

READY TO LEAD? DHS AND THE NEXT MAJOR CATASTROPHE

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT,
INVESTIGATIONS, AND OVERSIGHT

OF THE

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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READY TO LEAD? DHS AND THE NEXT MAJOR CATASTROPHE

Wednesday, June 11, 2008

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT, INVESTIGATIONS, AND
OVERSIGHT,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 3:06 p.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Christopher P. Carney [Chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Carney, Perlmutter, Pascrell, Thompson [ex officio], and Rogers.

Mr. CARNEY. The subcommittee will come to order. The subcommittee is meeting today to receive testimony on "Ready to Lead? DHS and the Next Major Catastrophe".

When Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, I was not a Member of Congress. I was, however, a naval officer. So I knew from experience what the Federal Government can do when its efforts are coordinated and it is well led. In the wake of Katrina, it was clear for all to see that there was neither coordination nor leadership.

DHS, the Department charged with leading the Federal response, sat back and waited for others to act. Why? Because leaders didn't lead. People didn't know their missions. The problems started at the top when the Secretary of Homeland Security, then Chief of Staff, had not even read the national response plan.

It is easy to understand why others across the Department may have been confused about their roles. I knew then and I know now that we can do better. I know because I have seen it from the inside.

Today, I want Mr. Parent to tell me what DHS and its senior leadership will do the next time a major disaster is looming. I want to hear how the lessons of Katrina and 9/11 have been turned into specific, actionable plans.

I was heartened to hear about the Department's focus on inter-agency working groups and on standardizing planning. It is tough to overstate the importance of planning and of having a planning system. In the Navy, planning is everything. When we are talking about disaster preparedness and response, it should be no different.

DHS is to be commended for recognizing the void in planning and moving quickly to fill it. Now it is time for other agencies that will play key roles in any response effort to fully get on board.

Some agencies in the Federal Government have been terrific about working with DHS. Others, not so much. If you proceed as

if the Department of Homeland Security act was just some bad dream, that will never really happen. But DHS is here and it is not going away any time soon. For the good of the country, it is time to accept that. Turf battles, whether in the executive or legislative branch, do us all a disservice, and those who put turf above duty dishonor themselves and their important mission.

I look forward to hearing about the areas where DHS has worked across agency lines in learning what we in Congress can do to replicate this across the Department.

The Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Alabama, Mr. Rogers, for an opening statement.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I make my statement, I ask unanimous consent that Mr. Brock Long, Director of Alabama Department of Emergency Management, be able to sit at the witness table and assist Director Walker.

Mr. CARNEY. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, sir.

Let me begin by thanking the witnesses for taking the time to be with us here today. I appreciate your time and your expertise. I especially want to thank two witnesses from my home State, Mr. Jim Walker and Mr. Brock Long. They will discuss some innovative programs our State has implemented to be better prepared for the next disaster. In fact, one of these programs, known as Virtual Alabama, won a national award this week from the American Council for Technology.

The purpose of this hearing is to determine how ready the Department of Homeland Security is to lead Federal efforts in the event of another major catastrophe. This hearing is timely, given that another hurricane season has just begun, and it is predicted to be a very active year. Alabama was hit hard by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, with tens of thousands of folks affected and 31 disaster recovery centers in operation.

One critical resource in responding to a catastrophe is the disaster canine teams. We saw the key role they played in the aftermaths of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Approximately 220 disaster canine teams were deployed. Both the canines and their handlers worked tirelessly to find both the living and the deceased as the catastrophe unfolded. These canines were partially responsible for more than 6,600 rescue and evacuations performed by the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System during that time.

In addition to their search and rescue missions, canines play a key role in homeland security. Their keen sense of smell and strong ability to process odors allows them to detect explosives, narcotics, bulk cash, and concealed humans. The Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces and the DHS generally do not have enough dogs to meet their stated needs. Therefore, it is important for DHS to expand its domestic breeding capacity and to develop national training and certification standards to ensure the quality of these canines.

As we examine the Department's level of readiness today, we should consider what steps Congress can take to help these folks at DHS be better prepared. First, Congress needs to enact the re-

maining 9/11 Commission recommendations to consolidate its jurisdiction over DHS officials so they will no longer have to report to 86 committees and subcommittees.

Second, we need to pass a DHS authorization bill before Congress acts on the Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

Third, Congress must not reorganize DHS again in the near future so its current organizational structure can take hold.

These three steps, if taken by Congress, not only would strengthen DHS, but also would strengthen our national security.

I look forward to hearing from our witness on these and other issues, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman and the Chairman of the full committee, the gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Thompson, for an opening statement.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. First, I would like to thank you for holding this important and timely hearing. I would also like to thank our panel for being here.

For many Americans, their introduction to the Department of Homeland Security was the images they saw on their television screens in the days after Hurricane Katrina. In the weeks and months that followed, FEMA and the Department took a lot of hits. But those of us who actually studied what happened know that the problems ran much deeper than Mike Brown and the Department of Homeland Security.

To be clear, it is absolutely true that the Department failed to lead an effective Federal response. However, it is equally true that much of the rest of the Federal Government was not willing to lead; and though this second truth that has been largely overshadowed, it is a lingering problem we must fix if we are to do better next time.

Today, we will hear from some promising programs underway within the Department. We will hear about a group, the Incident Management Planning Team, that does more than just pay lip service to the notion of interagency cooperation and planning. Instead, every day input brings together senior representatives from across the Federal Government to think about the unthinkable and, more importantly, to plan for it. It is hard to overstate the importance of these interagency efforts. June 1 marked the beginning of the 2008 hurricane season so this hearing comes at a timely point.

We also know that the Federal Government as a whole, not just FEMA, was not prepared in 2005. I look forward to the hearing today about the progress the Department has made over the past 3 years.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Other Members of the subcommittee are reminded that under committee rules, opening statements may be submitted for the record.

I welcome the witnesses. Our first witness is Wayne Parent, the Deputy Director of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Operations Coordination and Planning. Mr. Parent also served as the Director of current operations for the Border and Transpor-

tation Security Directorate within the Department. Mr. Parent has been with the Department since its inception.

Our second witness is Mr. William Jenkins. Mr. Jenkins is the Director for the Homeland Security and Justice Team at the Government Accountability Office. He is responsible for leading GAO's work on emergency preparedness and response issues. He has been with that agency for 28 years.

Our third witness is Ms. Christine Wormuth, Senior Fellow with the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, where she works on many issues, including emergency response and preparedness challenges. Prior to her current position, she was a staff director for the Jones Commission, which was widely heralded for its study of the Iraqi police force.

Our fourth witness is Mr. James Walker, the Director of the Alabama Department of Homeland Security. Mr. Walker was appointed to serve as the State's first Homeland Security Director on January 20, 2003.

I would like to take this opportunity to note Director Walker's 20 years of service in the U.S. Army, where he retired as a lieutenant colonel. Thank you for your service, sir.

Without objection, the witnesses' full statements will be inserted into the record. I now ask each witness to summarize his or her statement for 5 minutes, beginning with Mr. Parent. I will admonish you that we are on a tight schedule this afternoon so we will stick to 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF WAYNE PARENT, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF OPERATIONS COORDINATION AND PLANNING, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. PARENT. Good afternoon, Chairman Carney, Ranking Member Rogers, Chairman Thompson, and the Members of the subcommittee. I am Wayne Parent, Deputy Director of the Office of Coordination. I am pleased to appear today on this panel of distinguished witnesses.

Thank you for inviting me to discuss how the Office of Operations Coordination conducts strategic level planning with the incident management planning team and how this planning effort facilitates the Secretary of DHS's ability to execute his Homeland Security Presidential Directive—5 incident management responsibilities.

To put this discussion in its proper context, it is critical that we first recognize some of the authorities that guide OPS' action on this important issues. Pursuant to the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the Secretary leads DHS in executing its key missions. The Secretary's role as defined in the HSA is further articulated in the HSPD—5.

Under HSPD—5, the Secretary is the principal Federal official for domestic incident management, responsible for coordinating Federal operations within the United States to prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergencies.

The mission of operations is to integrate departmental and strategic level interagency planning and operations coordination in order to prevent, protect, respond to, and recover from terrorist

threats, attacks, or threats from other manmade or natural disasters.

Planning is critical to the Secretary's effective execution of his HSPD-5 authorities. This responsibility to coordinate the actions requires that he possess knowledge of the respective responsibilities and capabilities of the interagency before an incident occurs. As a result, the IMPT was created in 2006 to provide a strategic level planning capability that did not previously exist within DHS or the Federal interagency.

The mission of the IMPT is to provide contingency and crisis action incident management planning. It is comprised of two components: a core group of fifteen full-time planners from key DHS elements, as well as several key interagency partners, and a pre-identified on-call staff of 38 planners, comprised of additional members from the DHS, as well as the remainder of the interagency.

The IMPT's initial actions have been focused on the development of strategic level interagency plans that address each of the fifteen national planning scenarios. Each plan developed by the IMPT identifies the specific actions per existing authorities that individual departments and agencies intend to take in the event a given scenario occurs.

The IMPT's initial success has been due in large measure to the development and use of the National Planning and Execution System planning process. Early on, it was recognized that the success or failure in the IMPT would hinge largely on its ability to develop a planning process that could coordinate the efforts of this interagency group and facilitate the development of a shared planning culture across the Federal Government. No planning system or process previously existed for this purpose.

This process was converted to a curriculum which was taught to each of the members of the IMPT. The feedback from this training has been overwhelmingly positive and has resulted in numerous requests by departments and agencies that this training be offered to individuals within their organizations. To date, more than 500 planners across the interagency Federal arena have been trained, and more sessions are planned.

In order to build on the initial success of the IMPT and the NPES, in December, 2007, the President approved Annex 1, National Planning to HSPD-8. Annex 1 will further enhance the preparedness of the Nation by formally establishing a standard and comprehensive approach to operations planning. When fully adopted, Annex 1 will build on the strategic level planning effort already well under way with the IMPT by calling for the development of operational and tactical level operation plans at the Federal department/agency level for the national planning scenarios.

When an incident occurs or a known threat triggers the Secretary's HSPD-5 responsibilities, my office facilitates the DHS Secretary's ability to execute these responsibilities through its management of the DHS crisis action process. The primary entities which perform functions central to the crisis action process are the DHS senior leadership group and the DHS crisis action team.

I am very pleased to report on the progress DHS has made in how we plan for and manage incidents at the strategic level. On May 22, the Secretary acknowledged a culminating point for many

of our improvements by directing several enhancements to operations. We have begun to implement many of these enhancements, which allow us to better integrate the strategic planning and operational functions we already perform.

Since Hurricane Katrina, the National Operations Center, also under Operations, has thoroughly reviewed and revamped its procedures for managing information to ensure a high level of situational awareness for senior officials for all hazard events. These improvements have been successfully validated through real events and exercises over the past 2 years.

My office has also assumed responsibility for supporting the Secretary's principal Federal officials. In preparation for the 2008 Hurricane season, Secretary Chertoff has predesignated teams of principal Federal officials and Federal coordinating officers. To provide the necessary skills and experience for these important positions, the Secretary named officials from FEMA, TSA and the U.S. Coast Guard to lead each team. A number of predesignated officials already have served on the PFO teams during the last two hurricane seasons.

I hope this testimony leaves you with an appreciation for the progress DHS has made to improve strategic planning and operations coordination.

Thank you for the opportunity to report to the subcommittee on this program. I request that you place this testimony in the permanent record, and would be pleased to answer any questions at this time.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you for your testimony.

[The statement of Mr. Parent follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WAYNE PARENT

JUNE 11, 2008

Good morning, Chairman Carney, Ranking Member Rogers and Members of the subcommittee. I am Wayne Parent, Deputy Director of the Office of Operations Coordination and Planning at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I am pleased to appear today alongside Christine Wormuth and the other distinguished witnesses. Thank you for inviting me to discuss how the Office of Operations Coordination and Planning (OPS) conducts strategic-level planning with the Incident Management Planning Team (IMPT) and how this planning effort facilitates the Secretary of DHS' (Secretary) ability to execute his Homeland Security Presidential Directive—5 (HSPD-5) incident management responsibilities.

To put this discussion in its proper context, it is critical that we first recognize some of the authorities that guide OPS' actions on these important issues. Pursuant to the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (HSA), the Secretary leads DHS in executing its key missions: preventing terrorist attacks; reducing the country's vulnerability to terrorism; minimizing the damage and assisting in recovery from terrorist attacks that do occur in the United States; and acting as a focal point regarding natural and manmade crises and emergency planning. The Secretary's role as defined in the HSA is further refined in HSPD-5.

Under HSPD-5, the Secretary is the principal Federal official for domestic incident management, responsible for "coordinating Federal operations within the United States to prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies." On this point, it is especially important to recognize the fact that the term "incident" applies equally to real or potential threats and not just "disasters" that have already occurred, as is often erroneously suggested. To carry out those responsibilities, the President directed all "Federal departments and agencies to cooperate with the Secretary in the Secretary's domestic incident management role." Thus, the Secretary is authorized by the President to coordinate Federal operations across the full spectrum of homeland security operations, i.e., prevention, protection, response, and recovery.

In order to enable the Department to more effectively conduct joint homeland security operations across all organizational elements, the Secretary created OPS pursuant to Section 872 of the HSA. The mission of OPS is to integrate departmental and strategic-level interagency planning and operations coordination in order to prevent, protect, respond to and recover from terrorist threats/attacks or threats from other man-made or natural disasters.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLANNING TEAM (IMPT)

Planning is critical to the Secretary's effective execution of HSPD-5 authorities. This is especially true for two reasons: we face a variety of ever evolving all-hazards threats (i.e., terrorist, man-made, and natural disaster); and a multitude of distinct authorities and directives currently exist to govern the actions of the interagency for any one of the potential threats. In this regard, the Secretary's responsibility, per HSPD-5, to coordinate the actions of the interagency requires that he possess knowledge of the respective responsibilities and capabilities of the interagency before an incident occurs. As a result, the IMPT was created in 2006 to provide a strategic-level planning capability that did not previously exist within DHS or the interagency.

The mission of the IMPT is to provide contingency and crisis-action incident management planning in support of Secretary's national level domestic incident management responsibilities articulated in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and HSPD-5. It is comprised of two components: (1) a core group of 15 full-time planning representatives from key DHS elements (e.g., TSA, CBP, I&A, FEMA, Coast Guard) as well as other key interagency members (i.e., DOD, the FBI, HHS, DOT, DOE, EPA and the American Red Cross); and (2) a pre-identified "on-call" staff of 38 planners comprised of other members from DHS as well as the interagency. The IMPT was established in September 2006 and since then was developed into an effective interagency body through frequent training and exercising.

The IMPT's initial actions have been focused on the development of strategic level interagency plans that address each of the fifteen National Planning Scenarios previously developed by the White House.¹ The all-threats and all-hazards scenarios include nuclear, chemical, biological, natural disaster and cyber incidents. Each plan developed by the IMPT identifies the specific actions, per existing authorities, that individual departments and agencies intend to take in the event a given scenario occurs. None of the plans developed by the IMPT alter any existing authorities of individual Federal Departments and Agencies or convey new authorities upon the DHS Secretary or any other Federal official. The primary value of this effort is to identify the strategic-level responsibilities of the entire interagency in one comprehensive document. This planning process also serves two additional purposes: it facilitates the ability of Secretary to fulfill his/her coordination responsibilities under HSPD-5 by providing awareness of the individual capabilities that a specific agency plans to deliver; and it also identifies seams and gaps that exist within the interagency planning efforts for a particular scenario.

The IMPT's initial success has been due in large measure to its development and use of the National Planning and Execution System (NPES) planning process. Early on, it was recognized that the success or failure of the IMPT would hinge largely on its ability to develop a planning process that could coordinate the efforts of this interagency group and facilitate the development of a shared planning culture across the Federal Government.

No planning system or process previously existed. When the IMPT was established, few Federal departments and agencies adhered to a formal planning process that organized the operations planning efforts within their respective departments. To achieve this goal, members of OPS created NPES, a planning process that integrated current and emerging interagency planning "best practices" that was consistent with the NRP (now NRF); adhered to the core concepts and terminology addressed in NIMS; and provided for plan validation by incorporation into various national level exercises (e.g., Ardent Sentry and TOPOFF 4).

This process was converted to a curriculum that was taught to each member of the IMPT. The feedback from this training has been overwhelmingly positive and has resulted in numerous requests by departments and agencies that this training be offered to others within their respective departments and agencies. To date, more than 500 planners from across the interagency have been trained and more sessions

¹ For the purpose of expediting the prioritization and planning process, an HSC Deputies Committee determined that the fifteen National Planning Scenarios would be collapsed into eight scenario sets.

are planned. In addition, many State, local, and even foreign governments have requested copies of the NPES and related training.

In order to build on the initial success of the IMPT and NPES, on December 4, 2007, the President approved *Annex 1, National Planning, Homeland Security Presidential Directive-8* (HSPD-8). Annex 1 will further enhance the preparedness of the United States by formally establishing a standard and comprehensive approach to operations planning. This annex was intended to provide guidance for conducting planning in accordance with the Homeland Security Management System identified in the National Strategy for Homeland Security of 2007. When fully adopted, Annex 1 will build upon the strategic-level planning effort already well under way by the IMPT, by calling for the development of operational and tactical level operations plans for each of the fifteen National Planning Scenarios, at the Federal Department/Agency level.

DHS CRISIS ACTION PROCESS

When an incident occurs or threat becomes known that triggers the Secretary's HSPD-5 responsibilities, my Office facilitates the DHS Secretary's ability to execute these responsibilities through its management of the DHS Crisis Action Process. The DHS Crisis Action Process is a process by which DHS leadership manages a domestic incident by following a general sequence of events while simultaneously engaging in a continuous cycle of actions. The DHS Crisis Action Process is designed to integrate the following functions: leverage the input and collective experience of DHS and other senior Federal leaders; sustain strategic-level crisis action planning; collect, develop, and disseminate strategic-level situational awareness products; and facilitate the Secretary's ability to conduct informed dialog for coordination with his interagency peers. The primary entities which perform functions central to the Crisis Action Process are the DHS Senior Leadership Group (SLG) and the DHS Crisis Action Team (CAT).

Senior Leadership Group (SLG)

Once the DHS National Operations Center (NOC) is notified of a credible threat or that an incident has occurred, the NOC gathers information, generates required notifications, and provides situational awareness to the Secretary. The Secretary or the Director of OPS may convene the Senior Leadership Group (SLG) in order to provide initial incident orientation, discuss the incident, resolve intra-Department issues, and provide initial guidance and course of action recommendations. The SLG is comprised of the various DHS Assistant Secretaries that report to the Secretary and other select leaders within DHS. The SLG can be convened by the Secretary at any time and its primary purpose is to facilitate the Secretary's ability to receive input and recommendations from his most experienced leaders during times of crisis. When convened during times of crisis, the Secretary can also issue initial guidance to the SLG members regarding actions he deems appropriate. The Secretary will also consult with appropriate cabinet peers during an incident.

Crisis Action Team

The Secretary's Crisis Action Team (CAT) is a scalable incident management entity formed during an event or identified threat to conduct Strategic-level operations coordination and planning to support the Secretary in his fulfilling his HSA and HSPD-5 responsibilities. Specifically, the CAT was developed to facilitate the Secretary's ability to execute responsibilities as the principal Federal official for domestic incident management. It is important to note that the CAT membership includes interagency representatives as well as DHS components.

The CAT is a scalable entity organized into three branches: Operations, Planning, and Support. The Incident Management Officers (IMOs), who constitute the core group of the CAT Operations Branch, are always activated and serve in the National Operations Center Watch. Their primary function of the Operations Branch of the CAT is to provide the Secretary with integrated interagency reporting and situational awareness products regarding the specific event which triggered the CAT activation. The Planning Branch of the CAT is comprised of members of the IMPT and conduct strategic-level crisis action planning. Both the operations and planning branches of the CAT are also expected to provide any and all products necessary to facilitate the Secretary's ability to conduct informed dialog with his interagency peers.

CONCLUSION

I am very pleased to report on the progress DHS has made in how we plan for and manage incidents at the strategic level. DHS has made several key advancements in operational matters that directly support the Secretary's ability to carry

out his Homeland Security Act, HSPD-5 and HSPD-8 responsibilities. On May 22, the Secretary acknowledged a culminating point for many of these improvements by directing several enhancements to OPS and renaming it from the Office of Operations Coordination to the Office of Operations Coordination and Planning. We have begun to implement some of these enhancements, which will allow us to better integrate the strategic planning and operations functions we already perform.

Since Hurricane Katrina, the National Operations Center has thoroughly reviewed and revamped its procedures for managing information to ensure a high level of situational awareness for senior officials for all hazards events. These improvements have been successfully validated through real events over the last 2 years, and extensively tested during the TOP OFFICIALS 4 exercise in 2007 and National Level Exercise 2-08 in May, 2008. The Pet Food Contamination incident in May, 2007; the California Wildfires in October, 2007; and the recent Annapolis Conference and New Year's Eve mass gatherings are just a few examples of major events that were effectively coordinated using an improved system for managing information and supporting senior decisionmakers. During these events, the NOC and DHS Crisis Action Team managed information flow, developed Situation Reports and Executive Summaries, convened subject matter experts, developed critical information requirements, and prepared briefing materials for the Secretary. These materials were used by departmental leadership and the White House in their processes for determining courses of action.

OPS has satisfied every Homeland Security Council Katrina Lessons Learned recommendation that is applicable to the NOC. Key among these was the establishment of the NOC and a national reporting chain, as well as the implementation of the Common Operating Picture (COP) to enhance interagency situational awareness. For example, national reporting requirements and a national reporting chain were developed to cover hurricanes and tropical storms. These national reporting requirements and information flow were completed in advance of the 2006 hurricane season and remain in use now.

My office has also assumed responsibility for supporting the Secretary's Principal Federal Officials. In preparation for the 2008 hurricane season, Secretary Chertoff has pre-designated teams of Principal Federal Officials (PFOs) and Federal Coordinating Officers (FCOs). To provide the necessary skills and experience for these important positions, the Secretary named officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Transportation Security Administration, and the United States Coast Guard to lead each team. A number of the pre-designated officials already served on the PFO teams during the last two hurricane seasons.

As you know, the PFO and FCO have distinct responsibilities, but work in tandem as part of the Unified Coordination Group within the Joint Field Office to determine the requirements and set unified objectives and priorities in partnership with the affected State(s). The PFO is the Secretary's representative in the field and assists him in executing his HSPD-5 domestic incident management responsibilities.

I hope that this testimony leaves you with an appreciation for the progress DHS has made to improve strategic planning and operations coordination. Thank you for the opportunity to report to the subcommittee on this progress. I request that you place this testimony in the permanent record and would be pleased to answer any questions at this time.

Mr. CARNEY. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Jenkins for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM O. JENKINS, JR., DIRECTOR, HOMELAND SECURITY AND JUSTICE ISSUES, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Mr. JENKINS. Chairman Carney, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to discuss the Nation's preparedness for the next catastrophe disaster.

FEMA and DHS face a formidable task in leading the Nation's effort to develop and sustain a comprehensive, risk-based emergency management system, one that is capable of responding effectively to catastrophe disasters. Effective response requires, first, clear and clearly understood roles and responsibilities; second, the ability and willingness to effectively carry out those roles and re-

sponsibilities; and third, effective partnerships with the many organizations that will have a role in the response.

Roles and responsibilities are still not fully defined and well understood. We have not fully defined the capabilities needed for response, and we have no inventory of the existing capabilities, Government and non-Government, available for response to a catastrophe disaster. Key stakeholders have not always been included in the development of policies that define roles and responsibilities.

DHS and FEMA are taking steps in each of these areas, but is an open question as to how ready the Nation is to respond effectively to the next catastrophic disaster.

By definition, a catastrophe disaster is likely to quickly overwhelm State and local response capabilities, thus requiring substantial coordinated Federal response assistance, civilian and military. The sheer number of organizations, Government and non-Government, involved in the response to a catastrophe disaster makes it imperative that each understands their roles and responsibilities in the response. Unless roles and responsibilities are clear, precious time can be wasted, lives lost, as organizations determine who will do what. Response efforts may be duplicative, uncoordinated, and ineffective, as we saw with Hurricane Katrina.

Roles and responsibilities are still not always clear, as shown by three examples:

First, the agreement between NORTHCOM and the National Guard Bureau on how they will interact after a disaster does not define clearly each agency's roles and responsibilities, which could result in fragmented and uncoordinated response.

Second, there continue to be questions about the operational role of the principal Federal officials who represent the Secretary and the Federal coordinating official who is appointed under the Stafford Act and makes resource assignments to other Federal agencies.

Third, the National Strategy For Pandemic Influenza does not clarify how the Secretaries of DHS and HHS will jointly and strategically manage the response to an influenza pandemic over an extended period of time in multiple regions across the country.

Clear roles and responsibilities would be especially critical as we transition between Presidential administrations. Disasters cannot be expected to take a holiday during this period. To cope with the absence of many politically appointed executives, DHS has designated career executives to carry out specific responsibilities. Other departments and agencies should do so as well. It is critically important that these executives receive training and participate in at least some tabletop exercises on fulfilling their responsibilities. The aftermath of a major disaster is no time for on-the-job-training.

DHS has contracted with the Council for Excellence in Government to identify and map key roles and responsibilities for DHS and its Homeland Security partners for responding to disasters during the transition period. Once those materials have been developed, the Council plans to hold a series of training workshops for those in acting leadership positions.

Leading an effective response requires knowing what resources are available to do what and who has them. Currently, we do not

have a comprehensive inventory of the resources available for response to different types of disasters. DHS and FEMA have a variety of efforts under way to complete the needed guidance, operational plans, and performance metrics that can be used to assist capabilities and identify critical gaps. However, this effort is far from complete.

The DHS Inspector General has reported that responsibility for leading the development of a number of key capabilities, such as evacuation, community preparedness and interoperable communications is dispersed among multiple agencies and offices with no single point of accountability. This can complicate efforts to develop a clear focus on strategy, for building capabilities in these areas, and effectively coordinating with multiple stakeholders.

DHS and FEMA recognize they must build trust and effective partnerships with a wide variety of organizations that would have a role in responding to a catastrophic disaster. Thus, it is important that DHS and FEMA include these stakeholders in their development of key policies that affect them and have clear and transparent processes for how DHS and FEMA will do so.

Today, we are releasing our report on the process that was used to develop the national response framework. DHS did not follow its own work plan for involving stakeholders in the process, and cut communication with them in the midst of the revision. This undermines stakeholder trust and their sense of participation and ownership in the process.

FEMA subsequently implemented a broadly inclusive process for commenting on the September 2007 draft revision, which reduced much of the tension that had developed between DHS and the stakeholders. In addition, key non-Federal stakeholders, who are expected to be the primary responders to an influenza pandemic, were not involved in developing the national pandemic strategy and implementation plan.

In conclusion, FEMA and DHS have taken a number of steps to address the shortcomings that Katrina exposed in the Nation's ability to respond to a catastrophic disaster, but without clearly understood roles and responsibilities, a clear statement of needed capabilities and a comprehensive inventory of capabilities, it is an open question as to how ready DHS and the Nation are for the next catastrophic disaster.

That concludes my statement. I would be pleased to respond in any questions you or Members of the committee may have.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you for your testimony.

[The statement of Mr. Jenkins follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM O. JENKINS, JR.

JUNE 11, 2008

GAO HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights of GAO-08-868T, a report to Subcommittee on Management, Investigations and Oversight, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives.

Why GAO Did This Study

The Homeland Security Act was enacted in November 2002, creating the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to improve homeland security following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. The act centralized the

leadership of many homeland security activities under a single Federal department and, accordingly, DHS has the dominant role in implementing this national strategy.

This testimony discusses the status of DHS's actions in fulfilling its responsibilities to: (1) Establish policies to define roles and responsibilities for national emergency preparedness efforts and prepare for the transition between presidential administrations; and, (2) develop operational plans and performance metrics to implement these roles and responsibilities and coordinate Federal resources for disaster planning and response. This testimony is based on prior GAO work performed from September 2006 to June 2008 focusing on DHS's efforts to address problems identified in the many post-Katrina reviews.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making any new recommendations in this testimony. GAO has made recommendations in the prior reports identified in this testimony, and DHS has generally concurred with these recommendations and is taking action to implement them.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: OBSERVATIONS ON DHS'S PREPAREDNESS FOR
CATASTROPHIC DISASTERS

What GAO Found

DHS has taken several actions to define national roles and responsibilities and capabilities for emergency preparedness efforts in key policy documents and has begun preparing for the upcoming transition between presidential administrations. DHS prepared initial versions of key policy documents that describe what should be done and by whom (National Response Plan in 2004), how it should be done (the National Incident Management System in 2004) and how well it should be done (the interim National Preparedness Goal in 2005). DHS subsequently developed and issued revisions to these documents to improve and enhance its national-level policies, such as the National Preparedness Guidelines in 2007 which was the successor to the interim National Preparedness Goal. Most recently, DHS developed the National Response Framework (NRF), the successor to the National Response Plan, which became effective in March 2008. This framework describes the doctrine that guides national response actions and the roles and responsibilities of officials and entities involved in response efforts. Clarifying roles and responsibilities will be especially critical as a result of the coming change in administrations and the associated transition of key Federal officials with homeland security preparedness and response roles. To cope with the absence of many political appointed executives from senior roles, DHS has designated career executives to carry out specific responsibilities in the transition between presidential administrations and recently provided information to this committee on its transition plans. To assist in planning to execute an efficient and effective administration transition, DHS has also contracted with the Council for Excellence in Government to identify key roles and responsibilities for the Department and its homeland security partners for responding to disasters during the transition between administrations.

DHS is still developing operational plans to guide other Federal agencies' response efforts and metrics for assessing Federal capabilities. Two essential supplements to the new National Response Framework—response guides for Federal partners and an integrated planning system—are still under development. Also, DHS is still establishing a process to measure the Nation's overall preparedness based on a list of targeted capabilities and has not yet completed an inventory of all Federal response capabilities. The measures and metrics associated with these targeted capabilities are not standards, but serve as guides for planning, training, and exercise activities. However, DHS policy does not direct development of these capabilities to address national priorities for Federal agencies. For example, for the national priority to "Strengthen Interoperable and Operable Communications Capabilities" the National Preparedness Guidelines state that communications capabilities are developed to target levels in the States, tribal areas, territories, and designated urban areas that are consistent with measures and metrics established for targeted capabilities; Federal agencies' interoperability is not addressed.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in today's hearing to discuss the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) preparedness to lead Federal efforts to prepare for, prevent, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror. My remarks today focus on the preparation for and response to major and catastrophic disasters which require substantial Federal coordination with and assistance to State and local responders. My statement is

grounded in the work GAO has done to-date on DHS and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in preparing for, responding to and recovering from major disasters and catastrophes.

The need for Federal leadership in homeland security efforts was never greater than in the hours and days following the attacks of September 11, 2001, which ultimately led to the creation of DHS and the establishment of the Department's roles to provide strategic, national leadership as the focal point for Federal response and coordination. This role is defined in law and executive order and described in Federal emergency management strategies, policies, and procedures. In order to provide the coordinated national homeland security effort directed by the Congress and the President, DHS must provide leadership across a broad spectrum of stakeholders including: Federal agencies and departments, and DHS's own components; State, local and tribal governments, their emergency management agencies and other State agencies; sector-specific businesses and industry; voluntary organizations; and academia. It is an enormous challenge and responsibility. In leading national preparedness efforts, DHS through FEMA is responsible for developing national-level policies and doctrine to guide the efforts of these stakeholders to establish operational plans to carry out their roles and responsibilities and build, measure, and sustain their ability to do so effectively.

The effectiveness of DHS and FEMA in assuming these responsibilities was severely tested—and in some cases clearly found wanting—in the aftermath of the 2005 hurricane season and its catastrophic impact on the Gulf Coast. Numerous reports,¹ along with our own observations,² identified concerns about leadership of the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina and questions regarding the roles, and responsibilities of DHS, FEMA and other Federal agencies, as well as state and local officials and non-governmental organizations. As we reported in September 2006, effective preparation and response for catastrophic disasters requires that roles and responsibilities be clearly defined and understood and that responsible officials know what capabilities are needed to fulfill their roles and responsibilities, develop the operational plans to implement those roles and responsibilities, and establish, realistically test, and maintain the needed capabilities. To address many of the issues and problems highlighted by the Katrina response, Congress passed the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of October 2006 (Post-Katrina Act),³ which charged FEMA with the primary responsibility for coordinating and implementing key aspects of Federal emergency preparedness and response.

The Post-Katrina Act defines a catastrophic incident as any natural disaster, act of terrorism, or other man-made disaster that results in extraordinary levels of casualties or damage or disruption severely affecting the population (including mass evacuations), infrastructure, environment, economy, national morale, or Government functions in an area. Effective Federal preparation for and response to such an event requires planning, coordination, cooperation, and leadership within DHS and between DHS and other Federal agencies—civilian and military—as well as State and local governments, and the private and nonprofit sectors who have resources and capabilities needed for the response.

Today, I'd like to briefly discuss the status of DHS's actions in fulfilling its responsibilities to:

- establish policies to define roles and responsibilities for national emergency preparedness efforts and prepare for the transition between Presidential administrations; and
- develop operational plans and performance metrics to implement these roles and responsibilities and coordinate Federal resources for disaster planning and response.

My observations on DHS's and FEMA's development of policies, plans and metrics to lead Federal efforts in this statement are based on our prior work, focusing on DHS's efforts to address problems identified in the many post-Katrina reviews from

¹See reports: *A Failure of Initiative: Final Report of the House Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina* (Washington, DC: Feb. 15, 2006), U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs *Hurricane Katrina: A Nation Still Unprepared* (Washington, DC: May 2006), White House Homeland Security Council *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned* (Washington, DC: Feb. 23, 2006), Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General *A Performance Review of FEMA's Disaster Management Activities in Response to Hurricane Katrina*, OIG-06-32 (Washington, DC: Mar. 31, 2006).

²GAO, *Catastrophic Disasters: Enhanced Leadership, Capabilities, and Accountability Controls Will Improve the Effectiveness of the Nation's Preparedness, Response, and Recovery System*, GAO-06-618, (Washington, DC: Sept. 2, 2006).

³The Post-Katrina Act was enacted as Title VI of the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2007, Pub. L. No. 109-295, 120 Stat. 1355 (2006).

September 2006 to June 2008, as well as related work by the DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG). We have issued a number of GAO reports that have examined a wide variety of operational and management issues, made observations and recommendations, and followed up on our reports assessing DHS's leadership capabilities in working with other Federal agencies. Examples relevant to the hearing today include our reviews of emergency communications interoperability,⁴ evacuations of disadvantaged populations,⁵ national preparedness for pandemic flu,⁶ and coordination with the Department of Defense (DOD).⁷

SUMMARY

DHS has taken several actions to define national roles and responsibilities and capabilities for preparedness and response in key policy documents and has begun preparing for the upcoming transition between Presidential administrations. However, it needs to better integrate stakeholders in its revision of key policy documents, particularly the National Response Framework. To implement requirements of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and HSPDs 5 and 8,⁸ DHS issued initial versions of key policy documents in 2004 (NIMS and the National Response Plan) and 2005 (National Preparedness Goal) and has developed and issued revisions intended to improve and enhance its national-level policies. Most recently, the National Response Framework (NRF), the successor to the National Response Plan, became effective in March 2008; it describes the doctrine that guides national response actions and the roles and responsibilities of officials and entities involved in response efforts. Clarifying roles and responsibilities will be especially critical as a result of the coming change in administrations and the associated transition of key Federal officials with homeland security preparedness and response roles. To cope with the absence of many political appointed executives from senior roles, DHS has designated career executives to carry out specific responsibilities in the transition between Presidential administrations and recently provided information to this committee on its transition plans. To assist in planning to execute an efficient and effective administration transition, DHS has also contracted with the Council for Excellence in Government to identify key roles and responsibilities for the Department and its homeland security partners for responding to disasters during the transition between administrations.

DHS's efforts to develop operational plans to guide other Federal agencies' response efforts and metrics for assessing Federal capabilities are incomplete. In addition, DHS is still establishing a process to measure the Nation's overall preparedness based on the Target Capabilities List (TCL)⁹ and has not yet developed a complete inventory of all Federal response capabilities. For example, for the national priority to "Strengthen Interoperable and Operable Communications Capabilities" the National Preparedness Guidelines state that communications capabilities are developed to target levels in the States, tribal areas, territories, and designated urban areas that are consistent with measures and metrics established for targeted capabilities; Federal agencies' interoperability is not addressed.

⁴GAO, *First Responders: Much Work Remains to Improve Communications Interoperability*, GAO-07-301 (Washington, DC: April 2, 2007).

⁵GAO, *Status of Implementation of GAO Recommendations on Evacuation of Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations and Patients and Residents of Health Care Facilities*, GAO-08-544R (Washington, DC: Apr. 1, 2008).

⁶GAO, *Influenza Pandemic: Further Efforts Are Needed to Ensure Clearer Leadership Roles and an Effective National Strategy*, GAO-07-781 (Washington, DC: Aug. 14, 2007).

⁷GAO, *Homeland Defense U.S. Northern Command Has Made Progress but Needs to Address Force Allocation, Readiness Tracking Gaps, and Other Issues*, GAO-08-251 (Washington, DC: Feb. 16, 2008), *Homeland Defense: Steps Have Been Taken to Improve U.S. Northern Command's Coordination with States and the National Guard Bureau, but Gaps Remain*, GAO-08-252 (Washington, DC: April 16, 2008), and *Homeland Security: Enhanced National Guard Readiness for Civil Support Missions May Depend on DOD's Implementation of the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act*, GAO-08-311 (Washington, DC: April 16, 2008).

⁸The Homeland Security Act of 2002 and HSPD-5 required DHS to develop a comprehensive National Incident Management System (NIMS) and a comprehensive National Response Plan. Homeland Security Presidential Directive-8 (HSPD-8) of December 17, 2003 directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a national domestic all-hazards preparedness goal.

⁹The TCL is a comprehensive catalog of capabilities to perform homeland security missions, including performance measures and metrics for common tasks. The 37 capabilities referenced in the *Guidelines* span the full spectrum of homeland security missions. While the listing does not yet encompass every function that must be accomplished to prevent, protect against, respond to, or recover from a major event, it nonetheless offers a comprehensive starting point for planning.

BACKGROUND

DHS's Federal leadership role and responsibilities for emergency preparedness as defined in law and executive order are broad and challenging. To increase homeland security following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, President Bush issued the National Strategy for Homeland Security in July 2002,¹⁰ and signed the Homeland Security Act in November 2002 creating DHS. The act centralized the leadership of many homeland security activities under a single Federal department and, accordingly, DHS has the dominant role in implementing the strategy. As we noted in our review of DHS's mission and management functions, the National Strategy for Homeland Security underscores the importance for DHS of partnering and coordination.¹¹ For example, 33 of the strategy's 43 initiatives are required to be implemented by 3 or more Federal agencies. If these entities do not effectively coordinate their implementation activities, they may waste resources by creating ineffective and incompatible pieces of a larger security program.

In addition, more than 20 Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPDs) define DHS's and other Federal agencies' roles in leading efforts to prepare for and respond to disasters, emergencies, and potential terrorist threats. Directives that focus on DHS's leadership role and responsibilities for homeland security include HSPD-5 and HSPD-8 which are summarized below:

- Homeland Security Presidential Directive—5 (HSPD-5), issued on February 28, 2003, identifies the Secretary of Homeland Security as the principal Federal official for domestic incident management and directs him to coordinate the Federal Government's resources utilized in response to or recovery from terrorist attacks, major disasters, or other emergencies.¹² The Secretary of DHS, as the principal Federal official, is to provide standardized, quantitative reports to the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security on the readiness and preparedness of the Nation—at all levels of Government—to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents and develop and administer a National Response Plan (NRP). To facilitate this role, HSPD-5 directs the heads of all Federal departments and agencies to assist and support the Secretary in the development and maintenance of the NRP. (The plan was recently revised and is now called the National Response Framework.)
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive—8 (HSPD-8), issued in December 2003, called for a new national preparedness goal and performance measures, standards for preparedness assessments and strategies, as well as a system for assessing the Nation's overall preparedness. According to the HSPD, the Secretary is the principal Federal official for coordinating the implementation of all-hazards preparedness in the United States. In cooperation with other Federal departments and agencies, the Secretary coordinates the preparedness of Federal response assets. In addition, the Secretary, in coordination with other appropriate Federal civilian departments and agencies, is to develop and maintain a Federal response capability inventory that includes the performance parameters of the capability, the time (days or hours) within which the capability can be brought to bear on an incident, and the readiness of such capability to respond to domestic incidents. Last year, the President issued an annex to HSPD-8 intended to establish a standard and comprehensive approach to national planning and ensure consistent planning across the Federal Government. After the hurricane season of 2005, Congress passed the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006, that, among other things, made organizational changes within DHS to consolidate emergency preparedness and emergency response functions within FEMA. Most of the organizational changes, such as the transfer of various functions from DHS's Directorate of Preparedness to FEMA, became effective as of March 31, 2007. According to the act, the primary mission of FEMA is to:

“reduce the loss of life and property and protect the Nation from all hazards, including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters, by leading and supporting the Nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency

¹⁰ White House Office of Homeland Security, *National Strategy for Homeland Security* (Washington, DC: Jul. 16, 2002).

¹¹ GAO, *Department of Homeland Security: Progress Report on Implementation of Mission and Management Functions*, GAO-07-454 (Washington, DC: August 17, 2007).

¹² If and when any one of the following four conditions applies: (1) A Federal department or agency acting under its own authority has requested the assistance of the Secretary; (2) the resources of State and local authorities are overwhelmed and Federal assistance has been requested by the appropriate State and local authorities; (3) more than one Federal department or agency has become substantially involved in responding to the incident; or (4) the Secretary has been directed to assume responsibility for managing the domestic incident by the President.

management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation.”¹³

The act kept FEMA within DHS and enhanced FEMA’s responsibilities and its autonomy within DHS.¹⁴ As a result of the Post-Katrina Act, FEMA is the DHS component now charged with leading and supporting the Nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation.

DHS HAS ISSUED AND REVISED NATIONAL-LEVEL PREPAREDNESS POLICIES TO DEFINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

DHS Has Taken Action To Revise National Preparedness Policies but Should Plan for Better Integrating Stakeholders in the Future

DHS has taken action to define national roles and responsibilities and capabilities for preparedness and response which are reflected in several key policy documents: the National Response Framework, (what should be done and by whom); the National Incident Management System (NIMS) (how it should be done), and the National Performance Guidelines (how well it should be done). To implement requirements of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and HSPDs 5 and 8,¹⁵ DHS issued initial versions of these documents in 2004 (NIMS and the National Response Plan) and 2005 (National Preparedness Goal) and has developed and issued revisions intended to improve and enhance these national-level policies. Most recently, the National Response Framework (NRF), the successor to the National Response Plan, became effective in March 2008; it describes the doctrine that guides national response actions and the roles and responsibilities of officials and entities involved in response efforts. The NRF also includes a Catastrophic Incident Annex, which describes an accelerated, proactive national response to catastrophic incidents, as well as a Supplement to the Catastrophic Incident Annex—both designed to further clarify Federal roles and responsibilities and relationships among Federal, State and local governments and responders. Together, these documents are intended to provide a comprehensive structure, guidance, and performance goals for developing and maintaining an effective national preparedness and response system.

Because there are a range of Federal and non-Federal stakeholders with important responsibilities for emergency preparedness and response, it is important that FEMA and DHS include these stakeholders in its development and revisions of national policies and guidelines. Today we are issuing a report on the process DHS used to revise the NRF, including how DHS integrated key stakeholders. DHS included non-Federal stakeholders in the revision process during the initial months when issues were identified and draft segments written, and during the final months when there was broad opportunity to comment on the draft that DHS had produced. However, DHS deviated from the work plan it established for the revision process that envisioned the incorporation of stakeholder views throughout the process and did not provide the first full revision draft to non-Federal stakeholders for their comments and suggestions before conducting a closed, internal Federal review of the draft. DHS’s approach was also not in accordance with the Post-Katrina Act’s requirement that DHS establish a National Advisory Council (NAC) to incorporate non-Federal input into the revision process. Although the NAC was to be established within 60 days of the Act (i.e., December 4, 2006), FEMA, which assumed responsibility for selecting members, did not name NAC members until June 2007 because of the additional time needed to review hundreds of applications and select a high quality body of advisors, according to the FEMA Administrator. The NAC’s first meeting took place in October 2007 after DHS issued the revised plan for public comment. We are recommending that, as FEMA begins to implement and eventually review the 2008 National Response Framework, the Administrator develop and disseminate policies and procedures describing the conditions and time frames under which the next NRF revision will occur and how FEMA will conduct the next NRF revision. These policies and procedures should clearly describe how FEMA will integrate all stakeholders, including the NAC and other non-Federal stakeholders, into the revision process and the methods for communicating to these stakeholders. FEMA agreed with our recommendation.

¹³ 6 U.S.C. 313(b)(1).

¹⁴ GAO *Homeland Security: Preparing for and Responding to Disasters*, GAO-07-395T (Washington, DC: Mar. 9, 2007).

¹⁵ The Homeland Security Act of 2002 and HSPD-5 required DHS to develop a comprehensive National Incident Management System (NIMS) and a comprehensive National Response Plan. Homeland Security Presidential Directive-8 (HSPD-8) of December 17, 2003 directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a national domestic all-hazards preparedness goal.

The importance of involving stakeholders, both Federal and non-Federal, was underscored in our review of The National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza (National Pandemic Strategy) and The Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza (National Pandemic Implementation Plan) which were issued in November 2005 and May 2006 respectively, by the President and his Homeland Security Council.¹⁶ Key non-Federal stakeholders, such as state and local governments, were not directly involved in developing the National Pandemic Strategy and Implementation Plan, even though these stakeholders are expected to be the primary responders to an influenza pandemic. While DHS collaborated with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other Federal agencies in developing the National Pandemic Strategy and Implementation Plan, we found that there are numerous shared leadership roles and responsibilities, leaving uncertainty about how the Federal Government would lead preparations for and response to a pandemic. Although the DHS Secretary is to lead overall non-medical support and response actions and the HHS Secretary is to lead the public health and medical response, the plan does not clearly address these simultaneous responsibilities or how these roles are to work together, particularly over an extended period and at multiple locations across the country. In addition to the two Secretaries, we observed that the FEMA Administrator is now the principal domestic emergency management advisor to the President, the Homeland Security Council, and the DHS Secretary, pursuant to the Post-Katrina Act, adding further complexity to the leadership structure in the case of an influenza pandemic. Most of these leadership roles and responsibilities have not been tested under pandemic scenarios, leaving it unclear how they will work. We therefore recommended that DHS and HHS work together to develop and conduct rigorous testing, training, and exercises for pandemic influenza to ensure that Federal leadership roles are clearly defined and understood and that leaders are able to effectively execute shared responsibilities to address emerging challenges, and ensure these roles are clearly understood by all key stakeholders. We also recommended that, in updating the National Pandemic Implementation Plan, the process should involve key non-Federal stakeholders. DHS and HHS agreed with our recommendations, and said that they were taking or planned to take actions to implement our recommendations.

Presidential Transition Period Poses Challenges for DHS Leadership of National Preparedness Efforts

As we noted in our report on the preparation for and response to Hurricane Katrina issued in September 2006,¹⁷ clearly defined and understood roles and responsibilities are essential for an effective, coordinated response to a catastrophic disaster.

In any administration, the number of political appointees who depart rises as the President's term nears an end. Many cabinet secretaries and agency heads—in addition to the DHS Secretary and the FEMA Administrator—have response responsibilities in a major or catastrophic disaster, which could occur at any time. As political appointees depart, it is therefore essential that there be career senior executives who are clearly designated to lead their respective department and agency responsibilities for emergency response and continuity of operations. It is also important that they clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and have training to exercise them effectively.

DHS has designated career executives to carry out specific responsibilities in the transition between Presidential administrations and recently provided information to this committee on its transition plans. DHS has also contracted with the Council for Excellence in Government to map key roles and responsibilities for responding to disasters during the transition between administrations. The Council is to produce a visual mapping of these roles, plus supplementary documentation to support/explicate the mapping. Once those materials had been developed, the Council plans to hold a series of trainings/workshops for career civil servants in acting leadership positions and nominated political appointees based on the roles mapped out by the Council. In addition, the project includes training and workshops for those in acting leadership positions outside DHS.

¹⁶GAO, *Influenza Pandemic: Further Efforts Are Needed to Ensure Clearer Federal Leadership Roles and an Effective National Strategy*, GAO-07-781 (Washington, DC: Aug. 14, 2007).

¹⁷GAO-06-618.

DHS HAS NOT YET DEVELOPED COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONAL PLANS AND METRICS TO
COORDINATE FEDERAL RESPONSE RESOURCES

DHS Still Developing Ways to Lead National Planning

DHS is responsible for, but has not yet completed, leading the operational planning needed for an effective national response. Two essential supplements to the new National Response Framework—Federal Partner Response Guides and DHS’s Integrated Planning System—are still under development. The partner guides are designed to provide a ready reference of key roles and actions for Federal, State, local, tribal, and private-sector response partners. According to DHS, the guides are to provide more specific “how to” handbooks tailored specifically to the Federal Government and the other non-Federal stakeholders: State, local and tribal governments, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations. DHS has not established a schedule for completing these guides.

On December 3, 2007, President Bush issued Annex I to HSPD–8, entitled National Planning. The Annex describes the development of a national planning system in which all levels of government work together in a collaborative fashion to create plans for various scenarios and requires that DHS develop a standardized, integrated national planning process. This Integrated Planning System (IPS) is intended to be the national planning system used to develop interagency and intergovernmental plans based upon the National Planning Scenarios. The National Response Framework states that local, tribal, State, regional, and Federal plans are to be mutually supportive. Although the Annex calls for the new system to be developed in coordination with relevant Federal agencies and issued by February 3, 2008, DHS has not yet completed the IPS, and HSPD–8 Annex 1 (i.e. the White House) does not lay out a timeframe for release of the IPS.

According to FEMA’s Administrator, the agency’s National Preparedness Directorate, in coordination with its Disaster Operations Directorate and the DHS’s Office of Operations Coordination, has begun to develop a common Federal planning process that will support a family of related planning documents. These related planning documents will include strategic guidance statements, strategic plans, concept plans, operations plans, and tactical plans. The Annex to HSPD–8 is designed to “enhance the preparedness of the United States by formally establishing a standard and comprehensive approach to national planning” in order to “integrate and effect policy and operational objectives to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from all hazards.” According to the Administrator, FEMA continues to be a significant contributor to the draft IPS, and will also be involved in developing the family of plans for each of the national planning scenarios as required by the Annex.

In following up on the status of recommendations we made after Hurricane Katrina related to planning for the evacuation of transportation disadvantaged populations,¹⁸ we found that DHS’s leadership in this area had led to the implementation of some, but not all of our recommendations.¹⁹ For example, we recommended that DHS clarify within the National Response Plan that FEMA is the lead and coordinating agency to provide evacuation assistance when State and local governments are overwhelmed, and clarify the supporting Federal agencies’ responsibilities. In April 2008, we noted that DHS’s draft Mass Evacuation Incident Annex to the National Response Framework appears to clarify the role of FEMA and supporting Federal agencies, although the annex is still not finalized. Similarly, we recommended that DHS improve its technical assistance by, among other things, providing more detailed guidance on how to plan, train, and conduct exercises for the evacuation of transportation disadvantaged populations. DHS had developed basic guidance on the evacuation of transportation disadvantaged populations and was currently working on targeted guidance for States and localities. However, we had also recommended that DHS require, as part of its grant programs, all State and local governments plan, train, and conduct exercises for the evacuation of transportation-disadvantaged populations, but DHS had not done so. DHS agreed to consider our recommendation.

We also recommended that DHS clearly delineate how the Federal Government will assist State and local governments with the movement of patients and residents

¹⁸ GAO, *Disaster Preparedness: Limitations in Federal Evacuation Assistance for Health Facilities Should be Addressed*, GAO–06–826 (Washington, DC: July 20, 2006) and *Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: Actions Needed to Clarify Responsibilities and Increase Preparedness for Evacuations*, GAO–07–44 (Washington, DC: Dec. 22, 2006).

¹⁹ GAO, *Status of Implementation of GAO Recommendations on Evacuation of Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations and Patients and Residents of Health Care Facilities*, GAO–08–544R (Washington, DC: Apr. 1, 2008).

out of hospitals and nursing homes to a mobilization center where National Disaster Medical System (NDMS)²⁰ transportation begins. DHS and HHS have collaborated with State and local health departments in hurricane-prone regions to determine gaps between needs and available resources for hospital and nursing home evacuations and to secure local, State, or Federal resources to fill the gaps. Based on this analysis, HHS and DHS contracted for ground and air ambulances and para-transit services for Gulf and East Coast States.

At a more tactical level of planning, FEMA uses mission assignments to coordinate the urgent, short-term emergency deployment of Federal resources to address disaster needs. Mission assignments may be issued for a variety of tasks, such as search and rescue missions or debris removal, depending on the performing agencies' areas of expertise. According to DHS, the Department has agreements and prescribed mission assignments with 31 Federal agencies for a total of 223 assignments that essentially pre-arrange for the deployment of health equipment, a national disaster medical system, military equipment, and a whole host of other services in the event that they are necessary to support a State or a locality. FEMA officials said these assignments are listed in the operational working draft of the "Pre-Scripted Mission Assignment Catalogue," which FEMA intends to publish this month.

We have previously made recommendations aimed at improving FEMA's mission assignment process and FEMA officials concurred with our recommendations and told us that they are reviewing the management of mission assignments.²¹ In addition, reviews by the DHS OIG regarding mission assignments concluded that FEMA's management controls were generally not adequate to ensure that deliverables (missions tasked) met requirements; costs were reasonable; invoices were accurate; Federal property and equipment were adequately accounted for or managed; and FEMA's interests were protected.

According to the DHS OIG, mission assignment policies, procedures, training, staffing, and funding have never been fully addressed by FEMA, creating misunderstandings among Federal agencies concerning operational and fiduciary responsibilities and FEMA's guidelines regarding the mission assignment process, from issuance of an assignment through execution and close-out, are vague. Reflecting upon lessons learned from Hurricane Dean, the California wildfires, and the national-level preparedness exercise for top officials in October 2007, FEMA's Disaster Operations Directorate formed an intra/interagency Mission Assignment Working Group to review mission assignment processes and procedures and develop recommendations for the management of mission assignments, according to the OIG. Most recently, we reported²² on mission assignments for emergency transit assistance and recommended that DHS draft prescribed mission assignments for public transportation services to provide a frame of reference for FEMA, FTA, and State transportation departments in developing mission assignments after future disasters. DHS agreed to take our recommendation under consideration.

DHS Still Developing Ways To Define and Measure Federal Agencies' Capabilities

DHS issued an update to the national goal for preparedness in National Preparedness Guidelines in September 2007 to establish both readiness metrics to measure progress, and a system for assessing the Nation's overall preparedness and response capabilities. However, DHS has not yet completed efforts to implement the system and has not yet developed a complete inventory of all Federal response capabilities. According to the September 2007 Guidelines, DHS was still establishing a process to measure the Nation's overall preparedness based on the Target Capabilities List (TCL), which accompanies the Guidelines. Our ongoing work on national preparedness and the national exercise program is reviewing DHS's plans and schedules for completing this process.

In the Guidelines, the description for each capability includes a definition, outcome, preparedness and performance activities, tasks, and measures and metrics that are quantitative or qualitative levels against which achievement of a task or capability outcome can be assessed. According to the Guidelines, they describe how much, how well, and/or how quickly an action should be performed and are typically expressed in a way that can be observed during an exercise or real event. The meas-

²⁰ Under the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, primary authority for the National Disaster Medical System was transferred from DHS to HHS in January 2007. HHS and DHS are collaborating to implement this recommendation.

²¹ GAO, *Disaster Relief: Government-wide Framework Needed to Collect and Consolidate Information to Report on Billions in Federal Funding for the 2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes*, GAO-06-834 (Washington, DC: Sept. 6, 2006).

²² GAO, *Emergency Transit Assistance: Federal Funding for Recent Disasters, and Options for the Future*, GAO-06-243 (Washington, DC: Feb. 15, 2008).

ures and metrics are not standards, but serve as guides for planning, training, and exercise activities. However, the Guidelines do not direct development of capabilities to address national priorities to Federal agencies. For example, for the national priority to “Strengthen Interoperable and Operable Communications Capabilities” the Guidelines state that interoperable and operable communications capabilities are developed to target levels in the States, tribal areas, territories, and designated urban areas that are consistent with measures and metrics established in the TCL; Federal agencies’ interoperability is not addressed.

Prior disasters and emergencies, as well as State and Urban Area Homeland Security Strategies and status reports on interoperable communications, have shown persistent shortfalls in achieving communications interoperability.²³ These shortfalls demonstrate a need for a national framework fostering the identification of communications requirements and definition of technical standards. State and local authorities, working in partnership with DHS, need to establish State-wide interoperable communications plans and a national interoperability baseline to assess the current state of communications interoperability. Achieving interoperable communications and creating effective mechanisms for sharing information are long-term projects that require Federal leadership and a collaborative approach to planning that involves all levels of government as well as the private sector. In April 2007, we reported²⁴ that DHS’s SAFECOM program intended to strengthen interoperable public safety communications at all levels of government had made limited progress in and had not addressed interoperability with Federal agencies, a critical element to interoperable communications required by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004.²⁵ We concluded that the SAFECOM program has had a limited impact on improving communications interoperability among Federal, State, and local agencies. The program’s limited effectiveness can be linked to poor program management practices, such as the lack of a plan for improving interoperability across all levels of government, and inadequate performance measures to fully gauge the effectiveness of its tools and assistance. We recommended, among other things, that DHS develop and implement a program plan for SAFECOM that includes goals focused on improving interoperability among all levels of government. DHS agreed with the intent of the recommendation and stated that the Department was working to develop a program plan.

DHS had also not yet developed a complete inventory of Federal capabilities, as we reported in August 2007,²⁶ in assessing the extent to which DHS has met a variety of mission and management expectations. As a result, earlier this year Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee sent letters requesting information from 15 agencies with responsibilities under the National Response Framework to respond in the event of a nuclear or radiological incident. The committee asked for information on a variety of issues—for example, about evacuation, medical care, intelligence, forensics, and tracking fallout—to assess agencies’ current capabilities and responsibilities in the event of a nuclear attack. Other Federal agencies also need this information from DHS; in reviewing the Department of Defense’s (DOD) coordination with DHS, we reported in April 2008 that DOD’s Northern Command (NORTHCOM) has difficulty identifying requirements for capabilities it may need in part because NORTHCOM does not have more detailed information from DHS on the specific requirements or capabilities needed from the military in the event of a disaster.

This concludes my statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you or other Members of the subcommittee may have at this time.

Mr. CARNEY. I now recognize Ms. Wormuth for 5 minutes.

²³ According to the National Preparedness Guidelines, communications interoperability is the ability of public safety agencies (including police, fire, EMS, etc.) and service agencies (including public works, transportation, hospitals, etc.) to talk within and across agencies and jurisdictions via radio and associated communications systems; exchange voice, data, and/or video with one another on demand; and do so in real time, when needed, and when authorized.

²⁴ GAO, *First Responders: Much Work Remains to Improve Communications Interoperability*, GAO-07-301 (Washington, DC: April 2, 2007).

²⁵ Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-458, section 7303, 118 Stat. 3638, 3843-44, Dec. 17, 2004.

²⁶ GAO-07-454.

**STATEMENT OF CHRISTINE E. WORMUTH, SENIOR FELLOW,
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM, CENTER FOR STRA-
TEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

Ms. WORMUTH. Chairman Carney, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the subcommittee, thanks very much for asking me to testify at this hearing. It is a critically important subject.

In my view, America is not ready for the next catastrophe; and we are not ready as a Nation, it is not just DHS and the Federal Government. We have made progress since 9/11 and since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, but we have a ways to go.

I would like to focus today on seven problem areas and some recommendations that we have put forward that I think would at least help the Federal Government become more prepared.

Our new report, which I will shamelessly promote here, is called "Managing the Next Domestic Catastrophe: Ready (Or Not)", and you can find it on the CSIS Web site. It talks about this in much more detail.

We don't have time to talk a lot about the progress that DHS has made, but they have made progress; and I particularly would like to say, I am a big proponent of the Incident Management Planning Team. Nevertheless, a lot of work remains. So I will focus on the problem areas.

First, because the mission of securing the homeland is inherently an interagency mission at the Federal level, it is essential that the White House play a very strong leadership role in developing and implementing policy. For many reasons, this Homeland Security Council and its staff has not been able to do that, in my view. The next administration, I believe, would be well served to merge the Homeland Security Council and National Security Council and their staff into a single, strong organization. A merged, strong NSC would be an empowered partner that DHS needs, frankly, to make sure they are getting the interagency cooperation to do things like build integrated plans.

Second, DHS, in my view, is not sufficiently empowered to function as the incident manager at the Federal level, as is envisioned in HSPD-5. This is, in part, because in paper and in practice the Federal relationships, as Mr. Jenkins stated, are not really still very clear.

For example, the division of labor between DHS and the Department of Justice, particularly the FBI, in terms of preventing terrorist attacks here at home, is not very clear. In a similar vein, HSPD-5 grants a lot of leeway to the Secretary of Defense to determine, short of direction from the President, whether DOD will provide military forces during a catastrophe.

I do think the SECDEF should retain command and control over military forces. Of course, the Attorney General should have primacy in law enforcement issues, but the next President, in my view, should revise HSPD-5 to make clear that when it comes to the role of Federal coordinator for incident management, the Secretary of Homeland Security is first among equals in the Cabinet and has the responsibility to manage competing priorities during a catastrophe.

To further empower the Secretary, I think the chain of command inside of DHS needs to be clarified. As the Federal coordinator for

incident management, the Secretary is the official accountable to the President. The FEMA Administrator is the principal advisor to the President and to the Secretary on emergency management and can advise the President directly, but the Secretary as the overall coordinator has the responsibility and the authority to put those recommendations into a larger context. This needs to be made clearer than it is today.

Third, the ability of DHS to manage the next catastrophe I think is also constrained, frankly, by just the traditional Stafford Act mechanisms for disaster assistance. It is not clear that the traditional Stafford Act mechanisms are going to be sufficient if we have a nuclear detonation here at home.

Moving beyond these mechanisms I think is going to be very sensitive because it gets into the issue of the balance of power between the Federal Government and the States. But this is something I think that DHS, the President, and the Governors should be talking about much more openly, given the threats we face today.

Fourth, for a variety of reasons, I would say the Federal Government still doesn't have a working process to get detailed inter-agency plans developed. We have made progress. The IMPT is a major step forward. But we still don't have detailed plans that leaders can take off the shelf and adapt during a crisis that are approved, frankly, and agreed to by all of the interagency. I think a merged NSC exercising a real leadership role would help us get those plans.

Fifth, and closely related to the planning issue, is the fact that we do not yet have developed requirements for the Federal Government for what we actually need in terms of capabilities to be able to respond to a disaster. DHS very much, in my view, needs to take the lead in developing these requirements, figuring out what capabilities we need, what we already have, where there are gaps, and which agencies should be responsible for which capabilities.

Sixth, DHS faces, frankly, I think, as you all know, a very complicated oversight structure here in Congress. There are more than 70 committees and subcommittees overseeing DHS, which means that DHS officials spend a lot of time up here on the Hill trying to answer all of the issues. Frankly, it has been a challenge, I think, for Congress to develop a core set of Members who have deep expertise in these matters because every single Senator and almost every Member of the House has some sort of oversight over the Department.

We really very much need reform, as many have noted.

Finally, DHS has been basically, in my view, almost reorganized to its knees. This has created an incredible amount of turbulence. The morale of the work force is low. There is a lot of turnover with senior people. While DHS will be a very tempting target for the new administration to reorganize, a major reorganization right out of the gates, I think, would actually be very counterproductive. DHS needs time to mature, and reorganization is not a panacea.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify, and I am happy to take questions.

Mr. CARNEY. I thank you for your testimony.

[The statement of Ms. Wormuth follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHRISTINE E. WORMUTH

JUNE 11, 2008

Chairman Carney, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify on the readiness of the Department of Homeland Security to manage the next catastrophe. It is a subject of critical importance and I am honored to have the opportunity to share my views with you.

I would like to focus in my remarks on where DHS has made progress toward preparing to lead during the next catastrophe and where there are still problem areas, and offer some recommendations on how to address the challenges that remain. I will focus on how DHS—and the Federal Government as a whole—is organized to manage catastrophic events, whether roles and missions for incident management are clear and well understood, and whether the processes we have in place to prepare for and respond to a catastrophe are sufficient.

In my view, America is not ready for the next catastrophe. We are not ready as a Nation—it is not just DHS and the rest of the Federal Government. We have certainly made progress since the September 11 attacks and the response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, but there are still a number of very pressing problem areas that urgently need to be fixed. This is a national challenge and one that concerns not just the Federal Government but State and local governments, the private sector, the nonprofit sector and individual citizens, but I am going to limit my comments for this hearing to primarily what needs to be done at the Federal level. I would like to focus on seven problem areas and make some recommendations in each area that I believe would make the Nation better prepared for the next catastrophe, whatever it might be. One of my colleagues at CSIS, Anne Witkowsky, and I just published a report last week called *Managing the Next Catastrophe: Ready (Or Not)* that discusses these recommendations and several more in much more detail. It can be found on the CSIS Web site, which is www.csis.org.

PROGRESS

Before leaping into a discussion of what still needs to be done, it is important to note at least briefly where DHS has made progress in terms of preparing for future catastrophes. Although the Department has a very complex and difficult mission and is a very young bureaucracy, it has taken steps to improve the preparedness of this Nation. DHS published the new National Response Framework—the successor to the National Response Plan—in January 2008. The NRF describes the basic framework for how the Federal Government will work with State and local entities during disasters. The NRF is shorter, clearer and easier to read than its predecessors, and should help stakeholders at all levels gain a better understanding of what they are supposed to do during a crisis, and what organizations will be in place to coordinate response efforts.

At the direction of Congress, DHS also has taken steps to strengthen FEMA. FEMA's relationship to the rest of DHS has been clarified, it now has direct responsibility for most preparedness issues, and it is revitalizing its regional offices throughout the country, which should help synchronize Federal, State and local activities. Of particular note is the emphasis FEMA and other DHS components have placed on working with State and local governments to improve planning and preparedness for hurricanes and other challenges such as pandemic flu.

In the last 2 years, DHS also has made catastrophic planning a major focus area and has devoted considerable time and energy to planning issues. In 2006 the Department created the Incident Management Planning Team to lead an interagency effort to build plans designed to address the challenges described in the fifteen National Planning Scenarios. FEMA has its own planning cell, the Operational Planning Unit. In December 2007 the Homeland Security Council issued Annex 1 to HSPD-8, which calls for DHS to lead the development of a new Integrated Planning System to build a more formal and standardized planning system for catastrophes. It is very positive that DHS, and to a degree the larger interagency, has placed so much focus on strengthening catastrophic planning and trying to engage the entire interagency in this process. At the same time, despite all of the time and energy that has been spent on planning in the last 2 years, there is still little to show for these efforts in terms of concrete plans that Government leaders could take off the shelf and adapt for use during a crisis.

PROBLEMS

Despite progress that has been made, a number of problems remain that require the urgent attention of the next President and his administration.

First, because the mission of securing the homeland and preparing to manage a domestic catastrophe is inherently an interagency mission at the Federal level—and no one Cabinet Secretary has authority over another—it is essential the White House play a strong role in these areas. To date, this White House has not played a strong enough role in developing preparedness policies or in overseeing their implementation. The Homeland Security Council and its staff is overshadowed by the National Security Council organization, and it was not reassuring that the position of Homeland Security Adviser was left vacant recently for about 4 months.

The next administration would be well served to merge the Homeland Security Council and National Security Council and their staffs into a single strong organization that plays a central role in developing Federal homeland security policy and in overseeing its implementation. A newly merged, strong NSC would be the empowered partner that DHS needs to ensure that all members of the interagency are working together to build integrated plans for catastrophes and developing the necessary capabilities to respond quickly and effectively during a crisis.

Second, although DHS is named in HSPD-5 as the Federal coordinator for management of a domestic incident, DHS is not sufficiently empowered for this role, in part because on paper and in practice, Federal relationships in this area are still unclear and somewhat confusing. While I do not advocate that the Secretary of Homeland Security be given directive authority over other Cabinet officials, I do argue the Secretary of Homeland Security should be the “first among equals” when it comes to preparing for and managing catastrophes. While the Homeland Security Act of 2002 states that a primary mission of DHS is to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, HSPD-5 states that the Attorney General will coordinate the activities of other members of the law enforcement community to prevent terrorist attacks. The division of labor between DHS and the Department of Justice, in particular the FBI, is not entirely clear, most notably in terms of who during a catastrophe has the authority, short of the President, to resolve conflicts between law enforcement objectives and other equally crucial objectives, such as saving lives. In a similar vein, HSPD-5 makes clear that short of direction from the President, the Secretary of Defense has considerable leeway to determine whether to provide military forces for civil support missions. If a catastrophe were to occur tomorrow, the Secretary of Homeland Security does not have the authority to immediately require the Defense Department to provide military forces to aid in the response. In many instances this lack of official authority might never become an issue—DoD might well lean forward to assist DHS—but if there were any disagreement about priorities, time spent resolving that disagreement and bringing it to the President translates into lives lost on the ground.

The next President, with help from Congress, should make clear that as the Federal coordinator for incident management, the Secretary of Homeland Security is first among equals relative to other Cabinet officials during a major domestic incident. HSPD-5 should be revised to clarify Federal roles and responsibilities, particularly those of DHS, the Department of Justice and the Department of Defense. The Secretary of Defense should retain command and control over military forces, and the Attorney General should have primacy in law enforcement issues, but a revised HSPD-5 should make clear that the responsibility for managing competing priorities belongs to the Secretary of Homeland Security during a catastrophe.

Although our form of Government does not allow for unity of command at the Federal level in a military sense, the chain of command inside DHS does need to be clarified. Even with the new NRF and the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, it is not clear how the FEMA Administrator relates to the Secretary of Homeland Security during a crisis, and the Principal Federal Official (PFO) does not have authority over the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), despite all of the confusion about the roles of the PFO and FCO during the response to Hurricane Katrina.

The next President and Congress should clarify the DHS chain of command during catastrophes. As the Federal coordinator for incident management, the Secretary of Homeland Security is the official accountable during a crisis to the President. The FEMA Administrator is the principal adviser to the President and the Secretary of Homeland Security on emergency management and can advise the President directly on these matters, but as the overall incident manager, the Secretary of Homeland Security has the authority to put the advice of the FEMA Administrator into a larger context. On the ground, there should be a single DHS senior official that reports to the Secretary through the FEMA Administrator. Clearly during catastrophes the senior DHS official that is managing the political aspects of the crisis and reaching out to the public and press cannot also be the person who is coordinating the actual provision of Federal assistance, but that operational person needs to report to the senior DHS person on the ground. You cannot have unity of effort

if there are two senior DHS officials on the ground reporting to different people in Washington, without any authority over each other. In our report we call for a new position—the Lead Federal Coordinator—who reports to the Secretary through the FEMA Administrator and who has a deputy with the authorities of the FCO. It doesn't matter what you call this—you could retain the title of Principal Federal Official or eliminate the PFO position and retain only the FCO title—but the key is to have DHS personnel on the ground speaking with one voice, and only one senior DHS official reporting back to Washington.

Third, DHS's ability to manage the next catastrophe is constrained by the fact that the traditional Stafford Act mechanisms to respond to disasters are probably not sufficient to manage an actual catastrophe—something like the detonation of a nuclear device or the simultaneous explosions of dirty bombs in a handful of cities around the country. The formal process of making a Presidential declaration of emergency, requiring a request for assistance from a State government and then parsing out those requests to the various Federal agencies to be filled is simply too slow and linear to be effective during a catastrophe. In a similar vein, while the Stafford Act gives the Federal Government the authority to provide accelerated assistance to save lives, prevent suffering and mitigate severe damage, as a matter of policy, DHS and other agencies cannot forward deploy assets into a State without permission from the State government. Moving beyond traditional Stafford Act assistance mechanisms is a very sensitive area because it gets into the balance of power between the Federal Government and those of the 50 States, but given the threats we face in the post-9/11 environment, it is important that we start talking more openly about these issues.

The next administration should work with Congress and State Governors to develop a more streamlined process to provide Federal help that balances the sovereign rights of the States. A minimalist approach might be to explore how to revise current policies to better reflect the authority the Stafford Act already grants the Federal Government to provide accelerated assistance. This could include development of policies that would enable the Federal Government under certain extreme circumstances to deploy directly into States and begin directing Federal assets. A more fundamental approach might be to amend an existing law, such as the Defense Against Weapons of Mass Destruction Act, and create a sort of analogue to the Stafford Act explicitly designed to address the provision of Federal assistance during a catastrophe when a State government is incapacitated and unable to carry out some or all of its functions.

Fourth, for a variety of reasons, the Federal Government has yet to put in a place a working process to develop detailed plans for how to respond to various catastrophes. We have the fifteen National Planning Scenarios, but in terms of plans all we have is the NRF, which as you know is really just a blueprint for organizational relationships. The NRF is not a plan in the sense of describing what tasks need to be done, what capabilities are needed to execute those tasks, and how quickly capabilities need to be put on-scene. To truly be prepared for the next catastrophe, DHS and the rest of the interagency—not to mention State governments—need to have these kinds of more detailed plans, which would at least provide a baseline for action that could be modified as needed during a crisis.

Once again, developing these kinds of plans is fundamentally an interagency undertaking. As such, a merged NSC and its staff need to take a leadership role in ensuring these plans are developed, and just as importantly, that the capabilities they call for are fed into the resourcing process for the Federal Government. Plans developed at the Federal level need to be linked to plans at the State and local level. The FEMA regional offices, if fully realized, provide a “one stop shop” for that kind of coordination at the regional level, and the very new effort to build Task Forces for Emergency Readiness at the State level is another mechanism that could link State and Federal plans together in a much more meaningful way than we have achieved so far.

Fifth, and very closely related to the planning issue, is the lack of defined requirements or capabilities for what the Federal Government needs to respond to catastrophes. CSIS has highlighted this shortcoming in reports published in 2005 and 2006—and in our new report, and the Commission on National Guard and Reserves also highlighted this problem, as has the GAO in numerous reports. DHS has got to take the lead in identifying what capabilities are needed, what the Federal Government already has, what gaps might need to be filled, and which agencies should be responsible for which capabilities. OMB and NSC together need to track this process and ensure that agency budgets submitted to Congress include funding for identified requirements. Until we get these requirements defined, Cabinet agencies are unlikely to invest in developing them and hence it is very hard to make progress

toward being prepared, no matter what organizational charts and other processes we have in place.

DHS has many internal challenges, but a major external drag on its effectiveness and its ability to prepare for future catastrophes is the byzantine oversight structure it faces in Congress. DHS is overseen by more than 70 committees and subcommittees—maybe more. While about 80 percent of DoD's oversight is concentrated in six committees, every single Senator and almost every Member of the House of Representatives have some degree of oversight over DHS business. This incredibly complicated oversight structure undercuts the effectiveness of the Federal homeland security enterprise in a number of ways. For example, senior DHS officials spend an inordinate time on the Hill trying to be responsive to their many masters. Oversight is critical, but at the same time DHS leaders must have sufficient time to focus on their primary responsibility, which is to develop and oversee the implementation of policies to ensure the security of the homeland and prevent terrorist attacks. At the same time, the lack of a center of gravity in the House and Senate for oversight of DHS has undermined the ability of Congress to conduct this very central responsibility and weakened congressional efforts to develop a core group of Members with deep expertise in homeland security matters.

Many have called for reform of the congressional oversight process for homeland security, most notably the 9/11 Commission. Efforts to streamline the oversight structure to date have not made much progress, but there is no question that Congress could greatly strengthen the Federal Government's homeland security enterprise if it substantially simplified its oversight structure in this area.

Although I am recommending a number of changes for DHS, the final problem area I want to highlight is the fact that the constant reorganizations of DHS that have characterized its short history to date have undercut its effectiveness. DHS has experienced so much bureaucratic turbulence it is a wonder any progress has been made. The constant battles between FEMA and DHS headquarters have left a lot of blood on the floor, the morale of the DHS workforce tends to rank among the lowest in the entire Government, and turnover of senior DHS officials has been substantial.

DHS's generally poor reputation in the executive branch and in Congress will make it extremely tempting for a new administration to launch a massive reorganization. That said, I believe that yet another dramatic reorganization of DHS would be among one of the worst ways to try to improve the Nation's preparedness. Major structural reforms right away would be highly disruptive, painfully time-consuming and at the end of the day would probably yield little in the way of results. DHS should be allowed to mature. DoD took 40 years to evolve from the War Department into the Defense Department, and it took another 20 years for the Goldwater-Nichols reforms to transform DoD into the integrated agency it is today. Without question DHS has to make more progress in the next 8 years than it has in the last 5 years or so, but reorganization is not a panacea.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

I've focused on problems in my statement, but it is important not to lose sight of all that DHS has done, particularly in light of all of the obstacles it faces as a new and very large Federal department. At the same time, what matters to most Americans is not how far we have come, but how far we still have to go in terms of being prepared for the next catastrophe. Implementing the recommendations I've discussed this morning would not solve all of the problems we face in terms of improving our preparedness, but they would move the Federal Government much closer to where it needs to be in this area. Thank you very much for the opportunity to share these views with you; it is a privilege to be asked to comment on such an important issue for our country.

Mr. CARNEY. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Walker for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF JAMES M. WALKER, JR., DIRECTOR, ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, ACCOMPANIED BY BROCK LONG, DIRECTOR, STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is nice to appear before you again. I am deeply humbled by your recognition of my

military service, and I would also like to return the compliment to you for your military service.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. WALKER. Sir, I got a chance to listen to the other witnesses today. I know that my statement will go in the record. I would like to summarize real quick.

We talk about the main thing, but the main thing for us is our citizens. In Alabama, we work pretty hard to promote personal responsibility. Somewhere along the line, somebody told people that we are supposed to do everything for everybody, and that is not necessarily the truth. They have got to take responsibility for themselves.

At the State level, we have got to invest and empower our first responders, and some of the programs in my testimony talk about things like Virtual Alabama, where we put situational awareness into the hands of the first responders. We spend a lot of time talking about what decision-makers in Washington know or what they should know. But I think it is a lot more important that the people actually turning the wrenches and shovels, what do they know and when do they know it, because they are the ones doing the heavy lifting for this country.

Ninety-nine percent of what happens in this country happens outside the Beltway and down in our State and local communities. That is really where we need to put the focus, but there is a bit of a disconnect.

You mentioned getting on board with Federal agencies. How about getting on board with the States and locals and the millions of first responders who have an investment in not only their country, but in their community and what we are doing for them?

I can't thank you enough for the homeland security grant dollars that the Congress has sent down to the States and locals. They have made an incredible difference. We actually come up with some pretty good ideas and some pretty innovative programs. That can actually occur. Things can really happen and go really well that weren't contrived here inside the Beltway. We have got a few in Alabama, and they are embedded in my testimony.

As a former military person, the best way that I can describe the dynamics that are going on is when I was an Army officer in the late 1990's. We were immersed in the Balkans, and the active Army was doing all the heavy lifting for the Department of Defense, or the active components were. We realized the operational tempo was killing the active Army. So a decision was made to send a National Guard division to Bosnia. You could hear this huge sucking sound come out of the Pentagon: We can't send a National Guard unit to do what we see as an active Army mission.

Well, they did it and the unit performed magnificently. As a result, we have had more Guard units. As you know, the op tempo now among the National Guard in Southwest Asia, they have become part of the fighting force. There is no "we/they" mentality between the active force and the Reserve components and the Guard.

The same thing is going to happen with the Federal Department of Homeland Security if you consider they are the active Army and those of us in the trenches are the National Guard. There is going to be a tipping point where they realize they can't do it without us.

They can't do the border and immigration functions, they can't do the disaster response.

The emphasis needs to be where we are, and eventually we are going to tip this thing where they realize that we are an eager and welcome partner, and there is nothing that we can't do. We have got a vested interest because we are living with those citizens. We are down there in the cities of Main Street with them, as our first responders are also empowering us and would be incredibly useful, and we have got to continue to do that.

So that is the crux of my testimony today, Mr. Chairman.

We spend a lot of time talking about personal responsibility and engaging our citizens. We passed a couple of public safety announcements that were privately donated to the State of Alabama. With your indulgence, I would ask the clerk to hit the button and you can see a couple of these examples we have in Alabama.

Mr. CARNEY. So ordered.

[VIDEO PLAYED.]

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That just emphasizes that we are trying to promote personal responsibility and make the "main thing" the main thing, give our first responders the equipment and the intelligence that they need, and then partner with the Federal Government and try to bridge that disconnect between the heavy lifting that is being done in our communities that is translated back in the interfaces there.

So I look forward to any questions you may have. Thank you, sir.
[The statement of Mr. Walker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES M. WALKER, JR.

JUNE 11, 2008

Mr. Chairman and Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today representing State and local interests during this important hearing.

As Director of the Alabama Department of Homeland Security, it is my responsibility to manage the homeland security preparedness programs and initiatives Governor Bob Riley wants in place to serve Alabama's citizens and communities. During these past 5 years of the Riley administration in Alabama, our State has seen exponential improvements in first responder capabilities, citizen preparedness, and situational awareness.

Alabama has suffered the wrath of three major hurricanes and a tropical storm in the past 5 years. Each storm allowed us to learn valuable lessons about what it takes to manage a catastrophe on a broad scale. In every instance, we reviewed our tactics, techniques, and procedures with experience as our guide and made adjustments as required. Just recently, Governor Riley declared that Alabama is as ready as it has ever been for the start of yet another hurricane season.

Alabama's current high state of preparedness is due to many factors. First, the Federal homeland security grants appropriated by the Congress and awarded to each State by the Department of Homeland Security have proved invaluable to Alabama, and to every other State and territory in our country. These appropriations have allowed us to build much-needed homeland security capabilities, better equip our first responders, train and exercise our techniques and procedures, and engage our citizens in ways never before possible.

The success of these grants, I believe, is rooted in the idea that 99 percent of the heavy lifting to protect and manage disasters in our country is done outside the D.C. Beltway at the State and local level by the thousands of men and women who strap on their equipment every day to keep the cities and streets of America safe. Any investment we can make in State and local first responders and citizen preparedness is a sound one.

I cannot thank the Congress enough for its leadership in continuing to appropriate homeland security dollars to Main Street, Alabama and all around the country. However, I would like to make two points about homeland security grants.

First, please continue the annual appropriation of homeland security dollars to our States and territories. They have made an enormous and positive impact in Alabama, but there is still much, much more that needs to be done.

Second, factor predictability into the grants and give Governors and State homeland security directors as much flexibility as possible in how these grant appropriations can be used. With all due respect, Governor Riley and I believe we have a better feel for what it will take to prepare for and manage disasters in Alabama than our Federal partners do, so please give us the flexibility to make the best decisions we can for our State along with the expectation that we will continue to receive funding for the important programs we have in place. As you can appreciate, it is tough to develop a plan or implement a program without being able to predict how, when, or if you will be able to fund it.

The heart of our State homeland security program lies in setting the right conditions that will ensure first responders and decisionmakers have the right information and the right equipment available when they need it. Advances in situational awareness and asset management have experienced a sea change of improvements in Alabama during the past 5 years.

The ability for public safety officials to reliably communicate using radio networks is essential to gaining and maintaining a clear situational picture. Alabama has enhanced interoperable radio communications by upgrading existing systems and utilizing a common bridging platform to connect disparate radio systems across the State. Investing in one comprehensive State-wide radio system with a common platform was not an affordable option for us. Instead, we leveraged technology by installing frequency bridges in each of Alabama's 67 counties. This allows local agencies using different frequency bands to communicate.

During a large-scale event where local interoperability can become overwhelmed, we have positioned eight regional communications vehicles throughout Alabama. In addition to bridging technology, these vehicles have satellite connectivity, Internet access, and streaming video cameras. If Alabama were to experience a total collapse of communications infrastructure we can restore communication fairly quickly for first responders with portable antenna towers that accompany our regional communications vehicle, and by utilizing organic Alabama National Guard disaster communication capabilities.

This spring, Alabama conducted an experiment with the U.S. Army attaching antennas and video cameras to a high altitude aerostat. This technology, for example, would give Governor Riley and other State and Federal officials a panoramic picture of the Alabama coastline post hurricane, and allow us to direct assets and people where they are needed most.

In Alabama we have also developed an effective situational awareness framework in which to manage public/private sector programs and operational data. The program is called Virtual Alabama. It is an affordable visualization tool using Google Earth technology that employs the power of a secure Internet-based application to make a positive, immediate difference to first responders. The advantage to our first responder population is that Virtual Alabama is free for their use and inexpensive to the State. Local and State officials can layer and tailor secure infrastructure information about their jurisdictions and feed it into a broader database that will give State and Federal decisionmakers valuable and timely information.

With existing Geographic Information System (GIS) and orthophotographic data, we are able to transform massive amounts of useful information into a common operational picture. Examples of real-time applications include emergency evacuation routing, vehicle and asset tracking, critical infrastructure mapping, plume modeling, real-time sensor feeds, real-time streaming video, risk visualization, and post-event imagery placed alongside pre-event imagery.

Virtual Alabama was deemed fully operational by Governor Riley on November 1, 2007. Embedded in the program is the best imagery available for each of Alabama's 67 counties. Experts tell us it is the most comprehensive database in the country. To date, we have over 3,000 subscribers using Virtual Alabama, representing over 550 local, State, and Federal agencies and entities. I believe we have only scratched the surface on this emerging technology, and hope DHS will elect to do more to help us exploit this affordable technology around the country.

Alabama has made remarkable strides toward improving information sharing and situational awareness within our criminal justice and public safety community. We've wisely invested our homeland security grant funding to upgrade outdated 1980's-era flat file computer architecture. Alabama's hard-wired terminal architecture has now been replaced with a real-time, 21st century Internet-based system available to all 850 State-wide law enforcement agencies, law enforcement officials, and other emergency responders throughout the State. This improved capability also

includes a homeland security reporting system for providing information from the “cop on the beat” to our information fusion capability.

We can take National Crime Information Center (NCIC) information and other criminal justice information and transmit it electronically to law enforcement officers with data terminals or any type of cell phone, Blackberry, or other personal digital assistant device. Additionally, this service is free of charge to local law enforcement and encourages their participation in sharing, gathering, and disseminating information.

Finally, Alabama is investing both public and private resources to promote citizen and community preparedness. First responders make up only 1 percent of the population in Alabama. Our volunteers active in disasters and faith-based organizations make up another 1 percent of our population. For us to succeed in managing a catastrophe, it will take the collective efforts of first responders, volunteers, and the remaining 98 percent of our citizens. In that regard, Alabama has an aggressive public outreach and citizen preparedness campaign called Ready Alabama which delivers the message for Alabamians to “Be informed, Be involved, Be Ready.” More information is available at www.readyalabama.org.

Ready Alabama is a portfolio of programs that encourages individuals to engage in citizen service by becoming volunteers in disaster preparedness and response, pursuing additional emergency training, creating family communications plans, building emergency supply kits, knowing evacuation measures, and other relevant information. Our goal is to get citizens to take personal responsibility before and after a disaster for their families and perhaps even their neighbors in a catastrophic event.

In a disaster, first responders will be decisively engaged assisting our population that is unable to care for themselves. We tell our citizens that if the able-bodied do not take personal responsibility they risk becoming part of the response problem and not part of the response solution, thus tying up the efforts of first responders to restore order and assist those who truly cannot help themselves.

In the weeks and months ahead, Alabama will continue to identify and develop new requirements and systems to better serve our citizens. However, we must be able to rely upon Federal assistance via the family of State homeland security grants to further our efforts.

There is a real concern among the State homeland security directors around the country that there are people in the Federal Government who want to put the interests of the accountants ahead of the interests of our citizens. That would be a grave mistake. Collectively, we’ve made great strides since the attacks of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, but, as I stated out the outset, important work still remains.

Thank you again for the privilege of appearing before you today. I look forward to addressing any questions you may have.

Executech

Alabama puts mashups to work

Virtual Alabama pulls data from various sources and overlays it on Google Earth

BY BEN BAIN

If stars fell on Alabama, as the old jazz standard recounts, first responders would know exactly where they landed thanks to a new virtual version of the state.

Virtual Alabama, created by the state's Homeland Security Department, uses Google's Earth Enterprise software to generate 3-D representations of geospatial and related data to help first responders and other government officials analyze complex situations in an intuitive fashion.

The system enables authorities to create data mashups by quickly pulling together information from an array of sources across the state's 67 counties, using one data layer or another, depending on the situation.

For example, in a natural disaster, authorities might need maps that show the

location of utilities and water, power and gas lines. Later, they might need to pull up high-resolution aerial photos and information on property values in the region. In other cases, they might pull in video from cameras along a highway or in schools.

And although stars falling on Alabama are only metaphorical, tornadoes and hurricanes are real threats. In such events, state officials need quick access to geospatial data so they can plan and coordinate their responses.

Officials also can use geospatial information to perform disaster assessments or prepare for disaster recovery. Virtual Alabama has additional uses in law enforce-

ment investigations and training.

"This has just really been a mass collaboration," said Chris Johnson, Virtual Alabama's project manager and vice president of geospatial technologies at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Alabama.

That's collaboration of the most grassroots kind.

Counties statewide gathered and contributed complete sets of high-resolution aerial photographs and geospatial data at their own expense, trusting that pooling data on every nook and cranny from Mobile to Athens would pay off.

Johnson and Jim Walker, Alabama's homeland security director,

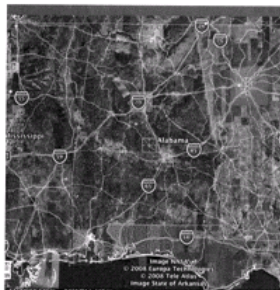
went county to county to convince local authorities that the project would be worthwhile — and judging from initial results, the counties have gotten their money's worth.

The complete set of data would be worth \$40 million if sold in the private sector, Johnson said.

Walker's department paid about \$150,000 for the Google Earth Enterprise software, which enabled them to cull the data and make it useful. The state agency received grants from the federal Homeland Security Department to purchase Google Earth Fusion and Server software and some hardware.

"It's very inexpensive, and there is not a single homeland security director in the country that can't afford it," Walker said. "Everybody can afford it, but what's important is that you own it."

"You are not tied to the appropriations of the federal government for new products or tools," he added. "This is something that you can do and manage to ben-



Getting all the data together

Alabama homeland security officials say Virtual Alabama will benefit many sectors and agencies. Those benefits are expected to include:

- Common operating picture and situational awareness.
- Critical infrastructure mapping.
- Vehicle and asset tracking.
- Real-time sensor feeds.
- Visualization of risks.

— Ben Bain

efit your state without a lot of outside interference.”

States already have a significant investment in geospatial data, said Rob Painter, senior federal manager at Google. Google Earth simply helps them integrate and visualize the data so it's easier to analyze.

Virtual Alabama is “a great model when you think about information sharing in government and wanting to break the stovepipes,” Painter said, adding that Google Earth Enterprise users do not have to come back and buy another license every time they want to grant access to a different partnering agency.

More than 35 Alabama state agencies and 35 federal agencies already have access to the program.

Other states have also seen that value — the Virtual Alabama team has given presentations to 15 other states, and Louisiana has created a similar resource.

The federal DHS is interested and is working with Alabama's team to develop

a pilot program on a national scale, a DHS spokeswoman said.

Johnson said that as the potential value of the project became clear, the team saw an opportunity to make Virtual Al-

Frank DiGiammarino, vice president of strategic initiatives at NAPA, said Virtual Alabama demonstrates how quickly and easily people can use Web 2.0 collaboration tools.

“IT'S VERY INEXPENSIVE, AND THERE IS NOT A SINGLE HOMELAND SECURITY DIRECTOR IN THE COUNTRY THAT CAN'T AFFORD IT.”

JIM WALKER,
ALABAMA HOMELAND SECURITY DEPARTMENT

abama a case study in collaboration, providing other states with best practices and showing them possibilities.

“If Alabama can do it, anyone else can do it,” Johnson said in explaining attitudes of others when they learn about the program.

Walker, speaking at a May 7 event sponsored by the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), said that although he is glad DHS is interested in the project, he wishes the department would move more quickly to adopt the technology.

“We look at it as kind of frame-bending event,” he said. “When you see enterprise Alabama, you've really seen an Enterprise 2.0 solution.”

Walker said he believes the state is using only about 10 percent of the technology's capability. More could be done in the areas of analytics and modeling.

Johnson said the Virtual Alabama team is focused on how to make the benefits of visualization available to people in the field.

Walker added that because disasters are by nature a local problem first, empowering frontline officers is important.

“99 percent of the heavy lifting in this country is done outside the Beltway,” he added. “There are good ideas that can actually work that aren't developed inside the Beltway.” ■

From the pages of Government Computer News

Carriers ready wireless nets for storm season

With this year's hurricane season predicted to be more active than usual, major wireless carriers have been hardening networks in the vulnerable Southeast and Gulf Coast states.

Florida has been the focus of a lot of this activity because of its double-coast exposure to the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico.

Verizon Wireless has spent \$150 million in the state during the past year — and Sprint Nextel has spent \$59 million — to add cell sites, generators and fuel storage facilities; position mobile emergency response equipment, and strengthen key switching facilities. Mobile equipment can temporarily en-

hance network capacity in disaster areas by providing additional cellular sites or satellite links to accommodate emergency response teams arriving in stricken communities. Hardened networks would benefit first responders and other crews responding to an emergency.

New NOAA satellite will monitor sea level

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration plans to launch a new satellite this month to monitor the rate of sea-level rise and measure the strength of hurricanes.

NASA's Jason-2/OSTM satellite employs a radar altimeter instrument to monitor 95 per-

cent of Earth's ice-free oceans every 10 days. It will enhance data collection that NOAA has been performing for the past 15 years. Earlier data shows the sea level is rising by 3.2 millimeters per year — a rate that is nearly twice that of the previous 100 years.

In addition to measuring changing sea levels, data from Jason-2/OSTM will be used to help predict hurricanes and tropical storms. NOAA will use the altimeter measurements to monitor ocean heat content, which can indicate an increase in the intensity of such storms. ■

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Mr. CARNEY. I thank all the witnesses for their testimony. I will remind each Member, Mr. Perlmutter, you have 5 minutes to question the panel after I do, of course.

Mr. Parent, one common finding in the aftermath of Katrina was that DHS, not just FEMA, failed to effectively lead the Federal effort in the days immediately before and after the storm hit.

Let's pretend for a moment that it is August 26, 2005, and Hurricane Katrina is 3 days away from the Gulf Coast. What are you doing to advise the Secretary and the senior leaders, including what concrete actions should be taken; and how does this differ from what actually was done?

Mr. PARENT. Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman.

I think, as you are well aware, in Katrina the pre-landfall activity was relatively minimal from the Federal side. There was some equipment that was pre-positioned, there were some people that moved south. But, by and large, there was not an expensive operation to prepare for the onset of that hurricane.

The difference today would be we lean forward with assets that could only be imagined in the Katrina environment. I would call your attention to Hurricane Dean last year, when the possibility existed that that very strong storm would swing slightly right and come up the Rio Grande valley, where there are large numbers of population that would have needed to have be evacuated, without the means.

The entire Federal Government, not just FEMA, not just DHS, marshaled assets for the evacuation in that area, for the preparation of shelters, for the preparation of recovery from the storm if it would have come up the river. We spent a lot of money, but I think everyone thinks that that was well spent.

Quite frankly, in the Katrina era it was, in many cases, felt that the literal definition of the Stafford Act prevented you from spending Stafford Act money for that type of storm-imminent prevention activity. That is no longer the case today.

A couple of other things that I would point to: The Department of Defense efforts, largely, until recently, those efforts were post-incident, post-Stafford Act declaration. Today, we have prescribed mission assignments for over 200 activities or 200 response activities across the Federal Government, a large percentage of which are DOD, that can all be called upon, that require no planning, no "what-ifs," no "could you do that," but they are ready to go. You push the button, you tell NORTHCOM, and the airplanes, the people, the trucks, they are all moving.

Across the rest of the Federal Government, a number of those prescribed mission assignments apply to the other emergency support functions for the same result.

Again, look at Dean. The people that were on scene down in Dean in the State of Texas, they all felt that they were ready for that storm if it had come up the Rio Grande, largely because of the assets and the capability that was ready to pounce on that storm if it came.

Those would be the major differences today versus Katrina, sir: What happens before the storm actually gets to the area.

Mr. CARNEY. Good. Thanks.

Ms. Wormuth, in your testimony you say that the White House has, "not played a strong enough role in developing policies or overseeing their implementation."

Could you expand on this? What would you like to see the White House doing over the next several years?

Ms. WORMUTH. I would be happy to expand on that.

Just to give you a sense of, I think, the contrast between the NSC and HSC—first of all, I think—fundamentally, to me, it makes sense to have a single organization, because in my view, most of the issues in homeland security are, in fact, national security issues. It is really two sides of the same coin.

I would argue that having two separate organizations dealing with these issues, many of which are, frankly, very interrelated,

gets you sort of an intellectually divided approach when you need to have a holistic approach.

But from an organizational perspective, the National Security Council staff—I think over 200 people, for example, whereas the Homeland Security Council staff is much smaller; it is about 45 people—the NSC, as an organization, obviously has along history. It is a very well respected institution. People in the Federal Government are very anxious to serve there. It is sort of the feather in your cap as a civil servant.

The agency doesn't have, frankly, the same stature that the NSC has as a staff organization. So the quality of people, in many cases, you don't have the same level of experience. In many cases, you have people with political backgrounds as opposed to people with operational or policy backgrounds.

So the HSC staff isn't resourced in the same way that the NSC staff is resourced. Generally, frankly, it doesn't get the same level of attention that the NSC does. I think that has had a direct impact on its ability to—when there is a disagreement in the inter-agency about something that needs to be done, it is harder for the HSC to sort of crack heads and make people cooperate as a direct result of this.

So I think if you merge the two organizations, you would essentially elevate the treatment of those issues. You would have a more holistic approach, but you would also have a stronger entity in the White House that could ensure the kind of interagency cooperation that DHS very much needs.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you. My time is up for the time being.

I now recognize the gentleman from Colorado, Mr. Perlmutter, for 5 minutes.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple questions.

Mr. Walker, I would like to start with you, because I generally agree with your approach, which is you start with the individual, the person, then you go to maybe the town or the city, and then the county and then the State and then the region and the Nation.

But let's go to Katrina because that came in and obviously just swamped everybody. It needed quick response or quick reaction on the part of everybody.

How do you deal with that today? Is there a protocol in place in Alabama? Ms. Wormuth was concerned that there really isn't a process or protocol available. How would you describe the situation today?

Mr. WALKER. Thank you for the question.

If you read the National Response Plan, I mean, all incidents really are local. It reminds me of when you serve in the Department of Defense, the entire structure of the Federal Government from the national command authorities, Congress on down, is geared to support that one beautiful individual holding an M-16 rifle. Well, post-9/11, the person at the tip of the triangle is a firefighter, police officer, sheriff, et cetera. So everything starts locally and the system should be geared to support that individual.

Well, what happens is, something happens locally even on a broad scale like Katrina, and if you know early on you are going to be overwhelmed, you start requesting assistance from the State.

Then the Governor, who is the chief executive in our State, has the responsibility of turning around to the Federal Government and saying: We are in a dilemma and this is what we think we need; can you start moving now? We understand that it takes about 72 hours to move this big battleship that is called the Federal Government into Alabama.

So we encourage our citizens to, No. 1, listen to emergency announcements. We have been pretty successful in Alabama. We have not had a coastal casualty in three major hurricanes and a tropical storm in the last 5 years. So if the citizens listen, that helps. If we have front-loaded the National Guard and commodities and put our procedures in place well in advance, knowing that the storm could possibly turn away from us, we are prepared. So when the storm passes, we can pop up, start restoring power and getting water and lifesaving commodities to citizens and start saving lives. But when we become overwhelmed, then the Governor turns around and says: This is what I can't handle and this is what I need,

In the area of communications collapse and some of the other things we experienced under Katrina, we have addressed those with the Homeland Security money; we have increased our satellite communications capability. We bought our own portable antennas, got communication response vehicles. We even, in the State of Alabama, ran a test with the Army this year to get an aerostat that we can put up 2,500 feet and see the entire Alabama coastline and with a camera see who is stuck on a roof, see whose house is on fire, see where people are looting. We can bring it down during the day, set it back up at night, and with an infrared camera, see where people are trapped.

So we are trying to take ownership and responsibility at the State level. But you are very right that some of this food-fighting and turf battles that go on at the Federal level have an impact on us who are really trying to do the tough work down at the State and local level.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thank you.

Ms. WORMUTH, your comments about—I have a couple of questions about your six or seven items. You say there is not a good process, not a good protocol. I am not sure. Can you expand on that a little bit?

Also, the next administration comes in and it is your advice just to let things stay, at least for a while, before somebody starts playing around, reorganizing again.

So, if you could.

Ms. WORMUTH. Mr. Perlmutter, I would be happy to comment.

First, I think you are referring to my recommendations about the Stafford Act in a catastrophic context. What I am saying here is that I would agree that in 98 percent of the cases, the Stafford Act mechanisms work very well. All events are local, and the process that Mr. Walker outlined works very well.

But in those instances, what I am concerned about is, what if you have, heaven forbid, a nuclear detonation or multiple dirty bombs or any of the sort of scenarios that are envisioned that are not natural in the fifteen National Planning Scenarios.

In those instances, it is not clear to me that the sort of linear process of assessing the damage, informing the Governor, recog-

nizing that local capabilities are going to be overwhelmed, and then having the Governor turn around and ask the Federal Government for assistance—what if the State doesn't have the ability to assess its own needs at that point? What if situational awareness has evaporated?

I am not a technology person, but I am not sure what the EMP blast from a nuclear blast would do to the aerostat device. It is in those instances where I think we may need to look at, can we streamline the ability of the Federal Government to bring its resources to bear?

I am very aware of federalism, and I do not want the Federal Government to come in and take over. I am not advocating that. But I think we are in a new reality now, and we need to maybe look at, do constructs that we developed two decades ago make sense in the post-9/11 environment?

On the reorg question, I would just say: yes. If I were creating DHS today, would I build it the way it is built now? No, I wouldn't. But I think at this point it is a reasonable organizational structure, and I would recommend the new administration come in, figure out what they have got, let the things that are working keep working and keep maturing, and then maybe make an assessment a year in as to whether changes need to be made.

But I think sort of the knee-jerk reaction to just "throw the baby out with the bath water" is going to be very counterproductive.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thank you.

Mr. CARNEY. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Pascrell.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Walker, you are not implying or directly saying that the Federal Government did not have any responsibilities prior to Katrina hitting in order to line up the resources that would be necessary if, God forbid, the worst happened. And it happened.

You are not saying that, are you?

Mr. WALKER. No, sir, I am not. Once a storm, if we are talking about a storm, hits that 72-hour window, you can bet, based on the forecasting and what we know, that the Governor is going to turn around and anticipate what his requirements are.

I think one of the challenges—and one of the reasons why Mr. Long is here—is that there has even been a change this year that has been a bit frustrating for us about prestaging commodities. We had water, ice and MREs already positioned in the State of Alabama prior to Hurricane Katrina, and we still had a tough time getting it delivered. In fact, we had to go and ask a local military base commander to get a helicopter with some of the things out of the mess hall and send them over to feed our citizens.

This year, just in late April, early May, we happened to find out by happenstance that FEMA has changed its prestaging commodities. They don't want to do it anymore, because they want to save money. So we don't have commodities in Alabama anymore.

What I find absolutely fascinating—and Mr. Chairman, I know that you grew up in rural Iowa. A little town called Mason City, about 30,000 people, is under water right now. The Iowa Emergency Management Director asked for 10 loads of water 3 days ago from FEMA. He still hasn't gotten it.

But if you are in Alabama, how lucky do we feel when my Governor turns around and says: I want commodities this hurricane season, and it is not already in our State?

Mr. PASCARELL. What we are basically saying, and correct me if I am misinterpreting, the Federal Government does have a role in the planning beforehand, rather than simply being available to go in and assist local governments.

We know the fireman, the police officer, the EMT is going to be the first to respond to an event, whether it is manmade or caused by nature. But the point is that the Federal Government has some role to help coordinate these things, not to circumvent, not to override, not to be in charge necessarily.

But the Federal Government has the responsibility. Then the question is: Does it have the resources?

I think you point out something very interesting. Even in 2008 the Federal Government has not put the resources in place to deal with what one could consider, relatively speaking, our minor situations. This is unacceptable. This is the point that we have been trying to make over and over again.

I have this question for Mr. Parent: The Department of Homeland Security was created in the wake of 9/11, Mr. Parent, as you well know, not only to prevent the next major terrorist attack, but to be able to have a unified and effective response to a national catastrophes, which was not the case.

Congress consolidated these agencies in, I think, good fashion and not-so-good fashion, so we could have this unified chain of understanding and this unified chain of command—a chain of command. But the response to Hurricane Katrina demonstrated that the coordination has not occurred—did not occur.

So it is my belief that the administration, this administration, since we are dealing with this at this time, must take steps to simplify and consolidate the chain of command when it comes to responding to those national catastrophes. There must not be any questions about who is in charge after a major incident has occurred, so we should decide that beforehand.

Are you with me so far?

Mr. PARENT. I am.

Mr. PASCARELL. So let me ask you then, can you provide an example where an improved interagency structure was needed during Katrina?

Mr. PARENT. Well, I think I understand your question, Congressman. I think you are asking me, what do I think the structure should have been during Katrina?

Mr. PASCARELL. That is another way of asking what I have asked.

Mr. PARENT. Well, in a nutshell, I think the structure existed, but it wasn't employed. It wasn't there when it needed to be there. The work that needed to be done to mitigate the disaster of Hurricane Katrina needed to be done in the 72-hour, 96-hour period before the storm hit.

Mr. PASCARELL. Did we know who was in charge during the early hours of Katrina and afterwards? Did we know who was in charge? Is that defined in the reports that we received concerning what happened?

Mr. PARENT. No. I think most of the Katrina reports say that it was a cloudy picture. That there was an issue with exactly who was there. Once Admiral Allen was designated as the PFO and got on-scene, I think that issue was cleared up.

Mr. PASCARELL. You will agree with me, though, that the mechanics should have been figured out beforehand?

Mr. PARENT. I certainly would agree with you, sir, along with everyone else.

Mr. PASCARELL. The Federal Government should have been working with the State government, et cetera, to decide that, not wait until after the situation, then we say we have got a command post in place 2 days after it happens.

That is not acceptable, is it?

Mr. PARENT. I would agree.

Mr. PASCARELL. That would not be the case, God forbid, if something happened tomorrow, would it?

Mr. PARENT. No, sir.

Mr. PASCARELL. Explain what would happen.

Mr. PARENT. What would happen tomorrow is, the designations are already made for hurricanes, as I said in my statement. We have PFOs, FCOs, senior Federal law enforcement officers, Defense coordinating officers all designated into teams for the five States that are in the hurricane-prevalent area.

Mr. PASCARELL. Would you say that is the main difference, that we do have a well-defined chain of command now, where we did not have it at that point?

Mr. PARENT. I would say in the form of those teams, absolutely. The team that came together that finally resolved Katrina had not worked together previously and was not predesignated as the teams are today.

Today, the teams conduct exercises, they go to training. They are well-known by the people on-scene, the State and local people on-scene. It is a very different picture, which if you combine that with the fact that we are willing to move assets into the area and actually move things that used to be post-incident, post-declaration, you get a much different response readiness picture than the Katrina picture.

Mr. PASCARELL. That sounds good and everything, but I am listening to Mr. Walker tell us of a very recent example, and that disturbs me very, very much.

If I can, Mr. Chairman, I would like Ms. Wormuth to respond to what Mr. Parent said.

Ms. WORMUTH. I would be happy to do that, Congressman.

This is how I would characterize the situation today. I do think it has improved since Hurricane Katrina, the chain of command or sort of the leadership picture. But, in my view, it is not clear enough, and there are two specific areas where it is not clear. It may be clear in the minds of individuals, but again, individuals can change, particularly during a transition.

The relationship between the Secretary of Homeland Security and the FEMA Director is one area that, frankly, is not particularly clear. The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act designates the FEMA Administrator as having the ability to speak directly to the President, but the Secretary has the role as the

overall incident manager. How those two individuals interrelate is not clear. In my view, the FEMA Administrator works for the Secretary of Homeland Security.

Mr. PASCRELL. That is pretty clear—

Ms. WORMUTH. That is how you should solve that. On the ground, I think predesignating the PFOs was a useful step forward. To me, it is still fundamentally difficult to see how you can have unity of effort on the ground when you have a PFO that reports to the Secretary and a FCO that reports to the FEMA Administrator and the PFO does not have authority over the FCO.

Mr. PASCRELL. What is the problem then in terms of what should be clear? Even though there are not words written on a piece of paper as to who should call Jake, et cetera, what is the problem then between the parent agency and FEMA? Is it turf? Is it ego? Is it the very nature of how they exist under present law? What is it?

Ms. WORMUTH. Sir, as an outside observer, my sense is that the PFO-FCO, the fact that we still have those two positions, I think, has its roots in, frankly, the internal turf battles between FEMA and the rest of the Department.

Mr. PASCRELL. What is the best way—and I will really put you on the spot: What is the best way to respond to those turf battles, which we heard back in 2001 with Catastrophe 1? And we heard Catastrophe 2, Katrina, same situation.

I don't feel comfortable about leaving the hearing and thinking that has all been resolved. I don't believe that.

Ms. WORMUTH. I don't feel comfortable with the situation as it exists today either. In my view you can do two things. I mean, one person on the ground working for DHS and reporting to the Secretary should be in charge. That person can't do everything. They can't talk to the media and talk to the Governor and report back to the Secretary and also be responsible for coordinating the operational assets. But they can have deputies who work for them who are doing that.

In my view, you can call it the PFO, you can call it the FCO. We recommend you call it the "lead Federal coordinator" just to get away from the whole PFO-FCO battle. But you should have one person in charge who reports back to Washington and who has a deputy or multiple, as the case may be. But you can't have two individuals who don't work for each other, who are both picking up the phone and calling back to Washington.

Mr. PASCRELL. Shouldn't we resolve that before we have the next administration so that there can be a continuity which we all can have hope in?

Ms. WORMUTH. I would certainly welcome that, Congressman.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman, I think that is something we need to address immediately. I think this is serious business, and it could mean saving lives, now that I think of it.

Thank you.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, Mr. Pascrell. We will start with another round of questions, I guess, here.

Mr. Jenkins, you spent a great deal of time observing DHS and FEMA exercises. Do you see any evidence of increased or decreased planning and interagency coordination over your observations?

Mr. JENKINS. Well, there certainly are some.

I agree with Ms. Wormuth about the PFO-FCO. We have certainly been told in those exercises that personalities are very important in how those two positions work; if they don't get along, it is not going to work, and there is some greater coordination.

I think there are still issues with regard to chain of command. There are some issues with regard to communications and roles and responsibilities that have come up in the exercises in terms of who is really supposed to do what. There is certainly progress being made.

Our basic concern in terms of the work that we have done so far is how effectively and how honestly these exercises are being evaluated, and identifying the issues that have come up in them and taking corrective action and making sure that those corrective actions are implemented.

Mr. CARNEY. If I might, are you suggesting that we don't necessarily have honest evaluations?

Mr. JENKINS. I think in some cases evaluations that we have read seem to be cut and pasted from other evaluations. The paragraphs are identical between the two exercises in terms of the evaluation. They are identical paragraphs down to the punctuation.

Mr. CARNEY. Really? Mr. Parent, could you shed any light on that?

Mr. PARENT. Well, I certainly have not seen that. But I am going to say that Mr. Jenkins is wrong.

I will tell you that I have been a PFO. I was the second PFO ever designated. I served as a PFO in TOPOFF 2, and I have participated in every major exercise since then up until the most recent, NLE-208. There has been enormous progress, but it is a large task.

There are many, many people—and I know you understand this—from a military background. The exercises we do that involve State and local, Federal and DOD, are much larger than any of the DOD-type exercises. The diversity of the people that participate is, again, many, many factors larger.

So there are—there are first responders in an exercise that are following their objectives. There is a PFO team that is following its objectives. There may be 50 operation centers that are following their objectives. So you do have to be a little bit careful when you evaluate an exercise, and you pick one spot over here and say, I really like—you know, that doesn't look good or whatever. Because the vast majority of those exercises, there are thousands and thousands of people who are benefiting from having participated in and conducted the exercise.

But are there some of the same problems that are not solved? Certainly. There are many, many issues that in the first 5 years of DHS we have not solved. That doesn't mean that they are being dropped or ignored; but the reality is, there are things that will probably still be problems 5 years from now. But many, many improvements have been made, and it is a very different process that exercises today versus 2003.

Mr. CARNEY. Well, certainly, if we see evaluations that are cut and pasted from previous ones, that doesn't look like we are making progress to me, actually.

You know, Mr. Walker, those of us who have been out on the pointy end of the spear know we have TTPs, everything is in place but sometimes we do it our own way despite that fact. Sometimes you have to react to things on the ground that aren't accounted for.

How do we account for that?

Mr. WALKER. We have a pretty aggressive training exercise program in our State too, thanks again to the family of Homeland Security grant dollars that you send down to us.

You know, with the disasters that we have—you know, anytime that you have an exercise or anytime that you have a real-time event, of course you learn, and there are lessons learned and you adjust as necessary. We continue to do that as well, and we adjust.

We have learned something from every disaster. As an example, getting ready for this hurricane season, the Governor every year, we reverse the Interstate 65 that runs up through the artery of Alabama, and we practice this stuff, so you know it pays off.

As it relates to chain of command, we talk about who is in charge. In my State, it is really pretty easy; it is a guy by the name of Governor Bob Riley. His job is to fight the close fight with our counties and our citizens and to turn around to one Federal official and say: This is what I need; now you, Mr. Federal Official, go to figure out how to get that for me.

Mr. CARNEY. Right. Right. Mr. Jenkins, coming back to you again real quick, you noted in your testimony that the Federal Partner Guides to the NRF are still under development.

Could you explain what these are and tell us why it is so significant that they are not done?

Mr. JENKINS. Well, essentially, they are how-to guides, that is, what your role is and what specifically is expected of you. They are described as how-to guides by FEMA, and they are supposed to really put meat on the NRF—more specificity for Federal partners, State partners, local partners—and so they are very important in terms of developing operational plans and being much more specific about what your roles and responsibilities are.

FEMA had initially hoped to have those in place prior to the hurricane season, but they are not in place at this point.

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Parent, do you know when this exercise is going to be completed? Any idea?

Mr. PARENT. They are in progress right now. I would say that it is very, very important that those be done correctly, because they do get to the meat of exactly what responsibility—it is really a responsibility issue in many aspects of those documents.

While we certainly do not have all of them out right now, there are draft copies of many of them that people are utilizing. We have had a hurricane CONOP, concept of operations, since right after Katrina. So the fact that we don't have that particular document for hurricane season, I don't see as debilitating in our process.

It will be a much better situation when we have those documents out for putting capabilities together in the plans, and everyone eagerly awaits them; but I don't see it as debilitating today that we don't have one for hurricanes.

Mr. CARNEY. Okay. Well, I would suggest all deliberate speed on those. And do them correctly, obviously, but we need to get them out there.

The Chair now recognizes Ranking Member from Alabama, Mr. Rogers, for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sorry I had to step out. I had a meeting that I had prescheduled.

Mr. Walker, I wanted to ask you about—and first, to congratulate you on your award, and ask you to tell me a little bit—and you may have visited this while I was out of the chamber—about Virtual Alabama and its applications in the event of a major catastrophe.

Mr. WALKER. Yes, sir. It is truly one of those tools where you try to put the right information and situation awareness in the hands of the people who are doing the job.

What we have done in Alabama is, we have captured the best imagery, the geographic information imagery that we have of the entire State of Alabama, all 67 counties. What we have discovered—very inexpensively, I might add—was that we could take our imagery that the State owns and we can layer and tailor whatever information we find useful, and at the click of a button, it becomes available to us.

So, in other words, we bought a license from Google, Google Earth platform. So if you were to go to Google right now and click on your house and Saks, you could look at it from Google Earth, but you can't do anything with it.

With our platform in Alabama, I can take our imagery, look at your house, I can populate the waterlines, gas lines, stoplights, any sex offender in your neighborhood, your floodplain data, any other useful information that a first responder needs. He is populating this data. We can even have your local volunteer fire department 3-D model out your house to include where your rooms and furniture are, your exits are. So for a firefighter that is doing that in all of their buildings in Montgomery or around the State. Before you put a firefighter in harm's way, he knows where the people are, he knows where the exits are, where the hazardous materials are; and so it is going to save his life or somebody's life when seconds matter and he enters that building.

On a broader scale, we also pay a lot of attention to school safety. We can access the cameras in the schools in Alabama and actually look inside the schools to see if there is a shooting or some sort of an incident. Our educators are populating student concentration. So if you take the Virginia Tech example, for example, whether it was a shooting, this guy locks himself in a building, we can send first responders—first of all, they can look into the building.

Second of all, we populated which students are in which classrooms at this time of day on this day; and when seconds matter, they are not kicking the doors down to empty classrooms. They are going to where the kids are.

So we can do that. We have accessed every Department of Transportation camera in the State of Alabama, so we can see what our traffic looks like if we were reverse laning to evacuate in a disaster.

We can also use that aerostat that I spoke about earlier. We can access all of this data on our imagery to give our first responders an immediate field for what is happening at the tip of the spear to help them save lives and manage a disaster.

Now, that situational awareness is at the local level, and it has nothing to do with somebody in a roomful of computers in Washington, DC.

Mr. ROGERS. Have y'all been able take that technology—and I remember after Katrina we had a delegation go down and visit not only New Orleans but—and the Governor and I went over there, went over to Mississippi, met with the Governor; and then came to Alabama, and met with Governor Riley.

One of the Governor's requests there was that we go ahead and pre-negotiate contracts for debris removal and such activities as that which we know we are going to have in case of another hurricane, so that when it hits, we have already got contractors in place, but more importantly, routes to deliver to different landfills.

Mr. WALKER. Yes, sir. With your permission, I would let Brock, who is the State Emergency Management Agency Director, address that for you.

Mr. LONG. An important element, most of those pre-event contracts are handled by local governments. But what we can do, for example—

Mr. ROGERS. Yes, but if you will remember, the last time, one of the criticisms FEMA had was they would only reimburse local governments if they had used the Federal contractors. These local mayors were saying they could have contracts in place much cheaper if they could get reimbursed for exacting a contract.

Mr. LONG. Right. That is correct.

I guess I would answer that question from this standpoint: We are judged in the recovery efforts, 75 percent of all we do—regardless of the preparedness stuff, we are judged 75 percent of the time by our recovery efforts. Debris is a huge issue. We have multiple issues where these are the largest mistakes made, million-dollar mistakes that are made. Obviously we need to do all that we can to reduce the mistakes that are there, you know, through supplementing.

We need to understand clear guidance from FEMA and Homeland Security as to what the rules are, how the Stafford Act is being interpreted and that there is consistency to that. Then, second, that needs to go down and make sure that all the States are very clear, we are all seeing eye to eye, so that we can supplement that at the local level.

Mr. ROGERS. When it comes to Alabama, are you clear now about where FEMA is? Do y'all have preset contracts in place now for things like debris removal?

Mr. LONG. Not at the State level, we do not. But we do know Mobile and Baldwin Counties, who would have the largest potential for the largest amount of debris, do have those contracts in place which we have helped advise them on regularly. We just held a meeting with FEMA Region IV to make sure that those plans were agreeable to FEMA.

Mr. ROGERS. I wanted to ask Jim about the cameras.

You had a good example with what happened in West Virginia—or at Virginia Tech; I am sorry.

You know, we had a problem in Auburn recently with a brutal murder there.

Mr. WALKER. Yes, sir.

Mr. ROGERS. One of the things that I would like to have seen in existence at that time was CC cameras, closed circuit cameras, around the campus. I think we need them in a lot of places. We have, in a Homeland Security visit to London, talked with our counterparts and the folks at Scotland Yard. In London everything in public is on CCTV, which has really helped them.

Do we have any pilot programs on any campuses in Alabama—not just high schools, but colleges where we have a CCTV you can plug into with that system?

Mr. WALKER. We do, sir. We just awarded another grant to Auburn University in your district with the Homeland Security grant money that you all were kind enough to send us in Alabama.

But what we discovered, sir, is with this Virtual Alabama technology, we do have a schools initiative. I hope to use some of our fiscal year 2008 grant money to do this. That is, a lot of schools in our State—I am talking about elementary up through—have camera systems in the school. A lot of them are the old 1960's, 1970's architecture, closed circuit where somebody has to be looking at a monitor.

But technology today, for about \$500 you can buy a switch to get those cameras onto the Internet. If I can get it onto the Internet, I can get it onto Virtual Alabama behind a password, and I can look at that stuff all the time.

Now the potential for this is enormous, because that is just a government-to-government activity. When you consider that the private sector is really 85 to 90 percent of our Nation's infrastructure and you can go to any plant in Alabama, they will have cameras, and they will have floor plans.

In order to really engage the private sector, which is a very, very difficult nut for Homeland Security directors at the State and the Federal level, if you can show success between a government-to-government entity like our schools and accessing their cameras, you can make a case to a businessman to say: Hey, look, why don't you let us upload your cameras and let you put it behind a fire wall? Because if there is a shooting at your plant, if there is a fire at your plant, if there is a disaster or a bomb that goes off at your plant, it is the local sheriff and emergency manager and firefighters that are going to save your fanny. So let's populate this data ahead of time and not exchange business cards at a disaster.

So that is another way that the technology is helping us.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you. I would like to advise my colleagues, "fanny" is a technical term in Alabama.

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Perlmutter, do you have any more questions?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. One quick one. This is to Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Parent.

Ms. Wormuth had the suggestion of merging or modifying or doing something between the Homeland Security Council and the National Security Council. Do either of you gentlemen have any thoughts about that?

Mr. JENKINS. Well, we at GAO really haven't looked at that. I have read her report, and I do agree that there needs to be consistency, you know, and coordination. To the extent to which there isn't that, it is a detriment.

But beyond that, we haven't really looked at that issue in detail the way Ms. Wormuth has.

Mr. PARENT. I am not sure I could say that I have looked at it either.

I have experienced it, though; and within DHS headquarters, Operations is the entity that maintains connectivity with the NSC and with the HCS. If it was one body, it would theoretically be a smaller number of meetings and a fewer number of people for us to do our business.

But at this point we engage with both and operate in both of those arenas. So one might be better than two.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thank you.

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Pascrell.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding the hearing today, you and the Ranking Member. I want to go back to the evaluations with Mr. Jenkins.

You said some very interesting things, and I am sure you can stand by what you say, since I have a great—I have great faith in the GAO regardless of what the subject matter is.

Who does the evaluations that you were referred to before? Are they professional or are they political appointees?

Mr. JENKINS. I think that what we were really looking at and what I was referring to is evaluations that seem to be quite general and nonspecific.

Mr. PASCRELL. Right.

Mr. JENKINS. In these specific instances, they were done by contractors.

Mr. PASCRELL. Which means?

Mr. JENKINS. They were people hired to run and—they were principally responsible for designing and conducting, you know, managing the exercise, and then preparing the after-action report on the exercise.

Mr. PASCRELL. How are those contractors that do the evaluation put in place? Is this a proposal? Bid process? What are the mechanics there?

Mr. JENKINS. It is a bid process.

Mr. PASCRELL. It is a bid process?

Mr. JENKINS. Yes.

Mr. PASCRELL. So you have evaluators who seem to lack specificity, and the examples that you highlighted are kind of cookie-cutting most of the criticisms of whatever they are evaluating.

Mr. JENKINS. Well, I wouldn't say that it is a majority. I mean, these are some specific examples that we have found where we found that they were very general, they were not very specific; and they are remarkably similar. But as Mr. Parent pointed out, there are thousands of these exercises.

We are trying to look at across the board. I want to temper that by saying that there are also some very specific, clear, hard-hitting after-action reports that have been done on exercises, and in some cases, by the same contractor.

Mr. PASCRELL. Well, we are not exactly evaluating how the deck chairs are lined up on the Titanic. What we are doing is evaluating whether or not the specific agencies or divisions within those agencies are doing what they are supposed to do. Is that correct?

Mr. JENKINS. Yes. In this particular instance, what we are trying to look at—and our work is still under way—is looking at how the exercises are designed, what they are designed to test, how they are evaluated, what kinds of problems—what went well, what did not go well, how are they sharing that across emergency response agencies, and how are they taking corrective actions to deal with any problems that are identified.

Mr. PASCRELL. Could you give us, for public consumption, an area which reflected these general evaluations without going into what should have been very specific criticism?

Mr. JENKINS. Not at this point.

Mr. PASCRELL. Could you make it available to this committee?

Mr. JENKINS. I will have to check.

Let me just say—

Mr. PASCRELL. Excuse me. Why would there be hesitation to provide the committee with information which I think is pertinent? We are talking about evaluations of work here.

Mr. JENKINS. Because we don't share the information or the work papers during the course of the work, only after the work is completed.

Mr. PASCRELL. Well, is the work completed in the ones that you were talking about?

Mr. JENKINS. No. It is still part of the overall assignment that we are working on. We will want to talk to the contractors as well. So we haven't had a chance to talk to them.

Mr. PASCRELL. When you do that, you will be able to provide this committee with those reports?

Mr. JENKINS. Yes.

Mr. PASCRELL. Since you know the evaluations of Homeland Security have not been very good?

Mr. JENKINS. Right.

Mr. PASCRELL. I am not making this up. So I would like to know what GAO's—your evaluation of the evaluators.

Mr. JENKINS. That is what we are looking at. I mean—and looking very broadly across national exercises, State exercises and local exercises as well as regional exercises.

Mr. PASCRELL. Okay.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, Mr. Pascrell.

Mr. Parent, I have got just one more question, and it is about the Annexes. I am glad you guys are working on HSPD-8 and the Annex and all.

Can you tell me how far along you are in the fifteen different planning scenarios?

Mr. PARENT. Yes. We are responsible for the strategic guidance statement and the strategic plan part of those fifteen scenarios. We have the vast majority of them in draft form.

What we are awaiting now is the approval of the integrated planning system which lays out the vetting process for the entire planning system, all the way down to the tactical level. So—and the approval of the IPS is very, very close. We are at about, I would say, the 95 percent point with that system.

Once that is done, the strategic guidance statements, the strategic plans and then a concept plan will flow very rapidly after that.

Mr. CARNEY. Okay. So you are about on the 5-yard line then?

Mr. PARENT. We feel that way. Yes, sir, we do.

Mr. CARNEY. Put down is at—

Mr. PARENT. Second.

Mr. CARNEY. Okay.

How is the interagency coordination going with those?

Mr. PARENT. I would like to say that we took—when we set up the IMPT, we took the lessons from the IIMG and the other interagency groups that had functioned in the early days of the Department. The IMPT is a happy group. It is a strong group. Attendance is good; we have no poor attendance records by any of the major players in the interagency community. We have a lot of engaged people.

Typically, those draft strategic plans I mentioned, not uncommon for us to work our way through the adjudication process for 800 or 900 comments on those plans. But as you know, in planning, that is the real meat of it, if people are engaging and saying, I don't understand that, or I don't know what you are trying to—what you are trying to say there, that is the real value of doing planning.

It is much greater than the actual document itself, in many cases, as General Eisenhower said.

Mr. CARNEY. Absolutely. I thank you.

I have no further questions. Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. No.

Mr. CARNEY. Okay.

Well, I thank the witnesses for their testimony. It has been truly valuable. Great insight. You may have some questions from our subcommittee in writing. I urge you, encourage you and advise you to get them back to us, the answers back to us in a timely fashion.

Thank you once again.

Hearing no further business, the subcommittee stands adjourned. [Whereupon, at 4:40 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN CHRISTOPHER P. CARNEY FOR WAYNE PARENT, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF OPERATIONS COORDINATION, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Question 1. Does the IMPT have enough resources? Would it be more effective with more staff, more permanent detailees, or more authority? What does the IMPT need to make sure its mission is completed as expeditiously as possible?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 2. The Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act revamped and strengthened the FEMA regional offices. Does the IMPT coordinate directly with the FEMA regional offices, or is there a single coordination point for all of FEMA? Is the current coordination structure sufficient, or could it be improved?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 3. Do other agencies recognize that DHS is the leader of the Federal Government's response to a major catastrophe? Do you think they recognized that during Katrina?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 4. In terms of planning organizations, DHS has its IMPT and FEMA has its Operational Planning Unit, or OPU. How well are these two entities working together? Are they complementing each other, or are they redundant or even working at cross-purposes?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

QUESTIONS FROM RANKING MEMBER MIKE ROGERS FOR WAYNE PARENT, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF OPERATIONS COORDINATION, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Question 1a. How does the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) ensure that all Federal agencies (and their personnel) that may respond to a catastrophic event understand their respective roles and responsibilities?

How does DHS ensure that each organization is ready and able to fulfill those roles and responsibilities?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 1b. Due to the lack of traditional "command and control" that is typically required in incident response, what challenges has DHS faced in coordinating with other Federal agencies?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 2a. The Stafford Act specifically addresses Federal response and recovery functions. What authorities exist, if any, to integrate interagency coordination for the prevention and protection mission areas?

How are the prevention and protection mission areas integrated with the components' mission sets?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 2b. How does DHS manage efforts to deal with a sustained threat that does not immediately require response or recovery efforts?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 2c. Please explain when the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) are utilized.

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 2d. Are there situations outside of Stafford Act events when the ESFs might need to be activated?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 2e. Does DHS or another Federal agency have the authority to activate ESFs outside of Stafford Act events?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 2f. Are there specific limitations within the Stafford Act and/or ESFs that impede progress in the planning arena?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 3. One of the recommendations made by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is that the role of the Department of Defense (DoD) should be clearly stated—that DoD does not have a lead role in responding to catastrophic incidents, but will be expected to play a substantial support role. The National Response Framework (NRF) does not include a DoD Emergency Support Annex, however, that would explicitly define the roles, expectations, and responsibilities of DoD in a catastrophic event.

To what extent are DoD's roles defined and its performance measured in the event of a catastrophic disaster?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 4. The glossary to the NRF defines incident management as “how incidents are managed across all homeland security activities, including prevention, protection, and response and recovery,” while emergency management is defined as “a subset of incident management.” Emergency management is statutorily defined in the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (Pub. L. 109–295) as the coordination and integration of all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, or mitigate against threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters. Some emergency response stakeholders have expressed concerns that the NRF inverts the generally accepted understanding of these terms.

Given that the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act broadly defines emergency management as encompassing those activities the NRF identifies as incident management, what actions has DHS taken to clarify the definition of incident management and how it differs from emergency management?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 5. The DHS Secretary is a member of the Homeland Security Council and is the principal Federal official for domestic incident management. The FEMA Administrator is the principal advisor to the President, the Secretary, and the Homeland Security Council on all matters regarding emergency management, and reports to the DHS Secretary. The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act enables the President to designate the Administrator as a member of the Cabinet in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters. According to the NRF, the Principal Federal Official (PFO) represents the DHS Secretary, and the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) represents the FEMA Administrator.

In the event that the FEMA Administrator is elevated to Cabinet status by the President following a disaster, how does the chain-of-command change and what are the changes in the relative reporting relationships of the Secretary, Administrator, DHS Office of Operations Coordination, the PFO, and the FCO?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 6a. During the response to Hurricane Katrina, there was confusion regarding the roles and responsibilities of the PFO and the FCO, which had an adverse effect on the response effort. Since that time, the NRF has clarified the respective roles and responsibilities of the two positions; however, there is still some concern about the roles of these two positions in strategically and operationally managing the response to a catastrophic disaster.

What activities are encompassed in the PFO's incident management roles that are distinct from the FCO's role in executing Stafford Act authorities for emergency management?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 6b. What, if any, policies and procedures exist that explicitly delineate the role of the PFO vis-à-vis the FCO, given expressed concerns about their delineation in the NRF?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 6c. What is the status of the PFO Concept of Operations and when will it be publicly available?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 6d. FCOs are subject to credentialing requirements and a professional development program. Are PFOs subject to equivalent credentialing and professional development?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 7a. DHS is responsible for leading the operational planning needed for an effective national response. Two essential supplements to the NRF—Federal Partner Response Guides and DHS's Integrated Planning System—are still under development.

What is the time frame for completion of the Partner Guides?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 7b. What challenges has DHS faced in developing the Guides?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 7c. What is the status of the Department's effort to develop the Federal response capability inventory required by HSPD-8?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 8. What are your views on the role of detection canines in responding to catastrophes?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 9. Do you believe we have enough canine teams for the homeland security mission? If not, how many should DHS acquire?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 10. Based on your experience, what recommendations do you have to develop training and certification standards for detection canines?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN CHRISTOPHER P. CARNEY FOR WILLIAM O. JENKINS, JR., DIRECTOR, HOMELAND SECURITY AND JUSTICE ISSUES, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Question 1. Based on your years of work, is there a time when FEMA was more successful at working within the interagency? If so, when was it, and what do you think was different then?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 2. Do you agree that a basic "roles and responsibilities" document like the NRF is important? If so, why? Do you think it would have been useful in the days immediately before and after Katrina?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 3. What is the impact on State, local, and tribal governments when interagency disputes break out during disaster preparedness and response?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 4. Mr. Jenkins, in your testimony you talked about DHS and FEMA working together to develop the Integrated Planning System. From what you've seen, are DHS and FEMA coordinating well in this area, or have you seen problems?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

QUESTIONS FROM RANKING MEMBER MIKE ROGERS FOR WILLIAM O. JENKINS, JR., DIRECTOR, HOMELAND SECURITY AND JUSTICE ISSUES, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Question 1. Would you please elaborate on how direct-line authority with respect to DHS operations centers would strengthen not just departmental coordination but also interagency coordination efforts?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 2. Based on your review, do you believe the current coordination among departmental operations centers is sufficient to avoid unnecessary duplication or confusion in the response to a catastrophic incident?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 3. According to your work reviewing DHS, in which areas do you believe the Department has been most effective in leading national preparedness efforts? Has the Department been more effective in leading preparedness efforts at the Federal level as opposed to the State or local level?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 4. In what areas of needed capabilities are we as a Nation most prepared for a catastrophic disaster and why? In what areas are we least prepared and why?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 5. Do you believe that DHS is prepared for the 2008 Hurricane season?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 6. What is your assessment of the roles and responsibilities of the Principal Federal Official (PFO) and Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO)? Do you believe these roles have been sufficiently clarified? Do you think DHS is taking the necessary steps to ensure that State and local first responders and emergency management personnel are aware of the distinctions in the positions?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 7. What do you believe are DHS' greatest challenges in effectively preparing and responding to catastrophic disasters?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 8. What are your views on the role of detection canines in responding to catastrophes?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 9. Do you believe we have enough canine teams for the homeland security mission? If not, how many should DHS acquire?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

Question 10. Based on your experience, what recommendations do you have to develop training and certification standards for detection canines?

Answer. Response was not provided at the time of publication.

QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN CHRISTOPHER P. CARNEY FOR CHRISTINE E. WORMUTH, SENIOR FELLOW, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Question 1. Can you offer some historical examples of when interagency coordination has worked well to accomplish common goals? What lessons can be taken from these examples and applied to the present day?

Answer. Historically, there are examples of constructive interagency coordination, although there are more historical examples of cases where interagency cooperation has struggled and has not been effective. Some positive examples of successful interagency coordination in the past include the CORDS experience during the Vietnam War, the role of the National Economic Council in integrating international trade policy, and Operation Unified Assistance, the interagency effort to provide humanitarian relief in the wake of the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004–2005.

In the case of CORDS, the office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support, this was a case where after multiple efforts to try to coordinate the myriad U.S. pacification programs during the early years of the Vietnam War, President Johnson finally appointed a single civilian manager with authority over all of the agency personnel and programs in Vietnam engaged in conducting pacification efforts and development assistance. The head of CORDS was second in the military chain of command and had unprecedented ability as a civilian to leverage the resources of the U.S. military. Appointment of a single civilian manager with authority over the full range of agencies in the field seems to have been a major element of the success of the interagency CORDS effort.

The National Economic Council during the Clinton Administration is another example of a successful interagency coordination process. Under the leadership of Robert Rubin, the NEC and its staff were able to work very closely and successfully with the National Security Council and the Cabinet agencies in the NEC to develop coordinated approaches to major international trade issues such as the effort to pass NAFTA, and to manage international economic crises such as the Latin American, Asian and Russian financial crises in 1997 and 1998. The effectiveness of the NEC during this time appeared to flow from the personal confidence President Clinton had in Robert Rubin, as well as Rubin's willingness and ability to work within the formal structure of the NEC to leverage the capabilities of all of the major economic players in the U.S. Government.

As part of its larger effort to examine prospects for future interagency reform, the Project on National Security Reform, under the auspices of the Center for the Study of the Presidency, is developing an extensive set of case studies of interagency cooperation. When complete, these case studies may shed additional light on this question.

Question 2. Based on your work and experience, what are the friction points that prevent interagency cooperation? Put differently, what is it that makes people unable to work together towards what seems to the rest of the world to be an obvious common goal?

Answer. In my experience, there are numerous obstacles to interagency cooperation, though they are not insurmountable. Some of these obstacles are structural, such as the role of the White House and the stove-piped nature of the executive branch, and some of these obstacles are substantive, such as disagreements over policy or personality conflicts.

In terms of structure obstacles, interagency cooperation is often greater when the White House plays a strong role in the policy development process as well as in overseeing policy implementation. An engaged National Security Council and/or Homeland Security Council staff can make a big difference in ensuring that the various members of the interagency cooperate effectively, and can often help resolve differences of opinion among Cabinet agencies. Conversely, if the White House is not sufficiently engaged in major interagency issues, cooperation can suffer, either because agencies are unaware of the full range of activities underway and have no way to gain this situational awareness, or because substantive disagreements over

policy are allowed to fester. Looking from the bottom up, the stove-piped nature of the executive branch is often another structural impediment to effective interagency cooperation. In many instances, agencies may not be opposed to working together on a particular policy, they simply may be unaware of activities other agencies have undertaken that are relevant to their work. Once again, the NSC and HSC staffs can play a key role in helping to break down these stovepipes by bringing interagency stakeholders together to share information and coordinate policies and programs.

Substantive obstacles can also impede interagency cooperation. Many of the most severe cases of insufficient interagency cooperation stem from disagreement in the interagency over the direction of a particular policy or program. In some cases these kinds of disagreements are strictly over the content of a particular policy, although policy differences are often grounded in the differing perspectives of the various Cabinet agencies. Tensions between the Departments of State and Defense during the period of preparation to invade Iraq, and in the aftermath of the initial invasion, have been well documented. There is no question that the differing perspectives and institutional equities of the two departments ultimately impeded the ability of the interagency to develop and implement policy toward Iraq, particularly because these differences were left unresolved even as the interagency collectively faced major decisions in the early years of the Iraq operation.

Finally, personality conflicts—which are often closely linked to differences of view on policy matters and bureaucratic imperatives—can be a significant impediment to interagency cooperation. It can be significantly more difficult to promote interagency cooperation when major players in a specific interagency issue are unable to work together because of personality differences. The reality of the role personalities can play is another reason why it is essential to have leadership in the White House that is willing to intercede at key points and ensure that despite personal disagreements, key officials work together toward common administration goals.

Question 3. Do you agree that a basic “roles and responsibilities” document like the NRF is important? If so, why? Do you think it would have been useful in the days immediately before and after Katrina?

Answer. A basic “roles and responsibilities” document like the National Response Framework is important. In my view, the NRF outlines how the Federal Government will work together as an interagency, as well as with State and local governments, and to a lesser degree with the private sector and non-governmental organizations, to respond effectively to a national emergency. The NRF describes in broad terms the roles of each level of government and describes what organizational structures will be established during a major event to manage an incident. While the NRF does not address specific types of scenarios, it does usefully provide an overall description of the broad framework for incident management cooperation at a national level. In essence, the NRF provides a common operating framework for all levels of government that will serve as the template for intergovernmental cooperation during a crisis. To have any hope of unity of effort in the future for incident management, the Nation needs to have this framework in place, and, more importantly, all stakeholders must be familiar with the framework and their respective roles relative to other actors.

Although the current NRF is still not optimized in my view, it is clearer and easier to understand than its NRP predecessors. To be fully effective, the NRF should be complemented by a set of interagency plans at the Federal level that provide more specific information about what kinds of capabilities the Federal Government will bring to bear for different kinds of potential incidents, how quickly those resources can be placed on-scene, and how the Federal capabilities will integrate with State, local, and private sector/non-governmental organization capabilities.

The predecessor to the NRF, the National Response Plan, was in effect prior to Hurricane Katrina, although it was a recently promulgated document at the time and was substantially different from its predecessor, the pre-9/11 Federal Response Plan. As a result, many stakeholders in the emergency management community, and particularly senior officials, were not very familiar with the basic concepts outlined in the NRP when Hurricane Katrina made landfall. While greater familiarity with the NRP would not have solved all of the problems associated with the response to Hurricane Katrina by any means, in my view, if more officials had been familiar with the NRP at the time, the response might have gone somewhat more smoothly. In particular, DHS might have declared an Incident of National Significance more quickly, which probably would have sped the deployment of Federal assistance of the Gulf Coast.

At the same time, the 2004 NRP was a very lengthy, complicated document and some of its core concepts reflected unresolved bureaucratic issues such as the role of the Principal Federal Official relative to the Federal Coordinating Officer and the

role of the FEMA Director relative to the Secretary of Homeland Security. Even if more senior officials had been familiar with the NRP prior to landfall, many of the disagreements about roles and responsibilities might still have occurred because they were inherent in the NRP at the time.

Question 4. Ms. Wormuth, in your written testimony you say that there is little to show from DHS in terms of concrete plans after 2 years of work. Could you expand on this—what would you expect or hope to see at this point?

Answer. Given that the interagency approved the fifteen National Planning Scenarios in late 2004 or early 2005, and established the Incident Management Planning Team in 2006, it is disappointing that the Federal Government in June 2008 still does not have any approved interagency operational plans corresponding to the fifteen scenarios. Given the critical importance of such plans to the ability of the country to prepare itself for a future domestic catastrophe, I would expect that 2 years after the formation of an interagency team to develop operational plans, the interagency would have completed at least some of the plans and secured their approval.

Instead, my understanding is that a small number of plans are pending with the Homeland Security Council and have been pending for many months. It is not clear why these plans remain in only draft form. It is also unclear why, if the plans are not satisfactory from a substantive perspective, the HSC has not sent them back to DHS for revision. Dissatisfaction with the draft plans may be part of the reason the HSC drafted and published Annex I to HSPD-8, which directed DHS to develop a new Integrated Planning System. By establishing an integrated planning process for use across the interagency, the HSC and DHS seemed to be seeking to put a framework in place that would guide future planning and improve the quality of future planning efforts.

Much of the energy in the planning process in the last year or so has been spent on drafting the IPS. I believe the IPS has been approved by the HSC, or is very close to approval. At the same time, it is not clear what will happen to an IPS, even if it is approved by the Bush Administration before the end of its term.

From an outside perspective, it appears that despite the dedicated efforts of many individuals across the interagency, but particularly within DHS, the planning process has been significantly and negatively affected by a number of factors. First, developing integrated operational plans is inherently an interagency process. Hence, to be successful, the IMPT needed considerable support from the HSC and its staff, and it is not clear sufficient support and engagement was provided. Second, inside DHS, the planning process has often been bogged down in bureaucratic disputes between FEMA and the Directorate of Operations—and prior to PKEMRA, between FEMA and the Under Secretariat for Preparedness. Third, it is not clear that the most senior levels of DHS have taken sufficient interest in the planning process, failing to resolve intra-DHS disagreements about planning roles and responsibilities.

Question 5. You suggest that conceptualizing disaster response and preparedness around the Stafford Act is limiting. Could you expand on this, identify some situations that you think the Stafford Act does not address well, and tell us what kind of changes you think are necessary?

Answer. The Stafford Act was written long before the September 11 attacks and recognition that the United States is facing the threat of an incident involving weapons of mass destruction. As such, it is not clear that the mechanisms in the Stafford Act will be sufficient to manage the interaction of the Federal Government with State and local governments during a truly catastrophic incident. The fundamental approach outlined in the Stafford Act is that local and State governments only seek Federal assistance once State and local capabilities are overwhelmed. Once State and local capabilities are overwhelmed, the governor of a State can formally request assistance from the Federal Government through FEMA, and FEMA in turn will distribute requests for assistance to the relevant Federal agencies as appropriate. The Stafford Act system is fundamentally a “pull/push” system.

In a catastrophe—an event that includes massive loss of life, economic damage over a wide area and/or disruption severely affecting the population, to include severe disruption of Government functions—there almost certainly will not be time to follow the very linear processes outlined in the Stafford Act. While the Stafford Act works well for the many “typical” disasters the United States experiences every year such as wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes and earthquakes, the “pull/push” system does not seem optimized for scenarios that could involve the detonation of a nuclear device, the release over a wide area of chemical or biological agent, or even the simultaneous detonation of multiple radioactive dispersal devices (RDDs or “dirty bombs”).

In my view, the Federal Government should explore with State Governors how to speed up the provision of Federal assistance during a true catastrophe. The Staf-

ford Act already authorizes the Federal Government to deploy Federal assistance in the absence of a request from a Governor, and States that coordinating with the State in this circumstance should not impede the rapid deployment or use of critical resources during a major disaster. However, as a matter of policy, the NRF does not allow the Federal Government to deploy Federal resources to an actual incident site in the absence of a request from a Governor. At a minimum, DHS and State Governors should explore whether this policy should be changed for catastrophic events.

A more expansive approach would be to consider whether there is a need for an analogue to the Stafford Act that would apply specifically to how the Federal Government interacts with State and local governments during catastrophic events. Some have suggested that the existing Defense Against Weapons of Mass Destruction Act could be amended to ensure that the Federal Government has appropriate authorities and funding mechanisms to deploy assistance at the earliest possible point in a catastrophe, regardless of whether a formal request for assistance has been made at the State level. Amending this act could include establishment of provisions that would describe in greater detail how to balance the sovereign rights of the States with the responsibilities of the Federal Government during a catastrophe. This is a very sensitive political issue that is grounded in the American form of federalist government and our Constitution, and hence any efforts to shape new authorities for the Federal Government during a catastrophe should be a joint effort between the executive branch, Congress and State governments.

QUESTIONS FROM RANKING MEMBER MIKE ROGERS FOR CHRISTINE E. WORMUTH, SENIOR FELLOW, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Question 1a. In your prepared statement (p. 8) you state that “DHS has many internal challenges, but a major external drag on its effectiveness and its ability to prepare for future catastrophes is the byzantine oversight structure it faces in Congress.”

Could you please elaborate on the need to streamline congressional oversight of DHS?

Answer. Reform of the congressional oversight structure for DHS is necessary both to improve the ability of Congress to conduct its oversight function and to enable DHS senior officials to strike an appropriate balance between executing core DHS functions and being responsive to members of Congress. Due to how Congress is organized to oversee DHS, there is not a true “center of gravity” in the House or Senate for homeland security issues. The committee structure makes it difficult to develop a core cadre of Members of Congress with a deep understanding of homeland security issues and programs. Major homeland security policy issues are frequently resolved in less than optimal ways due to battles over committee jurisdictions. Achieving coherence in the DHS budget, both from the perspective of Congress and the perspective of the Department, is very difficult because the DHS budget is spread through so many different appropriations bills. For all of these reasons, there is a strong need for congressional reform in this area.

Question 1b. What do you think would be an ideal starting point for the Congress to both streamline and maintain effective oversight?

Answer. In my view Congress would be better able to fulfill its oversight responsibilities vis-à-vis DHS if there were a single authorizing committee with oversight over DHS in both the House and in the Senate. In a similar vein, it would be useful to centralize the appropriations for DHS in a homeland security appropriations subcommittee, rather than dividing up the budget for the Department among multiple appropriations bills and subcommittees.

Question 2. In your prepared statement (p. 9) you state “this incredibly complicated oversight structure undercuts the effectiveness of the Federal homeland security enterprise in a number of ways.”

Could you please elaborate on that statement, and discuss how the effectiveness of Federal homeland security efforts are compromised by the problematic issue of extensive congressional oversight?

Answer. There are multiple ways in which the current congressional structure to oversee DHS undercuts the effectiveness of the Federal homeland security enterprise. As noted above, the diffusion of oversight responsibilities across multiple committees in Congress for DHS means that in many cases, resolution of homeland security policy issues is driven as much by committee jurisdictional equities as by the merits of the particular issue. Because the current committee structure has not encouraged development of a core, cohesive group of Members of Congress with deep

knowledge of these issues, congressional guidance and oversight is likely not as strong as it could be.

In addition to this dynamic, the diffusion of the DHS budget across multiple appropriations bills and committees makes it more difficult to develop a coherent DHS budget over time, and to oversee DHS programs and provide guidance for those programs in a coherent and consistent fashion. As a new Cabinet agency built from 22 separate agencies, DHS is already struggling to integrate and cohere as a Federal department. The fact that DHS components can go to a variety of congressional committees if they are unhappy with a particular policy decision to try to seek relief has not made it easier for the Secretary of DHS to mature the Department. In a similar vein, because there are many different committees and subcommittees with oversight over some part of DHS, guidance coming from Congress can often be conflicting or redundant.

Question 3a. In your prepared statement (p. 9) you state that “another dramatic reorganization of DHS would be among one of the worst ways to try to improve the Nation’s preparedness. Major structural reforms right away would be highly disruptive, painfully time-consuming and at the end of the day would probably yield little in the way of results.”

What do you believe would be the effects of yet another reorganization of the Department?

Answer. It is not at all clear that reorganization would address the core challenges facing the Department. Reorganization could well be an exercise in rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. The problem with the Titanic was not the arrangement of its chairs, but rather that it had a huge hole in its side. In a similar vein, creating yet another DHS organizational chart will be like moving the deck chairs instead of patching the hole. DHS needs strong leadership, consistent support and guidance from the White House, and the chance to consolidate its disparate components into a coherent whole—something that is very hard to do when the Department itself is not even physically located in one place. Another major reorganization would mean that DHS senior officials and line personnel spend many hours focusing on organizational issues such as establishing new roles and responsibilities, divisions of labor, job descriptions and so on, rather than working on the core substantive challenges facing the Department of Homeland Security.

In addition, another reorganization is very likely to further weaken morale and employee satisfaction, which is already very low relative to other Federal agencies. Another reorganization also is likely to make it more difficult for the next administration to attract new talent to DHS, because the “best and the brightest” will be deterred from taking jobs at DHS because there will be so much uncertainty about how DHS components will relate to each other, which offices have what responsibilities etc. Moreover, a major reorganization is also likely to make it more difficult for external stakeholders to work effectively with DHS at the outset of the new administration, because outside stakeholders will not have a clear understanding of who are their counterparts and which offices have responsibilities for their issues.

Question 3b. Do you believe that another reorganization of the Department would significantly impede DHS from fulfilling its preparedness mission?

Answer. Yes, I do believe a major reorganization at the outset of a new administration, if it has a significant impact on FEMA and other parts of DHS with preparedness responsibilities could significantly impede DHS’s preparedness efforts. In my view, a major reason DHS has not made more progress to date in the area of preparedness is the continuing reorganizations of DHS and the extensive bureaucratic skirmishing between FEMA, the Under Secretariat for Preparedness (and its predecessors ODP and OSLGC), and the Directorate for Operations. While the current organizational structure of DHS is not perfect, in my view the next administration would be better served to consolidate the existing structure of DHS, let nascent processes and organizational relationships mature for at least a year, and then determine whether additional organizational reform is truly necessary.

Question 3c. Considering the history of large scale mergers of Federal agencies, such as the Department of Defense, how critical is it for DHS to be allowed time to mature before it is subjected to another structural shake-up?

Answer. As I noted in my testimony, it took DoD 40 years to mature from the War Department into the Defense Department. The Goldwater-Nichols Act passed in 1987, but it took another 20 years for these reforms to reach their full potential. If the development of DoD is any guide, it will take many years for DHS to transform from a conglomeration of 22 different agencies into a single, coherent Federal agency. Given the importance of the DHS mission, it is important that the DHS leadership do everything it can to accelerate its bureaucratic maturation, but at the same time, one has to be realistic about how quickly this transformation can take place. It is not clear that a significant reorganization every 2 years or so is the best

way to accelerate the development of DHS given what is realistic to expect in terms of establishing a brand new Federal agency with a complex and difficult mission.

Question 4. What are your views on the role of detection canines in responding to catastrophes?

Answer. While canines make an important contribution to the homeland security mission, helping to detect explosives, narcotics, and other prohibited items from entering our borders or damaging critical infrastructure, I am not an expert on the role of detection canines. As such, I think it would be inappropriate for me to comment in detail on their present and future contributions to catastrophic response efforts.

Question 5. Do you believe we have enough canine teams for the homeland security mission? If not, how many should DHS acquire?

Answer. Please see above answer.

Question 6. Based on your experience, what recommendations do you have to develop training and certification standards for detection canines?

Answer. Please see above answer.

Once again, it was a pleasure appearing before your committee.

QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN CHRISTOPHER P. CARNEY FOR JAMES M. WALKER, JR.,
DIRECTOR, ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Question. What is the impact on State and local governments when interagency disputes break out during disaster preparedness and response?

Answer. At the State and local level, the best way to mitigate disputes is through an aggressive training and exercise program that identifies points of friction in a training environment, and not during an actual event. Often, where we cross wires is in the clear delineation of a chain of command. A concern that exists in Alabama and, I believe, in other States, is the notion that the Federal Government is going to take control during or after a disaster. That would not work in Alabama. We intend to execute the way we train, with the Governor of Alabama statutorily empowered to lead the State through a disaster. The role of the Federal Government is to provide the support the Governor requests, and not to do his job for him.

QUESTIONS FROM RANKING MEMBER MIKE ROGERS FOR JAMES M. WALKER, JR.,
DIRECTOR, ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Question 1a. In an article from *Federal Computer Week* that you included in your prepared statement, it states that “the Federal DHS is interested and is working with Alabama’s team to develop a pilot program on a national scale.” (p. 25)

Could you please discuss your involvement with DHS to develop a pilot program? Are there any developments on working to roll out Virtual Alabama on a national scale? How could DHS use this program?

Answer. For the past year or so, the Alabama Department of Homeland Security has been working with the Science and Technology Directorate at DHS. Specifically, we want DHS to embrace Virtual Alabama as a national best practice and help push it out to other States and territories. DHS is not structured to capitalize on good technology ideas developed outside of its organization. For DHS to apply Federal resources for innovative ideas the requirement must come from a directorate inside DHS. However, we are making some headway and we intend to develop a regional pilot for Gulf Coast States within the next year or two.

Question 1b. Do you believe that Virtual Alabama could serve as a model for other States to use?

Answer. Yes. The Virtual Alabama team has worked aggressively in its outreach efforts through national conference, invitational requests, conferences, and meetings with Federal agencies. In the past 12 months the team has met with the Federal Emergency Management Agency Region IV, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, Small Business Administration, NORAD/NORTHCOM, Environmental Protection Agency, DHS S&T/G&T, Health and Human Services, NASA, Federal agency representatives at Center for Excellence in Government, National Academy for Public Administrators, and National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Question 1c. Have you worked with any other States in trying to export the capabilities of Virtual Alabama to their respective States? If so, which ones?

Answer. Yes, the Virtual Alabama program has been viewed as a model for other States, several of which have expressed interest in the initiative to equip their emergency responders with a similar database of location information and the visualization tools to assist their efforts to safeguard the general public. In July 2007, Google entered into an agreement with the State of Louisiana on a similar project for that State’s emergency responders. The State of Louisiana asked Alabama for

permission to copy the concept for their State and immediately began the implementation of Virtual Louisiana. To date, the Virtual Alabama team has met with Governor's offices and Departments of Homeland Security in the following States: California, Mississippi, Tennessee, Michigan, Kentucky, Iowa, Illinois, Hawaii, Oklahoma, Texas, Nebraska, Indiana, Arizona, Florida, Pennsylvania, Nevada, and New York City. A number of States are in the procurement phase and announcements are pending. Wide-spread interest continues across the country.

Question 2a. In your prepared statement (p. 9), you state that "Alabama has an aggressive public outreach and citizen preparedness campaign called Ready Alabama."

Could you please elaborate on the campaign and how it is being implemented in Alabama?

Answer. Ready Alabama is an aggressive public outreach and citizen preparedness campaign. Ready Alabama challenges individuals to "Be Informed, Be Involved, Be Ready." This message is delivered via multiple venues and programs in order to ensure every Alabamian receives preparedness information." The overarching goal of our program is to promote personal responsibility on the part of our citizens.

Ready Alabama is a portfolio of programs that encourages individuals to engage in citizen service by becoming volunteers in disaster preparedness and response, pursuing additional emergency training, creating family communications plans, building emergency supply kits, knowing evacuation measures, and other relevant information. The components of Ready Alabama are Be Ready Day, Be Ready Kids, Be Ready Business, Be Ready Baby, Be Ready Seniors, Be Ready Camp, and Be Ready Sunday. This campaign has been highlighted by the Cable News Network (CNN), international Homeland Security journals, by the President in the 2008 President's published report to Governors during the National Governor's Association (NGA) meeting, and in the President's 2008 published report to the Nation on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

More information is available at www.readyalabama.org.

This campaign is combined with the Alabama Citizen Corps program. It is funded through DHS grant dollars.

Question 2b. Do you believe that this campaign will allow citizens to be better prepared to cope and respond in the next natural disaster or major catastrophe?

Answer. Yes. When you consider professional first responders comprise approximately 1 percent of the population, it is imperative the average citizen understands his or her personal responsibility to prepare, and, if necessary, respond to any type of disaster. By preparing citizens Government assets can be more effectively committed to serving those who cannot assist themselves. It is important to note that during both Hurricanes Ivan and Katrina the State of Alabama did not suffer a single storm related casualty in her coastal counties. Many of our citizens elected to become part of the response solution instead of being part of the response problem. It is incumbent upon Government to inform citizens they may need to care for their families, and, in a catastrophic event, help their neighbors.

Question 2c. Do you believe that this kind of readiness campaign could serve as a model for other States to use?

Answer. Yes, and we feel our program is already a model for the Nation. Other States are implementing components of the Ready Alabama Campaign and duplicating our Citizen Corps Program model. We take great pride in documenting and providing other States and municipalities with the particulars of our program. We believe the Alabama model provides an investment in the present by educating and training our citizenry, but also makes important investments in our future. We are training the next generation of parents, community leaders, and professional first responders by providing a tailored message, and asking them to partner with us to spread preparedness information.

Question 3a. In the past, FEMA pre-positioned emergency supplies in multiple locations across the country, but has since consolidated such supplies into six distribution centers. Rather than providing all supplies itself, FEMA has established agreements with Federal, State, non-profit, and private sector organizations, allowing FEMA to serve as a National Logistics Coordinator. The goal is to leverage emergency services, equipment, and supplies of multiple agencies to more cost-effectively provide emergency support to disaster-affected areas. The change, however, has led to some concern and confusion among State and local emergency managers.

How has FEMA communicated its plan to pre-position emergency supplies to State and local emergency managers?

Answer. It is the State's position that FEMA should develop a commodity strategy that is designed to support State level efforts first. One national commodity strategy developed and handed down by FEMA cannot be applied effectively to all States. The plan fails to compensate for each State's current level of capability to, purchase,

warehouse, distribute, and transport commodities to disaster impacted areas. The plan also does not account for each State's pre-event contract bid law limitations or timelines to implement pre-event contracts.

Alabama realizes the importance of working with its Federal partners to develop effective response plans and strategies, but these strategies cannot come from the top down and force the State to immediately adapt. All disasters start at the local level and work their way up to the top, and plans to respond cannot be developed in a vacuum. FEMA's strategy needs to be designed to support State level efforts and be based on current State capability. The new commodity strategy was not developed in this manner, nor was it introduced in a time frame that allows Alabama adequate time to build capability to support FEMA's new strategy. The State greatly appreciates FEMA's assistance in regards to commodities; however, it is Alabama's position that FEMA's new logistics strategy was developed with very little, if any, coordination with State response agencies.

The strategy was formally introduced to the State on May 2, 2008 only after the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) requested a meeting with FEMA Region IV representatives to come and explain the new process. On May 19, 2008, FEMA headquarters conducted a video conference once again explaining the new strategy. Despite the meeting and video conference, AEMA was left with more questions than answers on how it should be positioned to support Federal commodity assistance and has subsequently asked for FEMA to meet on July 8, 2008 to further clarify issues. The Agency was also disappointed that the strategy was issued less than a month before the beginning of the 2008 hurricane season.

Because this new strategy was introduced late, Alabama is forced to quickly build capability to support FEMA's plan. FEMA also informed the State at the May 2 meeting that Alabama needed to rely on pre-event commodity contracts with vendors to support the Federal strategy. Despite this suggested guidance, FEMA could not clearly explain the timeframe that Alabama's pre-event contracts should serve, the reimbursement process when commodities are purchased but disaster impacts are not realized, nor did they confirm whether or not the State had pre-event contract capability currently in place.

As of this date, Alabama is trying to quickly establish its own pre-event contract support mechanisms; however, AEMA estimates that it will be September 2008 before the contracts will be secured and operational. Until the pre-event contract can be established, AEMA must rely on unclear levels of FEMA support and State level emergency contract capability to purchase commodities only after the Governor issues a State Emergency Declaration. During the strategy development process, FEMA also failed to recognize the limitations that State bid law statutes place upon AEMA to secure commodities. Bid laws only allow the State to secure one vendor per commodity, and do not allow the State to utilize multiple vendors. AEMA is highly concerned that one vendor per commodity will not be able to adequately supply needed quantities before a disaster strikes.

Question 3b. Do you have confidence that FEMA's distribution centers and its agreements with other agencies will be able to provide necessary emergency supplies?

Answer. At this point we do not have complete confidence. A fundamental element of emergency management is to test and exercise new plans and strategies. It is the State's opinion that DHS and FEMA implemented the commodity strategy without adequately testing or exercising it. It's also the opinion of the State that the new commodity strategy is based on planning assumptions that were not co-developed with State input. For example, FEMA's gap analysis as of this date shows that Alabama's water requirement for a category 3 hurricane is 77 truck loads for the first 72 hours after impact. AEMA has voiced multiple times that this model estimate is woefully low and does not incorporate actual historical data or local county Point of Distribution (POD) capability from past events. AEMA is hopeful that it can arrive at common ground planning assumptions with FEMA at an upcoming July 8, 2008 meeting. Until agreeable planning assumptions are established, AEMA is at the mercy of FEMA's projections.

Alabama commends FEMA's attempt to reduce wasteful practices; however, the new commodity strategy may only be shifting the problem to the State level. For example, if AEMA decides to purchase commodities 72 hours in advance of a major hurricane to support FEMA's strategy, what happens if the storm shifts and does not impact the State? Alabama will be stuck with large quantities of commodities without the capability to store them in temperature controlled warehouses. These purchased commodities will ultimately decay and expire if not properly stored. The new strategy has failed to recognize this as well. AEMA asks that DHS and FEMA provide grant funding to help the State build warehousing infrastructure to store disaster supplies.

Alabama is also continuing to ask FEMA to support its requests to pre-stage 72 hours worth of water and MRE's in the State until AEMA has a chance to implement exercised and tested pre-event contracts that are proven to work. Providing pre-staged commodities in-State is also a win-win situation for all until the new strategy is proven and adequately tested by a sizable disaster event.

Question 4. What are your views on the role of detection canines in responding to catastrophes?

Answer. Detection Canines are a vital support element for Urban Search & Rescue Teams (USAR). Often, detection canines are a requirement for USAR teams that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requests during disaster. As you are aware, Alabama has a high potential to receive storm surge that is associated with a hurricane. Historically, storm surge has proven to have the highest potential to damage property and cause loss of life. Alabama must be prepared to implement a highly effective Search and Rescue Mission over a large area in the event that a hurricane impacts our coastline or a tornado strikes a densely populated area. In order to do this, detection canines will play an extremely important role helping first responders locate injured and deceased victims.

Question 5. Do you believe we have enough canine teams for the homeland security mission? If not, how many should DHS acquire?

Answer. My sensing is we are not utilizing canines to the fullest extent possible. Not only are canines useful in recovery operations, they are also invaluable in detection operations, search and rescue, and as a deterrent to crime and criminal activity. In many areas, canines are not an affordable option because they are expensive to train and maintain. That said, many areas do not have requirements for full-time canines. For areas that can afford canines and use them regularly, they are an incredible resource. Working through a mutual aid system, jurisdictions that do not have canines can request canine assistance for isolated or specific missions. A challenge for homeland security leaders is to ensure first responders with a requirement for canines can get access to them.

Question 6. Based on your experience, what recommendations do you have to develop training and certification standards for detection canines?

Answer. I do not have a lot of personal experience, but did get a chance to learn about and train with dogs in Israel, and in the military. One of the important lessons learned is the need for canines to work in pairs. Canines, like people, tire and lose their edge after extended periods of work. Canines need a partner to work in tandem with them.

QUESTIONS FROM RANKING MEMBER MIKE ROGERS FOR BROCK LONG, DIRECTOR,
ALABAMA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Question 1. Could you please describe your involvement, if any, with the Alabama Department of Homeland Security in the implementation of both the Virtual Alabama program and the readiness campaign?

Answer. The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) considers the "Be Ready" public awareness effort as a joint venture with the AL Department of Homeland Security (ALDHS) and various other agencies. The effort is designed to ultimately prepare the citizens of Alabama by establishing one clear and consistent voice from the State. AEMA and ALDHS both contribute funding to produce "Be Ready" public awareness media items. Ultimately, the goal is to "Brand" and advertise the "Be Ready" public awareness campaign so that citizens become very familiar with its purpose and meaning. Regarding Virtual Alabama, AEMA also views this as a joint effort with ALDHS. AEMA is working with ALDHS to make Virtual Alabama a "Common Operating Platform" that displays State disaster resources, hazards and vulnerabilities, and other vital data that can be used to provide decisionmakers with total asset visibility and situational awareness. AEMA is working with ALDHS and other agencies to locate, acquire, and add data layers to virtual Alabama to accomplish this.

Question 2. Do you feel that these programs play a critical role in your ability to successfully prepare Alabama for the next major catastrophe?

Answer. As we harness and maximize each program's potential, they are playing increasingly larger roles in our preparedness efforts. Both programs provide the State with an insightful and adaptable mechanism to assist catastrophic disaster response and preparedness efforts. In my opinion, there can never be enough funding provided to State and local government for the use of public awareness, risk/vulnerability identification, and total asset visibility. The "Be Ready" campaign allows all agencies to combine resources under one venue, and provides a framework for multiple agencies to work together to provide public awareness guidelines with a clear voice. If we are going to improve disaster response, we have to start with educating

citizens about their risk, vulnerabilities, and proper actions to take. Often, funding to support educational awareness programs, such as the “Be Ready” campaign, are the first to receive budget cuts. Disasters have a grassroots nature and impact individual citizens at the local level first. These impacted citizens serve as the Nation’s first line of defense when disaster strikes. We need to do all that we can to increase awareness and support to create a prepared citizenry. As Virtual Alabama continues to grow, this platform can also be used by both Government and citizens to attain detailed information regarding hazard vulnerability and potential impacts. Emergency Management has to improve efforts and provide citizens with effective mediums to educate them about vulnerabilities and proper actions to take when at risk.

Question 3. Could you please describe the progress, if any, that you believe these programs have made in ensuring that Alabama is capable of dealing with a catastrophe?

Answer. AEMA is continuously building Virtual Alabama’s capability and adapting it to meet the agencies’ needs. The tool is being used to display comprehensive data layers, such as the location of critical facilities, hazard areas, incident management and mutual aid teams, and critical facilities. AEMA is also working to use Virtual Alabama to understand populations at risk based on forecast, plume data, and other real-time threats. For example, Virtual Alabama is used to assist with plume modules for the CSEPP communities and can identify populations that would be impacted if an unlikely CSEPP incident were to occur. I feel this program has done a lot to help prepare Alabama for a disaster, but there is still more work to be accomplished.

Under the “Be Ready” campaign, AEMA and ALDHS developed multiple Public Service Announcements for television and radio to educate citizens about various preparedness actions they should take. These PSA’s are currently airing around the State.

Question 4. What are your views on the role of detection canines in responding to catastrophes?

Answer. Detection Canines are a vital support element for Urban Search & Rescue Teams (USAR). Often, detection canines are a requirement for USAR teams that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requests during disaster. As you are aware, Alabama has a high potential to receive storm surge that is associated with a hurricane. Historically, storm surge has proven to have the highest potential to damage property and cause loss of life. Alabama must be prepared to implement a highly effective Search and Rescue Mission over a large area in the event that a hurricane impacts our coastline or a tornado strikes a densely populated area. In order to do this, detection canines will play an extremely important role helping first responders locate injured and deceased victims.

Question 5. Do you believe we have enough canine teams for the homeland security mission? If not, how many should DHS acquire?

Answer. Unfortunately, the Alabama Emergency Management Agency does not have full visibility of this issue since a national database hasn’t been established to identify how many canines are available. However, it is my understanding that canines, like humans, can tire and work less effectively when exhaustion sets in. It is critical to have backup support canines during a disaster response that takes an extended period of time to locate disaster victims trapped by debris or other natural elements (such as mudslides).

Question 6. Based on your experience, what recommendations do you have to develop training and certification standards for detection canines?

Answer. My direct experience with training detection canines is very limited and I will defer this question to law enforcement and FEMA USAR experienced team members.

