be very helpful if
1992 | you would provide this Committee with the list of exactly
1993 | what remains to be done in order for the American people to
1994 | be assured that their Government will be able to respond in a
1995 | way that they can be confident.

1996 | How long with I don't take you to be able to put
1997 | together a detailed report going over the areas that you have
1998 | just basically off-the-cuff responded to? How long would it
1999 | take you to create the list and then let us know where the
2000 | deficiencies are so that we may be able to track the level of
2001 | readiness and provide resources or whatever needs to be done

2002 | in order to encourage the readiness? How long would it take
2003 | you?

2004 | Mr. JADACKI. I would say at least six months to put
2005 | together a report of that magnitude.

2006 | Mr. KUCINICH. Wow. Is there something you could do in a
2007 | few days so that you could help us, at least on an interim
2008 | basis?

2009 | Mr. JADACKI. We can probably do a high-level review
2010 | based on some of the work we have done over the past couple
2011 | of years and some of our experience dealing with some of the
2012 | FEMA activities in a short period of time. But if you are
2013 | looking for a more comprehensive review, that would probably
2014 | take longer.

2015 | Mr. KUCINICH. But just from a short period of time, how
2016 | long would it take you to be able to at least notify this
2017 | Committee of the level of preparedness?

2018 | Mr. JADACKI. I think to do a high-level review, probably
2019 | 90 days we can do a high-level score-card-type review.

2020 | Mr. KUCINICH. I think it would be helpful to have a
2021 | score-card-type review, but let's go to a shorter term here.
2022 | What are the critical areas that you think we need to focus
2023 | on for an immediate improvement in preparedness in the event
2024 | of another hurricane, let's say?

2025 | Mr. JADACKI. I think the lines of communication are
2026 | critical. I think the roles of the various parties at the

2027 Federal, State, and local level. I think a clear
2028 understanding of the FCO's responsibility versus the PFO's
2029 responsibility is critical. I think interoperability among
2030 the various first responders is critical, and I think
2031 logistics is probably a critical thing that needs to take
2032 place now in the midst of hurricane season--supplies, those
2033 types of things. I also think coordination with other
2034 Federal agencies I think is also critical, too, the
2035 prescribed mission assignments and those types of things.

2036 Mr. KUCINICH. Just so you understand this approach in
2037 this hearing, this isn't a ``gotcha'' hearing. I am not
2038 interested in that. I want to see what kind of guidance FEMA
2039 could receive and that the National Guard could receive so
2040 that whatever resources are available right now would be put
2041 to the best use in the event that there was some type of
2042 disaster, so it is in that spirit that I think it would be
2043 important for the Inspector General's office to provide some
2044 immediate response to the Committee so that we can look at it
2045 now. Even 90 days might be a problem. I mean, there are
2046 some areas--you just told us a few areas--catastrophic
2047 disaster exercises, for example, Mr. Paulison. The Inspector
2048 General's Office, you are not there. This relates to a
2049 question that Eleanor Holmes Norton raised at the beginning.
2050 Your answer was somewhat divergent.

2051 We all understand that real-life exercises require a

2052 | vast movement. I don't think she was asking about that, but
2053 | I am just giving you the concerns that members of this
2054 | Committee have about the level of preparedness. Your job is
2055 | to say you are going to do everything you can to get ready.
2056 | I understand that. You made it very clear.

2057 | Representative Virginia Foxx also made it clear that we
2058 | have to look at the rhetoric here. We can't soft-soap this.
2059 | We can't tell the American people yes, we are ready, and not
2060 | be. We need to be very candid with the American people.

2061 | I am going to ask Mr. Jadacki to work with FEMA and the
2062 | National Guard. And I would like to engage my colleague
2063 | here, who has actually spent more time than anybody on this
2064 | Committee on this, Mr. Davis, in assisting in this line of
2065 | inquiry.

2066 | Do you have any recommendations as to what would be
2067 | helpful to get the Committee up to speed so we get a good
2068 | read of where we are so we can know where we need to push, my
2069 | friend?

2070 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Well, I mean, there are a lot of
2071 | things. We have talked about it. I think that the test runs
2072 | that you do are very, very important. As you know, they did
2073 | a Hurricane Pam prior to Katrina, which went fairly well, but
2074 | when Katrina came it was so overwhelming we didn't follow the
2075 | models that had been set there. But, as I said in my opening
2076 | remarks, this isn't just like a spare tire you can take out

2077 | of the trunk and hope it works; you have to constantly be
2078 | testing, you have to be asking tough questions. I think it
2079 | would be good for the Committee to understand some of those
2080 | models that you are looking at, that you are simulating and
2081 | testing again, to see where the weaknesses are.

2082 | One of the difficulties you had in the whole Department
2083 | of Homeland Security is you took 22 different agencies and
2084 | 170,000 employees and put them under one roof with a lot of
2085 | different cultures and a lot of different missions, and it is
2086 | a work in progress. Just getting the computer systems to mix
2087 | and match up and work across platforms, that we give them a
2088 | FISMA grade every year, and it has been bad because yours is
2089 | as bad as your weakest link.

2090 | This is a tremendous undertaking. What we have tried to
2091 | do with FEMA is kind of take you out of that and make you
2092 | autonomous, so that when there is a crisis you have access to
2093 | every asset of Government in whatever agency it is. We saw
2094 | in Katrina it didn't all come as quickly as we would have
2095 | liked. Now, part of that was the fact that we weren't
2096 | coordinated locally. We didn't have that. But some of these
2097 | simulations let us know very early on what is happening, how
2098 | quickly you can get access to all of the elements that the
2099 | Government has put together.

2100 | Katrina was an overwhelming, unforgiving storm, but as
2101 | we look back at it there were so many little mistakes in this

2102 | storm that was so unforgiving they have become exaggerated.
2103 | The prospects for this year and the projections for the
2104 | hurricanes this year are not good, so it would be helpful to
2105 | know what simulations they are using, Mr. Chairman, what we
2106 | are testing against, and what weaknesses appear, because
2107 | nothing ever worked perfectly even in the simulation.

2108 | Mr. KUCINICH. And I would like to add to my colleague's
2109 | suggestion that 20 years ago there was computer software out
2110 | there, SimCity, where actually it was kind of a test of
2111 | logistics of what do you need to be able to manage a city
2112 | under different circumstances. I think that it would be
2113 | useful, as Mr. Davis said, to look at where you are with that
2114 | kind of modeling that would enable the broader discussion
2115 | among all the operations in Government.

2116 | Would you like to respond, Mr. Paulison?

2117 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Could I ask one quick question,
2118 | too? The other question is just having key personnel there.
2119 | I mean, this personnel is an issue in every Government agency
2120 | in key positions, being able to attract and retain the best
2121 | and the brightest. This is an agency, again, where expertise
2122 | and experience are at a premium.

2123 | Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Paulison?

2124 | Mr. PAULISON. And actually we have done very well in
2125 | that area as far as bringing the right people in.

2126 | Let me talk about the exercises you talked about.

2127 Mr. KUCINICH. Go ahead, sir.

2128 Mr. PAULISON. Since 2005 we have a course at the
2129 Emergency Management Institute called the Integrated
2130 Emergency Management Course. We bring 70 people from a
2131 particular city into Emmitsburg and keep them for a week and
2132 walk through similar things. We have done 134 cities since
2133 that time to bring them through that course, and hundreds
2134 before then. Salt Lake City went through just before the
2135 Olympics. Oklahoma City went through it before the bombing,
2136 and other cities. We just brought New Orleans in to bring
2137 the top administrators in the individual cities, because we
2138 know that response is at that local level and they have to be
2139 ready because they are the first responders.

2140 Mr. KUCINICH. And I think that what you have just said
2141 confirms that you have done some response capabilities with
2142 respect to terrorism scenarios. But, according to Mr.
2143 Jadacki, you haven't done a natural catastrophic disaster
2144 test run.

2145 Mr. PAULISON. What we do on the catastrophic--

2146 Mr. KUCINICH. Is that correct?

2147 Mr. PAULISON. First of all, we bought in planners into
2148 FEMA that we have never had before. We just hired 13
2149 operational planners. I was incredulous to find out we
2150 didn't have those people in place. But we are doing
2151 catastrophic planning right now. One is a hurricane in south

2152 Florida, going through the Miami Dade and Broward County,
2153 Palm Beach area. Probably six million people live in that
2154 area--catastrophic plan around Lake Okechobee, catastrophic
2155 planning for the New Orleans, Louisiana/Mississippi area, and
2156 catastrophic planning for the New Madrid earth fault, and
2157 also catastrophic plan for California for a major earthquake
2158 out there. So we are now putting those plans in place and
2159 doing them to make sure we have those rock solid plans.

2160 The exercises are extremely important also. We
2161 inherited the training and exercise program of the
2162 Post-Katrina Reform Act and brought those into FEMA. That is
2163 allowing us to integrate like we could not do before. We can
2164 do some things now that we could not do before, where we had
2165 a separate training section over in DHS and FEMA was doing
2166 its own thing. Now it is all together.

2167 So the work that the Committee did to help get that
2168 through is invaluable for us as far as making sure that our
2169 cities and our States are going to be ready for these type of
2170 disasters.

2171 Mr. KUCINICH. Well, apropro of what Mr. Davis just
2172 said, I have here the most recent report from the
2173 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which, as you
2174 know, is an assembly of the world's most famous and leading
2175 scientists. On page eight of this report, table SPM.2, they
2176 project--and I would ask you to follow this carefully--that

2177 ``the likelihood of future trends, based on projections for
2178 the 21st century, for intense tropical cyclone activity
2179 increases; likely, increased incidents of extreme high sea
2180 level; likely, high precipitation events; frequency
2181 increases, very likely.``

2182 Without objection, I would like to include this in the
2183 record of the hearing.

2184 [The report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate
2185 Change follows:]

2186 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

2187 Mr. KUCINICH. I would ask Mr. Paulison, can you tell
2188 this Committee if FEMA is or is not planning for any effects
2189 attributable to calculation?

2190 Mr. PAULISON. I am making sure that this organization is
2191 ready to respond, regardless of what comes our way. The
2192 prediction of hurricanes has not been very scientific. Last
2193 year we were predicted to have a lot of hurricanes; we did
2194 not have them. So far we have had none this year. We do
2195 have one storm out there north of Bermuda. But we are going
2196 to be ready, regardless of what the calculation people say to
2197 make sure yes, we are getting ready for that.

2198 Mr. KUCINICH. Okay.

2199 Mr. PAULISON. We are going to be ready for that. I am
2200 trying to be as positive as I can.

2201 Mr. KUCINICH. Do you have that as a matter of policy,
2202 though? I mean, for example, in your policy division, which
2203 you have developed, does the policy division have a policy on
2204 global warming?

2205 Mr. PAULISON. FEMA does not have a policy on global
2206 warming. We have a policy that says this organization is
2207 going to be ready to respond to disasters, whether they are
2208 natural disasters, whether they come in bunches or they come
2209 one at a time.

2210 Mr. KUCINICH. But does FEMA have a position that
2211 calculation would have no impact on the kind of natural

2212 | disasters that we are supposed to deal with?

2213 | Mr. PAULISON. I am not a climatologist nor am I a
2214 | meteorologist, so I don't know what impact the climate change
2215 | is going to have on natural disasters. All I am telling you
2216 | is this agency is ready to respond, and we are going to
2217 | continue to be ready to respond.

2218 | Mr. KUCINICH. Did you have an interest, though, on the
2219 | impact of calculation on creating natural disasters? Is that
2220 | something that has occurred to you?

2221 | Mr. PAULISON. Well, of course it would. Any time we get
2222 | predictions that there is going to be something worse coming
2223 | on down the road--

2224 | Mr. KUCINICH. You don't dismiss that out of hand?

2225 | Mr. PAULISON. No, sir. No, sir.

2226 | Mr. KUCINICH. I just was curious about that.

2227 | What I would like to do, since Representative Jindal is
2228 | here and has not yet had a chance to ask questions, with the
2229 | permission of Mr. Davis we could perhaps refer to Mr. Jindal.

2230 | You have the floor for five minutes. Thank you.

2231 | Mr. JINDAL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Mr.
2232 | Davis. Thank you for allowing me to sit in on the Committee,
2233 | and thank you also to the Committee for allowing me to
2234 | participate in the previous hearing on the trailers and the
2235 | formaldehyde hearing.

2236 | Mr. Paulison, it is good to see you again. I want to

2237 | thank each of the witnesses for their testimony.

2238 | I have several questions. Mr. Chairman, with your

2239 | consent I would like to submit my written statement for the

2240 | record, if there is no objection.

2241 | Mr. KUCINICH. Without objection.

2242 | [Prepared statement of Mr. Jindal follows:]

2243 | ***** INSERT *****

2244 Mr. JINDAL. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2245 I should have asked for more, Tom.

2246 Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Without objection.

2247 Mr. JINDAL. I have several questions also to submit for
2248 the record, but I have two points I really want to make with
2249 the time I have got. The first has to do with the regional
2250 office infrastructure. You know, back after the hurricane
2251 struck in 2005, the White House released its assessment, the
2252 Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina, Lessons Learned:
2253 Identifying Critical Flaws in the Nation's Response,
2254 including, in terms of preparing this, an absence of regional
2255 planning and coordination.

2256 According to the report, DHS did not have the needed
2257 personnel or resources in the regional offices. This led to
2258 reduced communications and an understanding of on-site needs,
2259 further delaying an effective response.

2260 That report actually recommended an increase in regional
2261 response capabilities, specifically called on DHS to build
2262 regional structures to integrate State and local strategies,
2263 and capabilities to encourage regional partnerships. Indeed,
2264 in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Congress mandated that
2265 DHS set up a regional structure. On April 28, 2005, four
2266 months before Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck the Gulf
2267 Coast, I actually called on Secretary Chertoff to follow
2268 through with a regional framework in which Louisiana would

2269 | have been equipped to facilitate a regional response.

2270 | My first point, my first question is this. When you
2271 | contrast the Coast Guard's response, an agency within DHS,
2272 | versus FEMA's and other agencies', there is a much more
2273 | robust, much more effective response, I think partially due
2274 | to the fact the Coast Guard had boots on the ground before
2275 | the storms, they knew the area, they knew the people. That
2276 | wasn't their first experience.

2277 | Given the fact the Gulf Coast will be hit in the future
2278 | by future hurricanes, future storms, certainly we have been a
2279 | long-time advocate for a robust DHS regional office in the
2280 | greater New Orleans area in Louisiana.

2281 | My first question is a leading question, but my first
2282 | question, the same question I asked the Secretary in 2005,
2283 | Don't you agree an enhanced regional structure could improve
2284 | the flow of communication between Washington and local
2285 | emergency management officials? I know you all have staffed
2286 | up some of the regional administrators, but couldn't we do
2287 | more to have a more robust presence on the ground?

2288 | Mr. PAULISON. Yes, sir, we can and we are.

2289 | Mr. JINDAL. I will follow up in writing. One of the
2290 | reasons I want to spend some of my time talking about this, I
2291 | do want to continue to get public commitments, because I do
2292 | think there is an opportunity. New Orleans is building a
2293 | Federal city concept, bringing together different Federal

2294 agencies. There is already a regional headquarters there for
2295 the Coast Guard, for Customs, for different Federal agencies
2296 that are part of DHS. It just seems like it would be a
2297 natural place to consolidate and get those synergies.

2298 I thank you for your commitment to that. Like I said, I
2299 would like to follow up on that with you.

2300 My second question is: you all have done an assessment,
2301 and you refer to this in your statement earlier about the
2302 gaps and preparedness among the different States. I know in
2303 Louisiana, in part, you identified some gaps when it came to
2304 in-place sheltering, when it comes to transportation and
2305 other things in terms of being prepared. This is especially
2306 important considering the fact we are in the middle of
2307 another hurricane season.

2308 Last year we passed in Congress the Post-Katrina
2309 Emergency Reform Act that required FEMA to provide assistance
2310 to the States in terms of evacuations. I also added some
2311 language to the Defense authorization bill requiring the
2312 Secretary of Defense to pre-position pre-identified assets
2313 such as medical supplies, food, water, and communications
2314 equipment to help the Department of Defense help us, to help
2315 the Department of Defense respond to requests from civilian
2316 authorities. The provision also called for Defense to work
2317 with DHS to develop concept plans to maximize military
2318 support.

2319 You talked about the gaps in Louisiana, and some of
2320 those I have talked about. given the directives in last
2321 year's legislation, what is the status on your work with
2322 Louisiana in providing additional shelter space,
2323 pre-positioned supplies, and what can we do to utilize the
2324 Homeland Security grant program to help meet those needs that
2325 are identified in that gap analysis?

2326 Mr. PAULISON. Particularly in Louisiana, but we have
2327 done it pretty much from Texas all the way to Maine, but
2328 particularly in Louisiana we have been working very closely
2329 with the State and the cities to make sure we have adequate
2330 shelters identified to put people in, who is going to staff
2331 them, who is going to put supplies in them. Also, for
2332 transportation modes in place, how many people do we think
2333 are going to self-evacuate in their own vehicles, how many
2334 buses without objection we need, do we have ambulance
2335 contracts in place? And the answer is yes to all of those.
2336 We now have identified enough shelter space for the predicted
2337 amount of people that would evacuate out of New Orleans and
2338 out of Louisiana should a hurricane come.

2339 We did it with three States. We did it was Mississippi,
2340 Louisiana, and Alabama, together, because we know what
2341 affects one State affects all the others. This is the most
2342 robust involvement FEMA has had with working with States to
2343 fill those gaps and making sure that we have good, solid

2344 | plans in place to move people out.

2345 | Louisiana really stepped up to the place this year, has
2346 | put bus contracts in place and other things to really help us
2347 | work together as a team to make sure that, if we do have to
2348 | evacuate, that we know where people are going to go and how
2349 | they are going to get there.

2350 | My time has expired. My last point, Mr. Chairman--

2351 | Mr. KUCINICH. I just want the gentleman to know that if
2352 | the gentleman wishes to ask questions for another five
2353 | minutes, I will permit that, because I think that, given the
2354 | fact that you represent Louisiana, you are entitled to this.
2355 | So if you would like to proceed, proceed.

2356 | Mr. JINDAL. Well, I appreciate the chairman's
2357 | indulgence. Thank you. And I thank the Ranking Member, as
2358 | well.

2359 | Mr. KUCINICH. Without objection

2360 | Mr. JINDAL. What I was going to make in my final
2361 | moments--and I appreciate the additional time--is that one of
2362 | the things I would certainly ask FEMA to consider doing is
2363 | providing guidance to the State about the best use of those
2364 | security grant programs to help fill these gaps year in and
2365 | year out.

2366 | I know one of the things we have heard, for example,
2367 | there has been a lot of funding--maybe not enough, but a
2368 | lot--provided, for example, for interoperable communications.

2369 One of the things we are hearing is that if those dollars
2370 aren't coordinated and spent effectively, we may not get that
2371 chance again. We did not have interoperable communications
2372 we needed. We didn't have it in Oklahoma City, we didn't
2373 have it on 9/11, and we certainly didn't have it after
2374 Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. So as you identify gaps, I
2375 would request that FEMA help provide guidance to the State on
2376 what might be the best ways to utilize some of the
2377 discretionary Homeland Security grants to help make sure that
2378 we can address these gaps.

2379 You know, one of the things I added in that language was
2380 requiring coordination with the Department of Defense to
2381 pre-position. I heard your comments before about having
2382 generators for hospitals and wanting to avoid no-bid
2383 contracts, and I applaud you for that. I absolutely agree.
2384 We don't want to be in that same position again where we
2385 don't have adequate food and water supplies. But then we
2386 also don't want to end up paying too much for supplies. We
2387 saw what happened in the last couple of years.

2388 What has been done as far as coordinating with the
2389 Department of Defense? I put that language in there. Has
2390 that taken place to your satisfaction? Is there more that
2391 could be done between the two departments?

2392 Mr. PAULISON. Like I said earlier, we have the best
2393 relationship with the Department of Defense, NORTHCOM, and

2394 National Guard than we have ever had. I know Katrina was a
2395 wake up call for all of us, and we recognize we have to work
2396 together, we have to plan together, we have to train together
2397 so we are not exchanging business cards in the middle of the
2398 disaster.

2399 We have put a Defense coordinating officer in every
2400 region in this Country, every region that FEMA has, to help
2401 with that coordination. We meet. We have a videoconference
2402 with them every week and with NORTHCOM on there. We meet
2403 with the National Guard to make sure that we are coordinated,
2404 we are sharing information, and we are working together as a
2405 team as opposed to working in silos.

2406 We are doing this. We are going to continue doing it.
2407 It is the right thing to do.

2408 Mr. JINDAL. I have two last points. One of the points I
2409 want to make--and I have said this at previous hearings--one
2410 of the things I am going to advocate for, and I would hope
2411 you all would be supportive of this, I think there is a lot
2412 of flexibility in the Stafford Act we have not taken
2413 advantage of, but I do think that there needs to be a
2414 completely different category for the kinds of catastrophes
2415 that were Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

2416 For example, allowing more flexibility on housing,
2417 allowing more flexibility for the assistance. I think we
2418 could have done more with the dollars we ended up spending,

2419 | but too often found ourselves tied by rules--for example, not
2420 | being able to improve public infrastructure; the rules
2421 | requiring us to replace what had sometimes been there before;
2422 | the rules that are preventing the hazard mitigation money to
2423 | help families who are trying to get help through the Road
2424 | Home program.

2425 | I know we have declarations for disasters, but I think
2426 | we need a designation for a catastrophe.

2427 | I want to ask you one of the things. If, not when, if
2428 | we get to that point I would hope that FEMA within the
2429 | Administration would also advocate for that.

2430 | My last question. I know there had been press reports
2431 | that after the hurricanes, after the storms there was
2432 | approximately \$854 million in cash and oil that was pledged
2433 | by foreign governments, but only \$40 million has been used so
2434 | far for disaster victims or for reconstruction. I know there
2435 | were some issues with the State Department. What mechanisms
2436 | have FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security made to
2437 | reduce the bureaucracy to make sure that if there are future
2438 | offers of support that they are handled in a more effective
2439 | way?

2440 | Mr. PAULISON. A major, major problem for us and
2441 | embarrassment, as far as I am concerned, not having a system
2442 | in place to handle donations from our friends in other
2443 | countries, so we have worked with our Office of International

2444 | Affairs, we working with the State Department, working with
2445 | the Department of Homeland Security to make sure that we have
2446 | a plan in place, and we do have a plan in place. One, making
2447 | sure that people understand what our needs are so we are not
2448 | being offered things that we can't use; making sure we have a
2449 | place to put them, and how we are going to distribute those.
2450 | We have put those plans in place so that does not happen
2451 | again.

2452 | We have a lot of friends around this world who offered a
2453 | lot of things. Some of it we could not use, and we should
2454 | have let them know right up front what our needs were and
2455 | what we could use.

2456 | Mr. JINDAL. Even my extended time has expired, but I
2457 | want to ask you one last quick question to make sure I am
2458 | understanding. In your judgment, based on the assessment gap
2459 | and the work you have done, do you feel the Gulf Coast is
2460 | ready, God forbid, if there should be another hurricane on
2461 | the order of magnitude of another Katrina?

2462 | Mr. PAULISON. Congressman, I do. Louisiana is, in my
2463 | opinion, more ready than it has ever been. They have really
2464 | done a great job of putting this organization back together,
2465 | getting on board. We still have issues, as you know because
2466 | you live there, with the parishes not talking to the State.
2467 | The communication system there is not what it should be. But
2468 | as far as what I see happening on the ground, as far as

2469 making preparations for contracts in place, having shelter in
2470 place, willing to make evacuation calls early, and also with
2471 our new policy of, if a State can ask for pre-landfall
2472 declaration, we will help them with that, as any Gulf Coast
2473 State. So I think with all those things in place I am
2474 comfortable we are going to be able to respond there and we
2475 are going to do a good job if a hurricane does come. God
2476 forbid, we don't want one. They surely don't need it right
2477 now with everybody in those mobile homes and trailers. But
2478 yes, they are as ready as I have ever seen them.

2479 Mr. JINDAL. Thank you. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for
2480 your indulgence.

2481 Mr. KUCINICH. I just want Mr. Jindal to know that the
2482 members of this Committee support you and your community and
2483 we want to make sure that all your questions are asked and
2484 that you are satisfied that everything is being done.

2485 When I spoke to Mr. Jadacki earlier, he had said that it
2486 would take six months to be able to get a detailed assessment
2487 of readiness and that perhaps some degree of report might be
2488 available in 90 days.

2489 What I am going to ask you to do is this, Mr.
2490 Jadacki--to at least provide us when we come back in
2491 September, one month from now, with the areas of concern that
2492 you have, and then within 90 days to be able to establish, on
2493 a scale from one to ten, some quantification of the degree of

2494 | readiness, with one being the lowest and ten being the
2495 | highest. If you could do that, it would give this Committee
2496 | some ability to be able to know where we are going.

2497 | Can you respond to that question?

2498 | Mr. JADACKI. Yes. I think we can meet those deadlines.

2499 | Mr. KUCINICH. I think that would be something we would
2500 | find comforting.

2501 | Mr. JADACKI. And that will be working closely with FEMA.

2502 | Mr. KUCINICH. That is appropriate, and we appreciate
2503 | that. And with the Guard, of course.

2504 | Also, before dismissing the first panel, I would just
2505 | ask Mr. Paulison, I want to clarify your answer to my
2506 | previous question. This is a question. Is FEMA
2507 | incorporating the predicted effects of global warming into
2508 | its planning, yes or no?

2509 | Mr. PAULISON. The answer is no. We are planning for the
2510 | worst and hoping for the best, so regardless of what the
2511 | predictions are, we are going to make sure the organization
2512 | can respond to disaster, whether they are hurricanes or
2513 | terrorist event or anything else.

2514 | So do we plan on the weather changing? The answer is
2515 | no. What we do is plan on having hurricanes and dealing with
2516 | them.

2517 | Mr. KUCINICH. Do you think it would be appropriate for
2518 | FEMA to consider the predicted effects of global warming in

2519 | your planning?

2520 | Mr. PAULISON. I do. I think there are modeling tools
2521 | that are out there that we can tap into that we have not been
2522 | that could be useful for us in planning for the future of
2523 | this organization, so the answer is yes.

2524 | Mr. KUCINICH. So will FEMA from this point on
2525 | incorporate the predicted effects of global warming into its
2526 | planning?

2527 | Mr. PAULISON. Yes, sir. We will look at that very
2528 | closely and work with our Science and Technology Department,
2529 | along with other modeling tools that we know we are going to
2530 | have to use to do a better job of planning for the future.

2531 | Mr. KUCINICH. I just want to make sure, as we are moving
2532 | forward now, that we have a clear and concise response from
2533 | FEMA with respect to incorporating predicted effects of
2534 | global warming into planning, because then that relates
2535 | essentially to readiness. So you are saying that you will do
2536 | that?

2537 | Mr. PAULISON. Yes, sir. That is one of those things we
2538 | have to deal with, just like everything else.

2539 | Mr. KUCINICH. You know what? That then is part of the
2540 | new FEMA.

2541 | Mr. PAULISON. Okay.

2542 | Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank the members of the panel
2543 | for their patience and their participation. I want to thank

2544 | you on behalf of ever member of this Committee. We had many
2545 | Members show up for participation today.

2546 | What we are going to do, now that we have concluded the
2547 | testimony from panel one, we have many significant issues
2548 | that will be raised on a second panel that we could not
2549 | address on the first panel, and so I want my staff to
2550 | summarize those issues in a letter to you, Mr. Paulison, so
2551 | that you can address them after the hearing.

2552 | I want to thank you members of the panel--Major General,
2553 | Mr. Paulison, Mr. Jadacki. You are much appreciated and you
2554 | are excused.

2555 | We will now take a five-minute recess to allow for our
2556 | staff to set up the second panel, so five minutes from now we
2557 | will begin.

2558 | Again, thanks to each of you for your service to our
2559 | Country.

2560 | Mr. PAULISON. And, sir, thanks to you also. The
2561 | feedback from this panel is extremely helpful for us in
2562 | putting this organization back on track. Thank you.

2563 | Mr. KUCINICH. Well, we are all working together. Thank
2564 | you.

2565 | Five-minute recess.

2566 | [Recess.]

2567 | Mr. KUCINICH. The Committee will come to order.

2568 | The first witness had to leave to take a flight, so we

2569 | are going to put into the record the testimony of William
2570 | Jenkins, who is Director of Homeland Security and Justice
2571 | Issues at the Government Accountability Office. Without
2572 | objection, we will include his testimony in the record of the
2573 | hearing.

2574 | [Prepared statement of Mr. Jenkins follows:]

2575 | ***** INSERT *****

2576 Mr. KUCINICH. We have a full panel of witnesses, and I
2577 appreciate their attendance.

2578 Mr. Albert Ashwood is the Director of the Oklahoma
2579 Department of Emergency Management and has held that position
2580 for ten years. He joined the State of Oklahoma in 1988 and
2581 has served the department in various positions, including
2582 Deputy Director from 1995 to 1997. In his tenure at the
2583 Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, Mr. Ashwood has
2584 overseen the distribution and administration of over \$500
2585 million in Federal and State aid. He also serves on FEMA's
2586 National Advisory Council and is President of the National
2587 Emergency Management Association.

2588 Thank you, Mr. Ashwood, for being here.

2589 Mr. Christopher Geldhart is Director of the Office of
2590 National Capital Region Coordination in FEMA. Before joining
2591 FEMA in April of 2007, Mr. Geldhart worked for the State of
2592 Maryland as Assistant Director in the Governor's Office of
2593 Homeland Security. He is a 12-year veteran of the United
2594 States Marine Corps, and was formerly a strategy consultant
2595 for the consulting firm of Booz Allen Hamilton.

2596 Thank you for being here.

2597 Mr. Dewayne West is Director of Emergency Services for
2598 Johnston County, North Carolina, where he is responsible for
2599 supervising the emergency management program, fire marshal's
2600 office, and emergency medical services for the county. He

2601 has held this position for almost 20 years. Mr. West is a
2602 certified emergency manager by the International Association
2603 of Emergency Managers, and is a member of many industry
2604 boards and commissions.

2605 Thank you, Mr. West.

2606 Mr. Darrell Darnell is Director of the District of
2607 Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency.
2608 Mr. Darnell is responsible for operating and maintaining the
2609 District's emergency management infrastructure and
2610 coordinating the District's emergency response. Mr. Darnell
2611 joined the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency
2612 after serving as Director of the Urban Areas and Exercise
2613 Program at IEM, a Louisiana-based national disaster and
2614 Homeland Security consulting company, as well as working at
2615 the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland
2616 Security.

2617 Thank you, Mr. Darnell.

2618 And, finally, Professor Kathleen Tierney is Professor of
2619 Sociology and Director of the Natural Hazards Research and
2620 Applications Information Center at the University of
2621 Colorado, Boulder. Professor Tierney has over 20 years of
2622 experience in the disaster field and has conducted research
2623 projects on a wide variety of subjects. She is also the
2624 author of dozens of articles, book chapters, and technical
2625 reports on the social aspects of hazards, disasters, and

2626 risks.

2627 To members of the panel, it is the policy of the
2628 Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to swear in all
2629 witnesses before they testify. I would ask that you please
2630 rise and raise your right hand.

2631 [Witnesses sworn.]

2632 Mr. KUCINICH. Let the record reflect that all of the
2633 witnesses answered in the affirmative.

2634 Members of the panel, as we requested with panel one, we
2635 ask that each witness give an oral summary of his or her
2636 testimony, and keep the summary under five minutes in
2637 duration. I want you to bear in mind that the complete
2638 record of your written testimony will be included in the
2639 record of the hearing.

2640 Let us begin with Mr. Ashwood. You may proceed, sir.
2641 Thanks again for your attendance.

2642 STATEMENTS OF ALBERT ASHWOOD, DIRECTOR, OKLAHOMA STATE
2643 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL EMERGENCY
2644 MANAGEMENT AGENCY; CHRISTOPHER GELDHART, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF
2645 NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION COORDINATION; DEWAYNE WEST, DIRECTOR
2646 OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FOR JOHNSTON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA,
2647 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES, THE INTERNATIONAL
2648 ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MANAGERS; DARRELL DARNELL, DIRECTOR,
2649 DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY
2650 MANAGEMENT AGENCY; KATHLEEN TIERNEY, DIRECTOR, NATURAL
2651 HAZARDS CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, BOULDER

2652 STATEMENT OF ALBERT ASHWOOD

2653 Mr. ASHWOOD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It is a
2654 pleasure to be here today to express my views on the current
2655 collaboration between FEMA and the States on the issues of
2656 preparedness, response, and recovery in the post-Katrina
2657 environment.

2658 I come here today as the current President of the
2659 National Emergency Management Association, which represents
2660 State emergency management directors throughout the Nation
2661 and U.S. territories, and also as the State Director of
2662 Emergency Management in Oklahoma.

2663 Nearly two years ago I testified before the House

2664 | Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, with the
2665 | topic being Recovering from Katrina: Ensuring that FEMA is up
2666 | to the Task. At that time I addressed the issue by asking
2667 | which FEMA was being assessed, the one prior to the
2668 | development of the Department of Homeland Security or the
2669 | shell which was in place at the time Katrina made landfall.
2670 | I talked about FEMA success stories of the 1990s and the long
2671 | evolutionary trek FEMA took to get there. I talked about the
2672 | disassembling of FEMA under the Department of Homeland
2673 | Security structure and the total de-emphasis of natural
2674 | disasters from September 11th, 2001, through July of 2005. I
2675 | also told the Committee that moving FEMA out from under DHS
2676 | and returning its funding and manpower to the pre-DHS levels
2677 | would be a way to return FEMA to the level of efficiency we
2678 | should all expect.

2679 | Today, however, I cannot honestly say these
2680 | recommendations would be enough. I still personally believe
2681 | FEMA should be an independent agency, working directly for
2682 | the President, but I would be naive if I were to sum up all
2683 | the Agency's problems under this one issue.

2684 | I believe all current issues can be summarized in one
2685 | topic: communication. In my 19 years of emergency
2686 | management, I have never experienced a more polarized
2687 | environment between State and Federal Government. It seems
2688 | that the Katrina Federal legacy is one of minimizing exposure

2689 | for the next event and ensuring future focus is centered on
2690 | State and local preparedness efforts.

2691 | The perfect example of this attitude is illustrated in
2692 | the National Plan review, which was conducted in 2006.
2693 | States were told that this was an opportunity for all levels
2694 | of government to sit together, review plans, identify
2695 | shortfalls, and develop a strategy to address those
2696 | shortfalls, both operationally and financially in the future.

2697 | It seemed like a wonderful concept, right up until the time
2698 | the national planning report card was published for each
2699 | State; then the entire exercise seemed little more than an
2700 | opportunity for the Federal Government to tell the press, We
2701 | told you the States weren't prepared.

2702 | Also, consider the National Response Plan--excuse me,
2703 | now called the National Response Framework--which is to be
2704 | released by DHS in the near future. You will be told that
2705 | this national document was developed over many hours of
2706 | collaboration between all levels of government and all
2707 | disciplines. Let me be the first to say that this statement
2708 | is totally inaccurate. I have queried my colleagues at both
2709 | the State and local level and realized that no one knows what
2710 | information this document contains, and we won't until we
2711 | read it like everyone else in this room.

2712 | Then there are the efforts currently being performed
2713 | along the Gulf Coast to ensure that every future evacuee is

2714 | accounted for and the public's expectation of government will
2715 | be met. Millions of dollars are being spent on Federal plans
2716 | to airlift individuals from Louisiana to Oklahoma, Arkansas,
2717 | Tennessee, and other host States, yet the arithmetic doesn't
2718 | work. The contractors can't find enough States to pledge
2719 | support to host the number of evacuees in the New Orleans
2720 | area, alone; therefore, I am constantly receiving calls from
2721 | FEMA saying, Can't you handle another 20,000, another 30,000?
2722 | We will make sure your costs are reimbursed.

2723 | Unfortunately, it seems a bigger issue is the revelation
2724 | which appeared in the newspapers last week. One in three
2725 | people surveyed along the Gulf Coast said they would ignore
2726 | Government evacuation warnings. This is up from one in four
2727 | in last year's survey.

2728 | In Oklahoma I am lucky to have a boss, Governor Brad
2729 | Henry, who realizes emergency management is a customer
2730 | service business. More importantly, he understands that the
2731 | customers we serve are at the local level, not in Washington.

2732 | Following disaster events, he expects me to brief him on
2733 | what assistance is being provided to the victims immediately
2734 | and what assistance we are working to provide in the future.
2735 | The governor does not expect me to provide anything which is
2736 | not available under the law, but he does expect me to extract
2737 | the full potential of the law to the victims' advantage, and
2738 | he expects the same level of customer service to be provided

2739 | by the Federal Government in support of our State.

2740 | Unfortunately, our recent dealings with FEMA in response
2741 | to disasters our State has experienced over the last 18
2742 | months has done little to ensure customer service is a
2743 | concern, or that we are even considered a customer. Since
2744 | December, 2005, Oklahoma has experienced wild fires, ice
2745 | storms, tornados, and floods which have resulted in six major
2746 | disaster declarations, one emergency declaration, and 26 fire
2747 | management assistance grants. One might say that this level
2748 | of activity is proof that the new FEMA is working diligently
2749 | to make sure assistance is being provided as quickly as
2750 | possible, but I would offer that each request has been viewed
2751 | from a Federal perspective of what is the minimum we have to
2752 | provide, as opposed to what is the need.

2753 | Never before have I entered into so many discussions
2754 | regarding interpretation of the law or the standard of
2755 | assessment. I have even had one FEMA attorney question the
2756 | authority my lieutenant governor has to make a request for
2757 | the State in the governor's absence.

2758 | Through this all, the governor has asked me some very
2759 | simple questions like: is FEMA this unresponsive because they
2760 | are under DHS? Why does it take two weeks to make a decision
2761 | on my request? Why does the FEMA region support our request
2762 | and FEMA headquarters doesn't? Or even, Why won't they
2763 | return my phone calls?

2764 Regretfully, I have but one answer to each of these
2765 questions: I don't know, sir, but I do know this is not the
2766 way it is supposed to be.

2767 In conclusion, I would like to summarize the current
2768 philosophical differences between my State and FEMA with a
2769 brief illustration.

2770 In my operations center a sign defining what is expected
2771 of each employee has hung on the wall for many years. It
2772 simply says, if it is legal, moral, and ethical, just do it.
2773 While I realize much of this creed is subjective by nature,
2774 it does stress the reason we are all employed: to provide a
2775 service to our citizens during their time of need. With this
2776 in mind, I wonder what a similar sign would say if it were
2777 currently hanging on the wall of FEMA headquarters. Perhaps
2778 it would say something like, if it is legally concise and
2779 limits our Agency's exposure and potential liability, we
2780 should consider doing it, contingent, of course, on General
2781 Counsel's final opinion and coordination with the Office of
2782 Management and Budget and subject to a final vote of a
2783 tribunal convened to effectively disperse responsibility
2784 throughout the Federal Government.

2785 Whether this philosophy is a product of FEMA, DHS, the
2786 White House, Congress, or a combination of any or all of the
2787 above, I simply don't know. I only know it does not meet my
2788 expectations as either a State customer or a private citizen.

2789 | Thank you.

2790 | [Prepared statement of Mr. Ashwood follows:]

2791 | ***** INSERT *****

2792 | Mr. KUCINICH. I thank the gentleman.

2793 | Mr. Geldhart?

2794 STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER GELDHART

2795 Mr. GELDHART. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member
2796 Davis. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to
2797 appear before the Committee today. I would also like to
2798 recognize my colleague, Darrell Darnell, from Washington,
2799 D.C., Homeland Security Emergency Management Director, and
2800 also the other distinguished members of this panel.

2801 I am here today to discuss the role of the Office of the
2802 National Capital Region Coordination and how we work with our
2803 local, State, regional, and Federal partners to enhance
2804 preparedness within the National Capital Region.

2805 I joined the Office of National Capital Region as its
2806 new Director four months ago, as the Chairman said before
2807 earlier, when the office became a component of the newly
2808 reorganized Federal Emergency Management Agency. Also, as
2809 the Chairman had mentioned earlier, I came from the state of
2810 Maryland. Part of my duties at the State of Maryland were to
2811 work within the National Capital Region on many different
2812 topics and areas such as critical infrastructure protection
2813 and many of the governance groups that govern how all three
2814 jurisdictions within the NCR come together to work together.

2815 As such, I have first-hand knowledge of the NCR, the
2816 geographic, economic, and socio-political complexity that

2817 | exists here in the region.

2818 | As you know, the NCR has some very key characteristics
2819 | that make it different than a lot of other places. We are
2820 | the fourth largest metropolitan population area in the United
2821 | States, second largest public transportation system, robust
2822 | private and public nonprofit sector. We are the seat of the
2823 | national government and home to more than 230 individual
2824 | Federal departments and agencies representing all three
2825 | branches of Government. Most importantly, the NCR is home to
2826 | more than five million residents and twenty million tourists
2827 | annually.

2828 | The complexity inherent in the region was a key factor
2829 | that led to many in Congress, including members of this
2830 | Committee, to establish the Office of National Capital Region
2831 | Coordination in the Department of Homeland Security to
2832 | oversee and coordinate Federal programs for and relationships
2833 | with State, local, and regional authorities.

2834 | The Office of National Capital Region Coordination
2835 | leverages key partnerships to successfully execute the
2836 | strategic priorities. These include the Joint Federal
2837 | Committee, the Metropolitan Washington Council of
2838 | Governments, Regional Emergency Preparedness Council, and the
2839 | National Capital Region Senior Policy Group.

2840 | Through these and other venues, the Office of National
2841 | Capital Coordination coordinates daily with Homeland Security

2842 | advisors, emergency management directors, chief
2843 | administrative officers, first responder leaders, leadership
2844 | from the private sector and nonprofit communities, as well as
2845 | other Federal officials.

2846 | The office has had several key accomplishments that it
2847 | has completed prior to me coming into this office, and I
2848 | would just like to highlight a couple of them.

2849 | Mr. KUCINICH. And I would ask the gentleman, you have
2850 | about two minutes left.

2851 | Mr. GELDHART. Absolutely. Homeland Security governance
2852 | structure, the way that things are operated here in the
2853 | National Capital Region for planning and preparedness,
2854 | response and recovery from Homeland Security; the strategic
2855 | plan that was put in place, working with all the stakeholders
2856 | I mentioned earlier; communications interoperability, which
2857 | that accomplishment, alone, has led to advanced ratings in
2858 | every category of DHS' interoperability score card for this
2859 | region; and the National Capital Region's first responder
2860 | partnership initiative landmark credentialing effort that
2861 | allows first responders to move quickly through multiple
2862 | jurisdictions in the event of an incident.

2863 | Moving forward from here, my job, my goal, the way I see
2864 | the office moving forward has three key objectives:

2865 | First key objective, coordinated and integrated
2866 | catastrophic planning effort, not only within the boundaries

2867 of the legislated, directed National Capital Region, but also
2868 those areas that surround this region that will be part of a
2869 major catastrophic event, such as evacuation, mass care, and
2870 mass shelter.

2871 Secondly, enhance the Federal coordination, focusing on
2872 the operational and strategic planning and decision-making
2873 within the region.

2874 Lastly, to create a more robust regional risk assessment
2875 for this region so we have a clear understanding of what we
2876 need to invest in, when, why, and how.

2877 I can go into detail with all of these different areas,
2878 Mr. Chairman, but in the interest of finishing up my
2879 introduction I would say by focusing on these key areas our
2880 office can help the NCR continue to be the model for regional
2881 planning throughout the Nation. Building upon the foundation
2882 that has already been constructed, the NCR will take tangible
2883 steps to enhance catastrophic planning, improve Federal
2884 coordination, and better understand risk from a regional
2885 perspective. At the end of the day, we are all committed to
2886 one goal, the continued safety and security of the region,
2887 its residents, and visitors.

2888 I would like to thank the Chairman and the Ranking
2889 Member and the members of the Committee for the opportunity
2890 to discuss the role of the National Capital Region, and I am
2891 happy to answer any questions you may have, sir.

2892

[Prepared statement of Mr. Geldhart follows:]

2893

***** INSERT *****

2894 | Mr. KUCINICH. I thank the gentleman.

2895 | Mr. West, please proceed.

2896 | STATEMENT OF DEWAYNE WEST

2897 | Mr. WEST. Thank you, Chairman Kucinich and Ranking
2898 | Member Davis and distinguished members of the Committee.
2899 | Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide
2900 | testimony on this critically important topic.

2901 | I am Dewayne West, Director of the Johnston County of
2902 | Emergency Services located in the great State of North
2903 | Carolina. We are located midway between New York and Florida
2904 | on I-95 at the crossroads of I-95 and I-40. With that,
2905 | Johnston County connects to the Nation's north and south with
2906 | east and west.

2907 | Currently I am a member of the National Association of
2908 | Counties, or NACO, board of directors, and a past president
2909 | of the International Association of Emergency Managers.
2910 | Since the tragic events of September 11th, NACO and IAEM have
2911 | formed a strong affiliate partnership, and today I provide
2912 | this testimony on both their behalf.

2913 | The International Association of Emergency Managers has
2914 | over 3,800 members, including emergency management
2915 | professionals at the State and local government levels, the
2916 | military, private business, and nonprofit sector in the
2917 | United States and other countries. Most IAEM members are
2918 | U.S. city and county emergency managers who perform the

2919 | crucial function of coordinating and integrating the efforts
2920 | at the local level to prepare for, mitigate the effects of,
2921 | resolve, respond to, and recover from all types of disasters,
2922 | including terrorist attacks. Members include emergency
2923 | managers from both large urban areas, as well as rural
2924 | counties.

2925 | Founded in 1935, NACO is the Nation's leading advocate
2926 | for the county elected and appointed officials. NACO
2927 | advances issues with a unified voice before the Federal
2928 | Government, improves the public's understanding of county
2929 | government, assists counties in finding and sharing
2930 | innovative solutions through education and research, and
2931 | provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers
2932 | money. NACO's membership totals more than 2,000 counties,
2933 | representing over 80 percent of the Nation's population.

2934 | Again, I am pleased to join you today to present our
2935 | position on these issues.

2936 | Since Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast in the
2937 | fall of 2005, Federal, State, and local elected officials,
2938 | emergency managers, and other public safety officials have
2939 | worked to strengthen the Nation's preparedness and response
2940 | to future hazards. While States, local governments,
2941 | emergency managers, and other public safety officials across
2942 | the Nation focused on strengthening and revising pre-existing
2943 | emergency preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery

2944 | plans, and in educating residents during the aftermath of
2945 | Hurricane Katrina, Congress focused their attention on
2946 | strengthening the agency most associated with the Federal
2947 | Government's response to a catastrophe, that being the
2948 | Federal Emergency Management Agency.

2949 | After most of the debate, Congress included the
2950 | Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 in the
2951 | fiscal year 2007 appropriations bill for the Department of
2952 | Homeland Security. Local governments, emergency managers,
2953 | and other public safety officials across the Nation applauded
2954 | the hard work of Congress in arriving at these comprehensive
2955 | revisions to strengthen FEMA. It was clear that FEMA's
2956 | ability to respond had deteriorated after its inclusion in
2957 | the Department of Homeland Security, and this vital link in
2958 | the emergency management system needed to be repaired.

2959 | The legislation made a number of changes to FEMA, and we
2960 | supported many of these provisions, specifically:

2961 | The strengthening of the role of FEMA Administrator, and
2962 | the assurance that the Administrator would be principal
2963 | advisor to the President, DHS Secretary, and Homeland
2964 | Security Council during times of disaster;

2965 | The restoration of preparedness functions with response
2966 | and recovery functions within Federal Emergency Management
2967 | Agency, thus representing a return to established emergency
2968 | management doctrine, all hazards integrated, all phases;

2969 The assurance that FEMA Administrator would have a
2970 demonstrated ability and knowledge of emergency management
2971 and/or Homeland Security and at least five years of executive
2972 leadership and management experience;

2973 Strengthen FEMA regional offices and integrated regional
2974 preparedness initiatives and resources;

2975 Enhance training exercises and technical assistance for
2976 Federal, State, local governments, and first responders;

2977 Creation of FEMA regional advisory councils in existing
2978 FEMA regional offices;

2979 And the establishment of a formal and effective
2980 mechanism for identifying and deploying local assets for
2981 effectively strengthening EMAC, which you have heard about.

2982 Prior to these changes and since creation of the
2983 Department of Homeland Security, FEMA can best be
2984 characterized by a cycle of neglect, crisis, and further
2985 neglect. In fact, I would like to refer to this cycle as the
2986 spare tire theory, which you have heard expounded on earlier
2987 today. It seemed unusual to hear that coming back from the
2988 Federal level.

2989 This theory suggests that we forget about or neglect the
2990 condition of our car's spare tire until we have a flat, and
2991 then we hope it is in good enough shape to get us to where we
2992 need to go. Likewise, we tend to forget about and neglect
2993 our system of emergency management until we need it.

2994 | As we explore today's topic, I strongly urge our Federal
2995 | partners to heed the lessons we should have learned from the
2996 | past.

2997 | Overall, I cannot say with certainty that FEMA is ready
2998 | for the next catastrophic disaster. The changes legislated
2999 | by Congress only went into effect last March. While we
3000 | applaud the effort of Congress to legislate needed changes,
3001 | we are very concerned that the law may not be implemented as
3002 | intended.

3003 | We applaud the efforts being made by Administrator
3004 | Paulison and Deputy Administrator Johnson, but we are
3005 | concerned that they may not have the protections within DHS
3006 | that they need and Congress expects.

3007 | Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank the gentleman. Your time
3008 | has expired.

3009 | Mr. WEST. I am sorry.

3010 | Mr. KUCINICH. No, it is fine. You are doing very well.
3011 | What we will do is to include your entire statement in the
3012 | record of the hearing. It is quite extensive. I have read
3013 | it.

3014 | Mr. WEST. Thank you.

3015 | Mr. KUCINICH. It is going to contribute to enhancing the
3016 | work of this Committee, and I think we will be able to get to
3017 | some of the questions, which will enable you to draw out some
3018 | of the other contributions that you have made.

3019 | I want to thank you, Mr. West.

3020 | Mr. WEST. Thank you.

3021 | [Prepared statement of Mr. West follows:]

3022 | ***** INSERT *****

3023 | Mr. KUCINICH. We are going to move on to Mr. Darnell now
3024 | for five minutes. Thank you.

3025 STATEMENT OF DARRELL DARNELL

3026 Mr. DARNELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good
3027 afternoon. Good afternoon Congressman Davis and members of
3028 the Subcommittee.

3029 I am Darrell Darnell, Director of the District of
3030 Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency.
3031 I am pleased to have the opportunity to testify before you
3032 today about the extent to which the District of Columbia is
3033 prepared to respond to emergencies and disasters and our
3034 collaboration with our partners in the National Capital
3035 Region.

3036 During the almost six years since the terrorist attacks
3037 of September 11th, 2001, and the two years since the Gulf
3038 Coast devastation from Hurricane Katrina, the District and
3039 the NCR, as a whole, have worked independently and in
3040 collaboration with our partners at the Federal, State, and
3041 local levels to enhance and improve our abilities in five
3042 critical areas.

3043 Transportation and housing. Evacuating the District is
3044 a daunting challenge under any circumstance. Moreover, a
3045 significant portion of the population relies exclusively on
3046 public transportation, necessitating government assistance
3047 during an evacuation effort. Acknowledging these

3048 | difficulties and having learned lessons from the Gulf Coast
3049 | experience with Hurricane Katrina, the District has conducted
3050 | regular evacuation drills, such as Operation Fast Forward, in
3051 | conjunction with the July 4 festivities on the National Mall,
3052 | and is leading the NCR's efforts to coordinate evacuation and
3053 | sheltering plans throughout the region.

3054 | Understanding that any evacuation undertaken in the
3055 | District will quickly involve our regional partners, we have
3056 | worked closely with them to develop a number of tools that
3057 | would assist decision-makers in all of the jurisdictions
3058 | during an emergency. These resources include regional
3059 | unified evacuation route profiles; an inventory of vehicles,
3060 | drivers, transportation pickup points and standing
3061 | agreements; as well as shelters that could be activated
3062 | across the region in the event of an emergency.

3063 | Medical assistance. The ability to respond to the
3064 | health and medical consequences of a large-scale incident
3065 | requires a combination of plans, facilities, properly trained
3066 | clinical staff, pharmaceuticals, equipment, and supplies,
3067 | broadly interpreted as medical surge capacity. The District,
3068 | in coordination with the region, has steadily increased bed
3069 | capacity and has added 300 hospital beds within the
3070 | district's borders.

3071 | To assist in preventing the spread of a biological
3072 | agent, the District's health community has been provided with

3073 | the syndromic surveillance system. This system provides an
3074 | early warning capability that alerts the public health
3075 | community to impending health situations, allowing them to
3076 | take proactive measures to stop a potential public health
3077 | emergency. This system connects pharmacists, hospital
3078 | emergency rooms, schools, veterinarians, laboratories, and
3079 | emergency medical services information and spots trends
3080 | within the data to begin to track an outbreak and assist in
3081 | identifying the potentials for it.

3082 | Security and law enforcement. As the Nation's capital,
3083 | the District of Columbia presents a unique environment for
3084 | security and law enforcement. The District is home to
3085 | numerous law enforcement agencies, with more per capita than
3086 | anywhere else in the Country. These agencies work together
3087 | in a collaborative fashion on a daily basis to provide
3088 | security to the citizens of the District, as well as Federal
3089 | Government agencies and employees.

3090 | Logistics. In addition to the accomplishments noted in
3091 | transportation and housing, our efforts in the area of
3092 | interoperable communications, a primary focus for the region
3093 | have yielded significant improvements in our ability to share
3094 | information and communicate across jurisdictional boundaries.
3095 | In an assessment conducted by DHS, the National Capital
3096 | Region ranked in the top 10 percent of urban areas of the
3097 | Nation for advanced interoperable communication.

3098 | Collaboration with the Office of National Capital Region
3099 | Coordination. Since its establishment in March of 2003, the
3100 | Office of National Capital Region Coordination has worked
3101 | closely with the jurisdictions in the NCR to help ensure
3102 | regional cooperation and coordination.

3103 | However, one final comment. The restructuring of the
3104 | Federal response structure to include a principal Federal
3105 | officer, or PFO, in addition to the full coordinating
3106 | officer. As a State emergency management director, it is my
3107 | opinion that adding additional Federal officials to the
3108 | process may lead to confusion about the roles and
3109 | responsibilities of each. It would be helpful to have only
3110 | one Federal official assigned for all the events, versus
3111 | multiple Federal officials for different incidents.
3112 | Clarification of the role and responsibility of that official
3113 | would also improve the process.

3114 | With the leadership of Chris Geldhart, I believe ONCRC
3115 | will continue to work with its partners to ensure further
3116 | progress in preparing and securing the NCR against disaster,
3117 | whether natural or manmade, in the coming years, and we look
3118 | forward to our continued success.

3119 | This is not a part of my prepared testimony, Mr.
3120 | Chairman. The one thing that I think we have been missing
3121 | from the discussion today, if I may respectfully say, is the
3122 | role of citizens in our preparedness efforts. Here in the

3123 District of Columbia since 2002 we have trained over 2,400
3124 volunteers in citizen emergency response training. We signed
3125 up 39 neighborhoods with over 60 volunteers to update and to
3126 develop community preparedness plans for their specific
3127 neighborhoods in all eight wards of the cities.

3128 This fall, as a part of the National Preparedness Month,
3129 and at the start of our school year, we are going to
3130 implement our Commander Ready program, where we signed up 75
3131 volunteers to teach over 650 school-aged kids in the grades
3132 of two to five, five to thirteen in age, about emergency
3133 preparedness and Homeland Security, because we really believe
3134 that this effort is not one of government only; citizens also
3135 have to take part and take an active role in preparedness
3136 efforts.

3137 Thank you.

3138 [Prepared statement of Mr. Darnell follows:]

3139 ***** INSERT *****

3140 Mr. KUCINICH. I would like to just respond briefly to
3141 what you said.

3142 I have read the testimony of each person here, and you
3143 are all making a contribution by being here and it is very
3144 important that you are here, and I look forward to Ms.
3145 Tierney's testimony momentarily.

3146 I want to say that the point that you make about citizen
3147 involvement is absolutely critical. So what I would ask you
3148 to do is to provide this Committee and our staff here with
3149 the information that you use to advance that program. Show
3150 us the manuals or models that you use, because it may be that
3151 this is something that would be important for the entire
3152 Nation. I would ask that you provide it to the staff, and I
3153 also would like an extra copy so that I can review it
3154 personally.

3155 Mr. DARNELL. Yes, I will do that.

3156 Mr. KUCINICH. I think it is a very valuable testimony
3157 here.

3158 Mr. DARNELL. Thank you, sir.

3159 Mr. KUCINICH. I would like to thank you.

3160 [The information follows:]

3161 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

3162 | Mr. KUCINICH. I would ask Ms. Tierney to proceed with
3163 | your testimony for five minutes. Thank you.

3164 STATEMENT OF KATHLEEN TIERNEY

3165 Ms. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for
3166 giving me the opportunity to be here to testify today.

3167 It is almost impossible for an academic to say anything
3168 in five minutes, but I will do my level best.

3169 The new FEMA is in the process of being created;
3170 however, we don't know at this time how proposed and
3171 in-process changes will affect the Agency's ability to
3172 respond in the future, particularly to catastrophic events.
3173 Major changes must be instituted. The necessary resources
3174 must be applied to address glaring deficiencies in our
3175 inter-governmental system of emergency management, and those
3176 given responsibility for the implementation of new reforms
3177 must be held accountable through strong oversight at various
3178 levels of government.

3179 In my testimony I discuss seven areas that require
3180 immediate attention.

3181 First is to ensure that the Nation develops a fully
3182 functional emergency management system, intergovernmental
3183 emergency management system, placing a priority on the
3184 Nation's most vulnerable urban areas.

3185 The Nation does not currently have an effective
3186 intergovernmental system for managing hazards and disasters.

3187 | What now exists is a patchwork or lily pad arrangement within
3188 | which some entities have the knowledge, resources, and
3189 | political clout to deliver effective programs, but the
3190 | majority do not. This is termed in emergency management
3191 | scholarship the leaders and laggards problem.

3192 | At the same time, as we strengthen the leaders and
3193 | assist the laggards, the efforts that we make have to be risk
3194 | and vulnerability based. The potential for catastrophic
3195 | losses from disaster events is well understood. Metrics
3196 | already exist to assess the vulnerability of communities, and
3197 | we know where the problems are.

3198 | Second, ensure that an all-hazard approach to emergency
3199 | management is implemented at all levels of government. The
3200 | Federal Government's official position is supportive of an
3201 | all-hazards approach. At the same time, investments in
3202 | terrorism-related programs far outstrip those devoted to
3203 | other hazards.

3204 | As Ms. Norton said earlier, the scenarios which
3205 | communities around the country were required to prepare as
3206 | part of the national preparedness goal are skewed toward
3207 | terrorism-related threats. State and local agencies that
3208 | receive funding for terrorism-related programs will naturally
3209 | focus on terrorism unless something is done.

3210 | Third, ensure that FEMA and other crisis-relevant
3211 | organizations center their efforts on comprehensive emergency

3212 management. We are talking today about preparedness and
3213 response, but what we need is a return to the pre-September
3214 11th emphasis on the four phases of the disaster cycle:
3215 mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

3216 Mitigation is particularly important so that we can have
3217 smaller disasters to respond to, because we have less loss
3218 and disruption, and it is also proven to be cost effective.

3219 Again, long-term recovery is very important. That the
3220 Nation lacks a strategy for large-scale disaster recovery is
3221 all too glaringly evident right now in the Gulf region.

3222 Fourth, explore organizational arrangements and
3223 authorities that depoliticize high leadership positions
3224 within FEMA, DHS, and other crisis-relevant organizations.
3225 There have been a number of different suggestions for how
3226 this might be done, including making the head of FEMA
3227 something like the head of the Federal Reserve System or the
3228 Government Accountability Office.

3229 Fifth--and we come back to Mr. Darnell's
3230 comments--invest in and mobilize institutions that provide
3231 the backbone for effective emergency management.

3232 We have to recognize that many of the systems that we
3233 will be relying on in future disasters, such as medical and
3234 health care systems, are already over-strained. We also know
3235 that the critical information on which effective disaster
3236 responses depend is largely in private hands. We need

3237 public/private partnerships.

3238 We also need to expand and strengthen the role of civil
3239 society institutions in the management of hazards and
3240 disasters. The program that Mr. Darnell describes is exactly
3241 what I am talking about in my testimony. Mobilize the
3242 critical civic infrastructure. One logical way to do this is
3243 to begin first with organizations that normally provide
3244 services to at-risk populations and that would be required to
3245 do so even more during disasters.

3246 Sixth--and this echoes a recommendation by the
3247 Government Accountability Office--develop and implement a
3248 strategy for workforce planning for emergency management, a
3249 strategic workforce initiative. Again, this is something
3250 that the GAO has talked about, and I provide some more
3251 details in my written testimony.

3252 Finally, build oversight accountability and evaluation
3253 into emergency management programs at all levels of
3254 government. All the reports after Katrina talk about the
3255 need for greater transparency and accountability, but it is
3256 astonishing that we have invested so much in so many
3257 initiatives without systematic research on program
3258 effectiveness.

3259 At this time, the goal of evidence-based emergency
3260 management remains illusive, but the need for objective
3261 assessments of programs and practices is clearer than ever

3262 | before. Reasonable people might well wonder which emergency
3263 | management practices actually achieve their intended results,
3264 | where programs are falling short, and which investments are
3265 | likely to bring the greatest return. Likewise, they might
3266 | wonder whether the communities in which they live will be
3267 | able to meet their needs in disasters.

3268 | The Federal Government owes the Nation answers to
3269 | questions like these.

3270 | Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee.

3271 | [Prepared statement of Ms. Tierney follows:]

3272 | ***** INSERT *****

3273 Mr. KUCINICH. I thank the witness and all members of the
3274 panel. We are going to go to questions now. The Chair will
3275 recognize our Ranking Member of the full Committee, Mr.
3276 Davis.

3277 Mr. Davis?

3278 Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Thank you very much. I apologize
3279 for not being able to stay for additional questions, but I
3280 have a meeting with Chairman Waxman down the hall.

3281 Let me start, Mr. Ashwood, just on your comment that if
3282 it is legal, ethical, or moral, just to do it. I mean,
3283 sometimes I think in the bureaucracy that is what you need is
3284 people who are willing to get outside the regulations and the
3285 box, and in our Katrina report some of the real hearings are
3286 those that were able to step outside the box, see an
3287 emergency situation, and respond.

3288 Unfortunately, Government doesn't generally reward that
3289 kind of behavior. It gets punished. In private sector you
3290 get a promotion. You don't need to say anything, but I think
3291 that is what it needs to be, customer service. You have to
3292 empower the guy at the window or that person on the street to
3293 make a split decision. They are going to make bad decisions
3294 once in a while, and we need to be careful about
3295 second-guessing everything they do, but that is what it takes
3296 in emergencies. Nothing is ever quite neat and fit and
3297 wrapped in a neat package when it comes to emergency

3298 | situations.

3299 | My real questions, Mr. Geldhart, are for you, because I
3300 | represent parts of the National Capital Area. We had an
3301 | issue a few years ago with Tractor Man. Do you remember
3302 | Tractor Man?

3303 | Mr. GELDHART. Yes, sir.

3304 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. It was a disaster. It held up, I
3305 | think, three or four rush hours while we were waiting to make
3306 | a decision, and there was nothing. Where are we today? If a
3307 | similar situation occurred today, do you step into the
3308 | breach? Are we well coordinated? And for emergencies,
3309 | whether it is a hurricane or a snow storm or, heaven's sake,
3310 | a terrorist attack of some kind, have we run any regional
3311 | models or tests to show how everybody is coordinating?

3312 | Mr. GELDHART. Thank you for the question, sir. To
3313 | answer your question as far as regional models, I am not
3314 | aware of a regional model that we have run to see if
3315 | everybody is prepared, but what I would offer is what has
3316 | happened in just the four months that I have been here, to
3317 | answer your question.

3318 | One of the first things that came up when I came onboard
3319 | was the 4th of July. In getting into the breach of the first
3320 | real major event that happened since I have been here and
3321 | going to all the coordination meetings, all the different
3322 | folks that were involved and the way that they brought things

3323 together was amazing to me, even though I have worked here
3324 for three years prior, to see the Federal, State, and local
3325 coordination, and it showed through in a couple of ways.

3326 First, we had a storm that came in at 5:00 in the
3327 afternoon with a packed Mall with a bunch of people waiting
3328 for the fireworks to happen, and we had to evacuate the mall.
3329 The way that that flowed from the National Weather Service
3330 giving the update to the Federal folks within the Park Police
3331 that sent out the message, since they were the lead Federal
3332 agency that said we need to get everybody off the mall, to
3333 D.C.'s Emergency Management Homeland Security Agency, who
3334 then helped communicate that word out to all of the folks who
3335 were on the Mall, to help execute and get everybody off the
3336 Mall, MPD being there, Metropolitan Police Department being
3337 there. And then once again going back the outstanding Federal
3338 side and opening up all the buildings that we had along the
3339 Mall so that folks had a place to go and we had a place where
3340 they could get in and out of the storm.

3341 Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. I was out working parades in
3342 Fairfax and stuff. How did it go downtown?

3343 Mr. GELDHART. I think that worked phenomenally, and it
3344 worked phenomenally because the folks on the ground, sir,
3345 have been doing this for years. What we have been able to do
3346 is we have been able to start to attach on, like a Lego,
3347 attach on the next level of what we need to do to make this

3348 | thing come off well.

3349 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Who coordinated that?

3350 | Mr. GELDHART. That was a mutual coordination effort.

3351 | When we look at these type of incidents, that one in
3352 | particular the lead agency in that was Park Police, because
3353 | they are in charge of the Mall, but everybody falls in behind
3354 | that, and whether that be D.C. Emergency Management Agency,
3355 | whether it be Metropolitan Police Department, whether it be
3356 | Capital Police, if any of those folks are in the lead the
3357 | others will fall in behind, because this is what we do. We
3358 | are either in the lead or we support in this region.

3359 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. You have issues making sure, if
3360 | there is any kind of an attack or a huge emergency of some
3361 | kind, hospitals moving people in and out is the most
3362 | difficult, getting first responders in, making sure that you
3363 | are going to draw on the whole region. Do we have agreements
3364 | with Maryland, the District, Virginia, where they can come
3365 | from all over? There are differences in tort laws, liability
3366 | issues, all of those kinds of things if it happens that gives
3367 | somebody's hesitancy to move people in if they could get sued
3368 | and the like. Do we have regional agreements that tie that
3369 | together?

3370 | Mr. GELDHART. We do have regional agreements in place
3371 | for mutual aid, sir. There are MOUs in place for the regions
3372 | of the National Capital Region to provide mutual aid to each

3373 other.

3374 Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. And you feel confident, if there
3375 is something, that you can draw on all the resources of the
3376 region, including National Guard, in case of an emergency to
3377 bring people in very quickly?

3378 Mr. GELDHART. Not only myself, sir, but whoever is the
3379 lead in that particular case.

3380 I can give you one more example. Just this past weekend
3381 we had a WMATA worker--Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
3382 Authority worker--notice some dead birds around one of the
3383 stations, and in that raised awareness, rose it up to the
3384 WMATA operations center, who then called out to several other
3385 stations and they found several other dead birds.

3386 In that instance now all of the sudden we have what
3387 potentially could be a bunch of different things. Who knows
3388 what it is? What we were able to do was coordinate
3389 throughout the region. We got on a conference call. We
3390 brought everybody together and we said, Okay, what do we know
3391 right now? What do we know that we can act on? Who is in
3392 the lead? Who is in charge?

3393 That happened very quickly, and very quickly we
3394 recognized that WMATA was in charge. They were chasing down
3395 what they were doing. We had the National Terrorism Task
3396 Force there, the Joint Terrorism Task Force was there,
3397 Washington Field Office was there, I was on the phone, all of

3398 | the Homeland Security advisors and emergency management
3399 | directors coordinated that.

3400 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Let me suggest this. I mean, I
3401 | think some of the things that are helpful that are here is we
3402 | had the test run on Hurricane Pam in New Orleans, and it
3403 | wasn't executed, but those are the kinds of things that I
3404 | think we need to be ahead of the curve.

3405 | Mr. GELDHART. Yes, sir.

3406 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. You can never predict with
3407 | precision exactly what emergency you are going to have to
3408 | encounter. It just never perfectly fits the scenario.

3409 | Mr. GELDHART. That is right, sir.

3410 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. But in the episodes we have had
3411 | today, I am happy that you are discussing them all,
3412 | evacuation, because that is an indication of everybody
3413 | working together. But in the other episodes we have seen,
3414 | whether it was the Janitors for Justice, whether it was the
3415 | Tractor Man, whatever, we have in many cases, I think, seen
3416 | an inability to get the right decisions made in a timely
3417 | manner. Evacuation plans are difficult.

3418 | Mr. GELDHART. Yes, sir.

3419 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. What we need, I think, from our
3420 | perspective, just speaking for myself, are some test models
3421 | of how everybody responds, what would be the protocols in a
3422 | situation like that. We remain a target. The new Homeland

3423 Security bill that we just passed starts putting more money
3424 into this region and areas that face this.

3425 Weather can be anywhere, but some of the other issues
3426 that may face us could be far more severe. I think running
3427 tests and models and all that kind of stuff can be very
3428 important.

3429 So if you could work with us in terms of what you might
3430 be looking at in those areas, what the results are, if you
3431 could make it public, but what the plans are, it would make
3432 us feel a lot more comfortable.

3433 We have had episodes in this region where one guy having
3434 a bad day on the bridge has held up traffic along the East
3435 Coast for hours; where one guy driving a tractor on the Mall
3436 holds it up and emergency vehicles can't get through. When
3437 you see that, you just sit and wonder what if it is a real
3438 attack.

3439 I am glad you are back on the job. I hope you are
3440 coordinating appropriately and have been out to Fairfax and
3441 out to Prince William and out to Arlington and Alexandria and
3442 Prince George's and all the other jurisdictions in here. The
3443 important thing: do you think they are comfortable with the
3444 plans at this point, or are you still getting your feet wet?

3445 Mr. GELDHART. Your question, sir, was whether they are
3446 comfortable with the plans that are in place?

3447 Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. With the plans that are in place

3448 | and the coordination, or do you think we are still getting
3449 | our feet wet?

3450 | Mr. GELDHART. I think that at the tactical level, on the
3451 | ground, as I said earlier, our firefighters within this
3452 | region, they go from a one-alarm to a four-alarm fire in a
3453 | given day. They work with the different jurisdictions within
3454 | this region. I think those folks are ready. I think they
3455 | are up to the task and I think they will perform admirably in
3456 | any condition we throw them into.

3457 | I think our coordination and the piece that you are
3458 | mentioning, sir, that needs to be better--and that I think we
3459 | would all agree on needs to improve--is at the strategic and
3460 | operational level. I think that is a constant area of
3461 | improvement that we need to work on.

3462 | One of my top priorities, catastrophic planning, we have
3463 | to do that in this region. We have to get deeper into that.
3464 | And it is not a one-person show. This is a team sport here
3465 | in the National Capital Region. At any given time, somebody
3466 | is the quarterback, but we are going to drive from my office
3467 | to have catastrophic planning done.

3468 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Well, welcome aboard.

3469 | Mr. GELDHART. Thanks.

3470 | Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Let me just say this may be the
3471 | subject of a future hearing, I may suggest to the chairman,
3472 | just for this region, because you have Congress and the

3473 operations of Government and everything else, and we hope to
3474 continue to stay in correspondence with you on this. Thank
3475 you very much.

3476 Mr. GELDHART. Thank you, sir.

3477 Mr. KUCINICH. Thank you, Mr. Davis. I concur that there
3478 is a reason to have a specific hearing with respect to this
3479 region and to the District.

3480 In the time that we have remaining before we wrap up
3481 this hearing for the votes, I want to direct some questions
3482 to the members of the panel.

3483 First of all, to Mr. Ashwood and to Mr. West, within
3484 your own sphere of activities, do you feel that you are
3485 prepared to meet the disasters, let's say, in your State,
3486 your respective States?

3487 Mr. ASHWOOD. I will go ahead and tackle that question
3488 first. I feel we are better prepared every day. Do I feel
3489 we are prepared to meet any disaster? I would have probably
3490 told you yes prior to the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, and
3491 I would have been totally wrong. I would probably told you
3492 yes before the ice storms we had in 2000 and 2001, and I
3493 would have been totally wrong.

3494 Mr. KUCINICH. So what do you expect from the Federal
3495 Government? I think that is a fair question to ask.

3496 Mr. ASHWOOD. What I expect from the Federal Government,
3497 I expect their support. I expect their participation in the

3498 | planning process. I think that is the key here. It is not
3499 | the plan, it is the process. It is making sure that all
3500 | levels of government are in on the front end of the process
3501 | so that we all know what each other is doing so we can
3502 | support each other more effectively when the event does
3503 | occur. That is what I expect.

3504 | Mr. KUCINICH. So at this moment what would be your
3505 | assessment of the ability of the Federal Government to do
3506 | that?

3507 | Mr. ASHWOOD. I would say, as I did in my testimony, my
3508 | biggest concern is the communication with the Federal
3509 | Government on what to expect. I don't know if I am talking
3510 | to FEMA or DHS or the White House or who exactly is calling
3511 | the shots.

3512 | Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. West?

3513 | Mr. WEST. I would concur with his comments. To say we
3514 | are ready, I would say we are as ready as we can be, given
3515 | the resources and the funding, personnel, et cetera, that we
3516 | have had over the last 20 years. A good emergency manager
3517 | probably would refrain from ever saying they are ready, but
3518 | we are getting ready.

3519 | Mr. KUCINICH. Let me go back to Mr. Ashwood a minute. Is
3520 | it your opinion that, in light of the testimony that you have
3521 | heard today on the previous panel and in light of what you
3522 | have experienced and heard based on your work for the State

3523 | of Oklahoma, does it appear that there is some shifting of
3524 | responsibility back to the State and local level as a means
3525 | of trying to forego Federal responsibility for its
3526 | appropriate role in helping to coordinate and provide
3527 | resources for a disaster?

3528 | Mr. ASHWOOD. Probably not. I will say this because I do
3529 | have a great deal of respect for Dave Paulison. I think he
3530 | is trying to do the right thing. I think what the real issue
3531 | here is, though, is that disasters are a bottom-up event.
3532 | You have to have a strong base. The stronger local
3533 | government is, the stronger the State is, the stronger the
3534 | individual citizen is, and the more prepared that they are
3535 | the better prepared that we are nationally.

3536 | Mr. KUCINICH. So if the communication is there, then you
3537 | have the chance for preparation?

3538 | Mr. ASHWOOD. Absolutely, sir.

3539 | Mr. KUCINICH. Would you agree with that, Mr. West?

3540 | Mr. WEST. Yes, sir, and at the end of the day people
3541 | like me and my elected officials have to face our citizens,
3542 | and they say we did well or we did not. Certainly FEMA and
3543 | our State is going to be involved in that, but we have to
3544 | live with these people after everybody else goes home.

3545 | Mr. KUCINICH. I want to go back to the issue of
3546 | preparedness. We are still working with the old National
3547 | Response Plan. I mean, they haven't really implemented a new

3548 | one. They are talking about it. How does using this old
3549 | plan affect your State of Oklahoma and your State of North
3550 | Carolina, Mr. Ashwood?

3551 | Mr. ASHWOOD. I don't think it does, really, to tell you
3552 | the truth, and I was part of the initial writing team of the
3553 | first National Response Plan. Frankly, I didn't know what
3554 | was wrong with the Federal Response Plan prior to that except
3555 | that there needed to be a national plan, which makes perfect
3556 | sense, to incorporate all levels of government in the
3557 | process. When that didn't happen, I lost a lot of faith in
3558 | the National Response Plan in any form.

3559 | Mr. KUCINICH. Well, there is a new plan. How long do
3560 | you think it will take to implement a new plan once it is put
3561 | in place?

3562 | Mr. ASHWOOD. Having not read it, I have no idea, sir.

3563 | Mr. KUCINICH. But it does take time to implement a plan?

3564 | Mr. ASHWOOD. Absolutely.

3565 | Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. West?

3566 | Mr. WEST. Yes, sir, I agree. I concur with his
3567 | comments. We felt good about the fact that we were going to
3568 | be included in some of the initial work, but then we have not
3569 | seen any results from that at this point.

3570 | Mr. KUCINICH. So you don't know if the input that you
3571 | provided has been included in the plan?

3572 | Mr. WEST. That is correct, sir. I think one of the

3573 | frustrating things is that we attend listening sessions and
3574 | various meetings, and we rarely see the results of those
3575 | meetings being implemented, or suggestions, or things of that
3576 | nature.

3577 | Mr. KUCINICH. Now, were you told, Mr. West, that a
3578 | high-level DHS official was rewriting the plan but with no
3579 | input from State and local officials?

3580 | Mr. WEST. That is correct, and I was pleased to hear
3581 | today that this is going out in draft form for comment,
3582 | because we were not aware of that until today.

3583 | Mr. KUCINICH. Okay. I think this Committee would be
3584 | interested to know, when the draft report gets to the State
3585 | level, whether or not that draft report reflects the input
3586 | from the State in terms of enhanced communication.

3587 | Mr. Ashwood?

3588 | Mr. ASHWOOD. I would be glad to, sir.

3589 | Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. West?

3590 | Mr. WEST. Absolutely.

3591 | Mr. KUCINICH. Now, to Mr. Ashwood and Mr. West, you are
3592 | concerned that your input be included in that?

3593 | Mr. ASHWOOD. Absolutely.

3594 | Mr. KUCINICH. I want to go to the decision-making at
3595 | FEMA before we conclude. Many people have expressed concern
3596 | to our staff that decisions at FEMA are not being made by
3597 | on-the-ground regional directors, but instead are being made

3598 | by bureaucrats in Washington; therefore, decisions that used
3599 | to be made by experienced management coordinators who were
3600 | most knowledgeable about the needs of the area are being
3601 | overruled by attorneys and people in the Office of Management
3602 | and Budget.

3603 | Now, Mr. Ashwood, I understand that you faced this
3604 | problem recently when you attempted to get a declaration of
3605 | emergency in Oklahoma; is that correct?

3606 | Mr. ASHWOOD. Yes, sir, that is correct.

3607 | Mr. KUCINICH. And what would you tell this Committee
3608 | that might facilitate, let's say, a quick response to a State
3609 | that needed a declaration? What could we do to make sure we
3610 | serve your constituency?

3611 | Mr. ASHWOOD. I could illustrate the frustration that we
3612 | had, and we have actually had it a couple of times this year.
3613 | The most recent request we had, our governor on July 5th of
3614 | this year requested that four counties be declared for
3615 | individual assistance because of torrential rainfall and
3616 | flooding that we had across the State from May 24th to that
3617 | time period, over a month's time. We had record rainfall and
3618 | we had documentation from the National Weather Service
3619 | showing record rainfall during that entire period of time.

3620 | We requested four counties be declared for individual
3621 | assistance. We requested that the time period begin May 24th
3622 | to the present. And we requested that direct Federal

3623 assistance--that would be Federal resources such as water and
3624 ice and that type of thing--be made available for these four
3625 counties.

3626 The turnaround on that request was exceptional. It was
3627 within 24 hours. However, receiving the answer to our
3628 request, we received two counties for declaration, no direct
3629 Federal assistance nor no mention of direct Federal
3630 assistance, and the time frame had changed from June 10th to
3631 the present rather than May 24th to the present.

3632 Now, while I am not saying that we were totally correct
3633 on everything, it would seem to me that if there was a
3634 problem with our request, the Governor's request to the
3635 President, that a phone would have been picked up somewhere
3636 along the line and said, look, we have a problem here, can we
3637 talk about it and work this thing out, rather than just
3638 making a unilateral decision and saying, Here, take it.

3639 Mr. KUCINICH. The interesting thing about your testimony
3640 and what we have heard from Mr. West is that the lack of
3641 communication in this era of cell phones and pagers and every
3642 manner of being able to contact people instantaneously, it
3643 still comes down to human relations, people talking to people
3644 saying how do we work this out and how do we come together.

3645 I think that your testimony today will send a message to
3646 FEMA of the urgency of not only including you in the
3647 planning, but also in tightening up lines of communication so

3648 that mobilization in the case of disaster can happen. I
3649 think that the testimony of Mr. Tierney in terms of the
3650 specific steps that have to be taken is really important in
3651 this regard, and I am hopeful that FEMA will reflect on it.

3652 Mr. Darnell, you have given us an image of a system that
3653 you are really working to test, but also involve more and
3654 more people. When I heard you speak, it reminded me of the
3655 kind of preparedness that we saw communities involved with in
3656 Y2K, which was a kind of model. Had you thought about that?

3657 Mr. DARNELL. Well, I wasn't at the local level during
3658 Y2K, but a lot of my experiences are born out of my previous
3659 experience at Department of Justice and DHS, particularly in
3660 interoperable communications and in the planning aspects of
3661 it.

3662 One of the things that we try to do in the NCR, going to
3663 Congressman Davis' concerns about the Tractor Man incident,
3664 all of our emergency operations centers now can work an event
3665 or an incident using a common operating picture, and we
3666 couldn't do that in the past, and so we have software
3667 programs called WebEOC that all 140 emergency operations
3668 centers in the National Capital Region are using. What that
3669 allows us to do is have real-time situational awareness
3670 looking at the same information, sending out the same
3671 messages on the same information system and sharing that
3672 information. That makes it easier to communicate.

3673 Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Darnell, I want to thank you for that
3674 response.

3675 I have just been notified that we have about four
3676 minutes left on a vote.

3677 We have had an extensive hearing today, and the
3678 participation of each and every one of the witnesses here has
3679 been essential for us to be able to continue our efforts to
3680 make sure that this Country is better prepared to be able to
3681 meet the needs of disasters and emergencies.

3682 This has been a hearing of the Committee on Oversight
3683 and Government Reform of the House of Representatives. I am
3684 Dennis Kucinich, and I am the Chair of the Subcommittee on
3685 Domestic Policy. I have been privileged to Chair these
3686 proceedings with the permission and good graces of Chairman
3687 Waxman, who is the Chair of our full Committee. We have had
3688 a very extensive discussion that started at 10:00. The panel
3689 has been patient, and your participation has been invaluable.

3690 The Committee is going to continue to proceed to explore
3691 the issues that came out as a result of your testimony and
3692 the previous panel's.

3693 At this point I want to thank the panel. You are
3694 excused.

3695 This concludes the hearing of the Committee on Oversight
3696 and Government Reform, the hearing on FEMA preparedness on
3697 2007 and beyond. Thank you very much. Good afternoon.

3698

[Whereupon, at 2:07 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]