



Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina

Tom Davis, Chairman

"Hurricane Katrina: Preparedness and Response by the Department of Defense, the Coast Guard, and the National Guard of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama"

Thursday, October 27, 2005
10:00 am
2154, Rayburn House Office Building

[Chairman's Opening Statement](#)

WITNESS LIST

PANEL ONE

[Major General Bennett C. Landreneau](#)

The Adjutant General
State of Louisiana

[Major General Harold A. Cross](#)

The Adjutant General
State of Mississippi

[Major General C. Mark Bowen](#)

The Adjutant General
State of Alabama

[Rear Admiral R. Dennis Sirois](#)

Assistant Commandant for Operations
U.S. Coast Guard

PANEL TWO

[Admiral Timothy J. Keating](#)

Commander

North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command

The Honorable Paul McHale
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense
U.S. Department of Defense

[Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum](#)

Chief
National Guard Bureau

Opening Statement of Chairman Tom Davis
Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to
Hurricane Katrina
Hearing on the Military's Role
October 27, 2005

Good morning.

Today the Select Committee will examine Department of Defense responsibilities, procedures and coordination with the Department of Homeland Security in the event of a catastrophic disaster.

We will look at the roles of the National Guard and U.S. Northern Command in disaster response as the operational arms of DOD and the states, and we'll review the role of the Coast Guard, a unique national asset with both military capabilities and domestic law enforcement authorities.

We'll try to establish a timeline of the military's actions – what they were asked to do, when they were asked, and whether the jobs actually got done.

We all acknowledge the heroic efforts that DOD, National Guard, and Coast Guard personnel made, efforts that saved many, many lives. The mobilization was massive and, at least once the call went out, swift.

But we also need to acknowledge that there were problems with the military response, that even some of the successes occurred despite less-than-optimal planning, and that too often our leaders were planning in a crisis environment.

There were problems with situational awareness and damage assessments.

With coordinating search and rescue operations. With the effective use of Defense Coordinating Officers by FEMA. With an early and persistent disconnect between DOD and state and local authorities. With inadequate telecommunications that prevented effective coordination.

With failing to learn as much as we could have from previous storms.

The nation's plans for managing the consequences of a natural disaster presume a multilayered approach, with local, state, and federal officials all playing important roles. While DHS and FEMA are responsible for managing the federal effort, they are not the only entities involved. Indeed, the National Response Plan places responsibility for initial response on state and local first responders, with the federal government providing assistance as needed to meet the emergency at hand.

While local first responders may be best suited for handling local emergencies, the question remains what happens when first responders are overwhelmed, as they appear to have been in Hurricane Katrina.

Today we'll ask whether DOD anticipated these circumstances, what preparations were made, and what actions were taken with regard to the National Response Plan's "Catastrophic Incident Annex" -- the annex that authorizes federal agencies to act when state and local capacity even to know what they need is compromised by the sheer size of the calamity.

Today's hearing on DOD's role in Katrina comes amid growing debate over an expanded military role in future disasters.

President Bush prompted the discussion in a nationally televised address from New Orleans on September 15, saying, "It is now clear that a challenge on this scale requires greater federal authority and a broader role for the armed forces -- the institution of our government most capable of massive logistical operations on a moment's notice."

Two of our witnesses today -- Secretary McHale and Admiral Keating -- have indicated more recently that DOD is considering training and equipping an active duty force specifically for disaster response.

These remarks have led to some confusion over specifics, and even to some outright opposition.

On October 13, the National Governors Association issued a statement reasserting their authority. "Governors are responsible for the safety and welfare of their citizens and are in the best position to coordinate all resources to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters," the association wrote.

An October 21 statement by Fran Townsend, who is leading President Bush's examination of the federal response to Katrina, has also spawned negative reactions from state officials.

Townsend reportedly said she is considering whether there is, quote, "a narrow band of cases" in which the President should seize control when a disaster strikes. A spokesperson for Louisiana Gov. Blanco responded by saying she could not think of an instance in which the president should be able to unilaterally take control. "We don't believe Katrina was the time, and I don't know what another time would be," Denise Bottcher told the Times-Picayune.

There's a basic tension here we need to explore. On the one hand, we hear understandable caution against over-reacting to Katrina with sweeping changes to laws or processes, caution against deviating too wildly from the locals-as-first-responders paradigm. I, for one, don't want people thinking that the best lesson to be learned from Katrina is that all answers can be found in Washington.

On the other, the call for increasing the military's role in domestic affairs is easy to grasp. Who else can respond the way the military can? Who else can stand up when others have fallen?

This tension was reflected in the National Response Plan *before* Katrina. On the one hand, the Catastrophic Incident Annex assumes that local response capabilities may be, quote, "insufficient," as they will be, quote, "quickly overwhelmed."

On the other, the Plan states that Federal resources will only be integrated into the response effort upon a request by state and local authorities – and the Plan assumes that state and local officials will be able to do the integrating themselves.

It seems our plan tries to have it both ways. Our plan may have too many cooks in the kitchen.

So we need a closer evaluation of the existing procedures for DOD under the National Response Plan, paying particular attention to DOD's role when first responders are wiped out or otherwise incapable of providing the initial response.

I think most of us would agree that Incidents of National Significance require a Response on a National Scale.

But the devil is in the details.

We cannot expect the Marines to swoop in with MREs every time a storm hits. We train soldiers to fight wars; you can't kill a storm.

So what's the threshold? What would spur the kind of enhanced or heightened military role that some have been promoting in the aftermath of Katrina? When would we pull that trigger? Would it have made a difference in the response to Katrina?

The fact is, military resources are not infinite. It seems that the kind of standing humanitarian force that would be needed to provide this sort of immediate assistance at a moment's notice would either threaten readiness or require an expansion of the active force and a significant boost in how well they're equipped.

There are legal questions that arise. Are we talking about statutory changes? Would we revisit *Posse Comitatus*?

I think the most important issue to address is far simpler: Do we need a larger DOD role – *or just a smarter one?*

As they say across the river, "When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." As we review the good and the bad of the military's performance in Katrina, and as we debate how to better prepare for the future, let's make sure we're not just hammering away at rusty nails.

Focusing on trying to improve what was largely a passive response is like putting a new paint job on a Yugo. Prettier maybe, but still not reliable.

Too much of what we've heard so far from FEMA and DHS and others fails to recognize that fundamental changes in disaster management may be needed. We have to stop waiting for the disaster that fits our response plan and instead design a scalable capacity to meet whatever Mother Nature throws at us.

With Katrina, there was no shortage of plans. There was, however, a profound shortage of proactive execution.

If 9/11 was a failure of imagination, then Katrina was a failure of initiative.

We are not here to point fingers. We're here to let experience be our teacher. Let's remember today what an incredible job the Coast Guard did. Let's acknowledge the National Guard's clear sense of urgency. Let's note for the record that Northern Command had prepared for this storm, deploying Defense Coordinating Officers to the three states before landfall and placing units on alert.

But let's also recognize that it remains unclear how much real support was in place *before* the storm arrived. Let's recognize that Secretary McHale himself has said DOD's response was too slow.

We need to ask how many DOD personnel were stationed at the Superdome and Convention Center. About their role in providing food and water. About their role in maintaining law and order amid chaos.

With today's hearing we return to the confounding, life-and-death gap between theory and practice that underlies our overall investigation. This committee was created to attempt to bridge that gap, to confront the vast divide between policy creation and policy implementation.

To make sure we are better prepared for the future.

I thank our esteemed panels of witnesses for joining us today so that we can continue the process of learning from our mistakes.



DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND AIR FORCE

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS-LOUISIANA
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
CAMP BEAUREGARD
PINEVILLE, LA 71360

October 24, 2005

Re: Written Testimony of Major General Bennett C. Landreneau
The Adjutant General
Before the House Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate
The Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina
On October 27, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.

Good morning, on behalf of the soldiers and airmen of the Louisiana National Guard that make up Task Force Pelican, I am pleased to be with you today to highlight the Louisiana National Guard's role in Hurricane Katrina preparedness and response.

Since 1636 our nation's National Guard has answered the call to service, whether on foreign soil or here at home. The National Guard's unique state and federal mission make it the most versatile tool in our nation's defense.

The Louisiana National Guard has a long history of service to state and country. When training, preparing and deploying for federal service or responding to our Governor's call, the professional citizen soldiers and airmen of the Louisiana National Guard have served with honor and distinction.

The scope of the Guard's response to this catastrophe was of such magnitude, that to try to capture every aspect is beyond the limitations of this paper. Let me give you the highlights--- In the early hours of Hurricane Katrina, and without regard for their own safety, and in many cases, knowing their own homes were probably destroyed, these great citizens of Louisiana began to go out, by helicopter and boat to begin the massive search and rescue operations. Pulling residents from rooftops, out of attics and directly from the water, the men and women of the Louisiana National Guard were there, saving thousands of lives and bringing hope and compassion to every person they rescued.

These rescues were part of the Guard's original mission, when 2000 guardsmen were alerted on Friday, August 26, 2005 in preparation for hurricane response. Guardsmen were deployed to pre-designated locations throughout southeast Louisiana. At the Louisiana Superdome, in accordance with the Emergency Operations Plan, the Guard provided medical care and security for this special needs and shelter of last resort. As part of the security mission, Guardsmen established controlled access points and screened each person who entered for contraband and weapons. In

addition, the Guard had prepositioned high water vehicles, engineering equipment, aviation assets and other security forces throughout Southeast Louisiana.

The storm hit landfall at 6 a.m. on Monday morning. Within hours of the eye of the storm passing over New Orleans, National Guard boats and helicopters were deployed to carry out the Governor's priority mission to save lives.

The Louisiana National Guard ran air traffic control from the Superdome, with over 100 aircraft operating twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, within the crowded airspace over the 9th Ward, St. Bernard, New Orleans East, and metropolitan New Orleans. The air operations were a joint state and federal operation involving Louisiana National Guard, Coast Guard, Army and other state guard units, which were later joined by Navy, Air Force, and Marine aviation assets..

A common misconception is that there was no food and water at the Dome, when in fact the Louisiana National Guard provided food and water to the evacuees at the Dome.

Within twelve hours of being called by the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) to assist at the Convention Center, the Louisiana National Guard and other state guardsmen were welcomed by the crowds. Food and water were served within 3 hours. By Saturday, 19,000 people were evacuated from the Convention Center. Three thousand (3,000) of these evacuees were critical care medical patients who were airtransported to safety. Over thirty thousand (30,000) people had been evacuated from the Superdome the previous day. By early Saturday, all evacuees had been taken from New Orleans to safe shelter.

The success of the Guard's response to the Governor's mission to save lives is a direct result of years of planning, training, exercises, and the Guard's actual response to the numerous storms that hit Louisiana on a recurring basis.

As every citizen of Louisiana knows, hurricanes are a way of life from June to November. This is very evident to every soldier and airman of the Louisiana National Guard.

Each year, the guard, as every other state agency, reviews its individual response plan to hurricanes. In conjunction with the Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, plans are adjusted to meet the ever changing dynamics of hurricane preparedness.

As part of The Louisiana National Guard's planning, we involve all of the partners that play a vital role in preparedness and response.

Our ongoing relationship with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and FEMA continues to be strong and we continue to work to improve through planning and exercises.

Our relationship with the Northern Command (NORTHCOM) is one of working partners. Through workshops, exercises and on-going analysis and improvement, we continue to refine our state's homeland security posture. Our participation with NORTHCOM in the planning and execution of the Joint Task Force concept was instrumental in the integration of Active Component and National Guard Forces during Katrina and Rita.

The support received from the Department of Defense (DOD) was excellent. Immediately, we knew the local and state resources would quickly be overwhelmed and exhausted. Due to the coordinated efforts of Governor Blanco, DOD leadership, the National Guard Bureau and the Louisiana National Guard, other states' National Guard forces arrived quickly to perform critical missions in the effected area.

Active duty forces were committed to the effort, as well. It should be noted that while Active component forces were moving into and conducting missions in the area of operations, there was never a question as to who was in charge of the forces. The legal authority of the Governor was clear and the Active Component and National Guard forces clearly understood the command relationships, and were very successful in their joint mission. We achieved the unity of effort required by the National Response Plan, and we did this to save lives.

One of the most successful outcomes of Katrina was the execution of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact. This was the largest and most rapid EMAC activation in our nation's history. 48 states and 4 territories participated, enabling thousands of National Guard forces to come into Louisiana and immediately save lives. To this date, other states and territories are continuing to provide resources to Louisiana through EMAC.

In recent years the Louisiana National Guard has been on the provider side of these compacts. In 2003 we provided equipment for ice storms in Arkansas. For Hurricane Ivan, Louisiana sent 200 soldiers and airmen to Florida to assist in recovery. Prior to this 2005 hurricane season, Louisiana

participated in a South East EMAC conference, which was designed to identify possible shortfalls for the upcoming season. Without this working Emergency Management Assistance Compact, there would be no state to state vehicle for resources to be identified and missioned.

The Louisiana National Guard uses EMAC in support of the National Response Plan. Within Louisiana, the National Guard is a state agency working with the Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, and as such the guard submits requests for federal assistance through LOHSEP. LOHSEP is also the agency that funnels requests to the National Guard from state and local officials or emergency managers. Overall, the NRP assisted our efforts in the Katrina response. However, due to the sheer scope and magnitude of these events of catastrophic proportions, a review of the NRP is suggested. In fact, the plan calls for self-review. In addition, emergency response plans at every level, local, state and federal should be evaluated and refined to identify opportunities for improvement.

The Louisiana National Guard's communication system, although degraded by the effects of the storm, allowed us to coordinate our response throughout the response and recovery process. Through our Air Support Operation Squadron's mobile satellite systems and Civil Support Team unified command suite, we were able to communicate with our guard forces as they began search and rescue operations in and around the greater New Orleans area.

Although Louisiana's communication system already has 5 levels of redundancy, this storm reinforced the nation's need for an interoperable communication system for a unified local, state and federal response. The volume of transmissions after Katrina highlighted the need for additional progress in this area. Although some progress has been made, clearly we are not where we need to be to meet our nation's requirements for interoperable communications.

Hurricane Katrina was truly a catastrophic incident. Its effects rapidly overwhelmed the local and state resources. As you know much of the Area of Operations was inaccessible by all but aviation and marine assets and most public communications capabilities were significantly degraded. Facing this challenge, local, state and federal officials, through innovative measures, mobilized, deployed, staged and integrated an effective response, and saved thousands of lives and protected property.

In conclusion, I am extremely honored to serve along side the finest soldiers and airmen in the United States. When the

call came, we were prepared, trained and equipped. Our response was timely, decisive and effective. The efforts of these soldiers and airmen reflect great credit on the citizens of Louisiana and their sacrifices will never be forgotten. Thank You.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bennett L. Lawrence". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

House Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina

**Testimony of Major General Harold A. Cross
The Adjutant General of Mississippi**

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am Major General Harold Cross, the Adjutant General of Mississippi. I serve as the Commanding General of the Mississippi Air and Army National Guard and director of the Mississippi Military Department. I report directly to the Governor and, during state emergencies, receive tasking requests from the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, a separate state agency.

The Mississippi Military Department works very closely with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. We are collocated in the same building and collaborate in the development of the Mississippi Emergency Management Plan which is closely aligned with the National Response Plan. However, the decision to activate and utilize the Mississippi National Guard during state emergencies rests solely with the Governor.

Specific missions tasked to the Mississippi National Guard for hurricane response include but are not limited to:

- Search and Rescue
- Law enforcement operations
- Commodity distribution
- Casualty evacuation
- Debris removal from roads and along power grids

On August 26, 2005, as it became apparent that Hurricane Katrina was a clear threat to the State of Mississippi, Governor Haley Barbour issued Executive Order number 939 directing me to activate the appropriate forces of the Mississippi National Guard requisite to the assistance to state and local civil authorities. In response to this order, and in concert with the Mississippi Emergency Management Plan and the Mississippi National Guard Operations Plan, I ordered the following units to report to state active duty and to be in place by August 28 with their equipment.

223rd Engineer Battalion

890th Engineer Battalion

112th Military Police Battalion

1/204th Air Defense Artillery Battalion

Joint Operations Center Personnel.

These personnel and their equipment were in place on August 28th and pre-positioned at Camp Shelby and Camp McCain, with a small contingent (approximately 175 soldiers) positioned forward in the lower three counties of Mississippi.

In addition, on August 28th, as the storm strengthened, the advance detachments of the following units were activated and ordered to their readiness centers to prepare their units for mobilization by August 29.

114th Area Support Group

MG BOWEN'S TESTIMONY FOR THE KATRINA BIPARTISAN COMMITTEE

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It is an honor to be here to testify before this committee. The Alabama National Guard began operations in preparation for Hurricane Katrina on August 28th. The last of our soldiers and airmen that have supported relief operations related to Hurricane Rita will return from Louisiana tomorrow. During this time, our soldiers and airmen have supported the citizens of Alabama, Mississippi, Texas and Louisiana with as many as 2800 personnel at one time. We were **12%** of the total National Guard effort for Rita and Katrina relief and recovery.

In respect to the National Response Plan, the National Guard responds to taskings from the Alabama Emergency Management Agency. Therefore, we don't send requests directly using the National Response Plan. If we have a need that we cannot fill from within our assets, we utilize the Emergency Management Agency Compact(EMAC) to request assistance from other states. If we cannot get assistance through EMAC, we request assistance through our state EMA utilizing the National Response Plan. The Defense Coordinating Official is the conduit between the state government and the federal response. The same procedure is utilized in respect to the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Our primary vehicle for requesting assistance is Governor to Governor using EMAC.

We do not expect any response from FEMA within the first 48 hours. Therefore, FEMA's response inside Alabama was very satisfactory. FEMA's distribution point operations, in conjunction with our Theater Sustainment Command in Birmingham, Alabama, have been outstanding. Previously, during Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis, we established 67 separate distribution points within Alabama. Our 167th Theater Sustainment Command is extremely proficient in establishing theater level distribution, and in conjunction with FEMA, this has been a great success story. Since the 167th has become NORTHCOM's Theater Sustainment Command, we expect that our level of involvement will grow significantly and be duplicated in all other states.

Concerning the adequacy of support from EMAC, we consider EMAC an invaluable tool in getting support from other states. We have not yet had the requirement for external support, however, we have provided assistance through EMAC to our neighboring states. Following Katrina, the Adjutant General of Mississippi requested an Engineer Battalion and Military Police Battalion and we responded immediately with requested forces in theater in under 36 hours. This was followed by the deployment of a complete Task Force of more than 1500 soldiers.

The only shortfalls we observed during this process was the ability of the affected state to generate an EMAC request in a timely manner. Simply put – the affected state is too overwhelmed to complete the paperwork for all their requirements. We corrected this by identifying capabilities and level of support, then completing the request ourselves and

forwarded it to the requesting state. The requests should be submitted electronically, i.e. e-mail, instead of fax.

Inside the state of Alabama, command and control relationships were always clear. We fully understand that under EMAC, once we move into an affected state, we work for the Governor and The Adjutant General of the affected state. Communications were problematic. There is a shortage of satellite phone capability and in addition, the process for frequency management was not responsive enough to meet the needs of deploying units. Interoperability of communications with first responders and external agencies also needs improvement.

In terms of reconnaissance of the affected areas, we require a single clearinghouse for information about the affected areas. This information should include detailed knowledge of the area including medical, electrical, accessibility, telecommunications, and sewer capability. Detailed maps are absolutely critical for deploying units.

The primary equipment shortage we encountered was in the area of communications, i.e. satellite phones.

In terms of logistics, it is absolutely critical that military forces and external agencies entering an affected area have to be self sustaining for five to seven days. If a unit enters theater without this capability, they become a burden on the already affected infrastructure.

Communications can be improved immediately through more satellite phones, and preplanned interoperability for first responders and external agencies. In addition, integration of a more responsive frequency management plan that includes first responders and external agencies prior to the emergency, to include rehearsals, will improve communications drastically. Further, establishing a lead agent or agency for overall coordination and management of communications is absolutely necessary.

Command relationships and legal authorities are adequate as currently written. However, it is critical that all agencies and DoD components are educated and trained in how the command relationships work.

Reception, Staging, and Onward Integration(RSOI) is a military concept of coordination and deconfliction of all assets flowing into an affected area, or theater of operation. This same concept is critical to the military and civilian response during a disaster like Katrina. During RSOI, communications frequencies are deconflicted, areas of responsibilities are delineated, incoming personnel are fed and housed prior to departure to forward areas, and briefed on the current Rules for the Use of Force. Most importantly, a good RSOI plan gives the commander, in this case the affected state's Governor and Adjutant General, an accurate picture of how many and what kind of units are present. This gives the commander the ability to more efficiently utilize assets available. Most likely, the affected state's National Guard would handle RSOI for incoming military units. The affected state's Emergency Management Agency should also conduct an RSOI for responding civilian agencies.

As Adjutant General under Alabama's Constitution, my responsibilities are the National Guard only. There are separate directors for Homeland Security and Emergency Management in my state. Command and control for my airmen and soldiers remained under my command or Mississippi and Louisiana governors under EMAC. The use of Title 32, instead of State Active Duty, simplified pay and guaranteed protections for Alabama airmen and soldiers during an operation of this scale. It also provided retirement points during these longer tours of duty. It is critical that our soldiers and airmen are on duty for 72 hours prior to an emergency to provide an adequate, timely initial response. In this 72 hour period, we will notify personnel, place the personnel on duty, load necessary equipment, stage and move our soldiers to the affected areas. The Stafford Act should be triggered 72 hours prior to an event for FEMA to reimburse the National Guard Bureau for Title 32 support.

In addition, the proposal for establishing the National Disaster Recovery Center – Southeast Region at the former Craig AFB in Selma, AL is an important step in improving our readiness to respond to disasters in the Gulf states. Selma's access to Highway 80 and close proximity to Interstates 65 and 20/59 makes it an obvious choice for this most critical facility.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

U. S. COAST GUARD

STATEMENT OF

**REAR ADMIRAL DENNIS SIROIS
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS, U.S. COAST
GUARD**

ON THE

**COAST GUARD'S ROLE IN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND
RESPONSE**

BEFORE THE

**UNITED STATES HOUSE
SELECT BIPARTISAN COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE
PREPARATION FOR AND RESPONSE TO HURRICANE KATRINA**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2005
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to address you today as we discuss the Coast Guard's preparedness and response to national emergencies such as Hurricane Katrina.

As a military service, law enforcement agency and the only national maritime first responder, the Coast Guard has the capability, capacity and organizational relationships that enable it to play a critical role in disaster response.

AGILE AND RESPONSIVE FORCE

The Coast Guard's ability to respond to major catastrophes is partly attributable to the flexible, multi-mission nature of its forces.

Coast Guard ships and aircraft are built to respond to a variety of missions without the need for extensive reconfiguration or the addition of special equipment. For example, a Coast Guard cutter conducting fisheries enforcement operations in the Gulf of Mexico could quickly be diverted to the New Orleans area to provide aircraft command and control, refueling and forward staging facilities within only a few hours. Coast Guard aircraft that normally perform law enforcement surveillance in the Pacific Ocean were immediately redirected to fly disaster relief supplies to the Gulf Coast.

Additionally, Coast Guard forces are on station at key locations around the Nation, many of them on short-notice recall, so they can respond quickly to emergent events. When a major catastrophe occurs, or is anticipated, we can reposition forces quickly to that area to optimize the response. The Coast Guard's response to Hurricane Katrina points to the value of these assets during a crisis. Within hours of the storm's passing, the Coast Guard surged 30 cutters, 38 helicopters and over 5,000 personnel into the affected areas, saving 26,055 lives in the first five days alone. These assets also provided vital security, logistics and communications to the areas hardest hit by the storm.

Another key to the Coast Guard's success is that the Coast Guard has a decentralized command and control structure. The authority and responsibility to move forces, establish response readiness levels and direct operations is vested in the District and Area Commanders. This provides the most direct oversight of operations at the field level and avoids delays caused by time-consuming bureaucratic processes.

Perhaps the most important factor contributing to the Coast Guard's effectiveness in disaster response is the fact that our forces are engaged in this type of mission on a daily basis. As the Nation's maritime first responder, Coast Guard men and women plan for, train and execute rescue missions every day. This real-world experience is reinforced by a robust exercise program that includes continuity of operations plans and extensive contingency plans with our government and private-sector partners at the federal, state and local levels. Our exercise program will continue to expand and mature as we move ahead with the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program, enhancing disaster response plans across the Government.

INTEGRATED OPERATIONS

The Coast Guard possesses several unique features that help to integrate its efforts with those of the Department of Defense (DoD), other federal agencies, the National Guard, and state and local authorities.

Because the Coast Guard is at all times a branch of the military, our communications systems, planning processes, personnel training and even our command structures have much in common with the DoD Services. Coast Guard commanders can be either supported or supporting commanders for military operations, and we have extensive experience working in and with DoD Joint Task Force Headquarters. This allows for easy integration of forces and unity of effort when working together during major catastrophes.

In addition to our work with DoD, the Coast Guard works on a daily basis with other federal, state and local partners. The service's Ports, Waterways and Coastal Security mission demands the Coast Guard interacting daily with state and local law enforcement and emergency response organizations, exercising command structures, testing force laydowns and building the trust that is critical to effectively execute an emergency response. Coast Guard Captains of the Port provide a critical link through Local Emergency Planning Committees, Area Maritime Security Committees, Harbor Safety Committees, Area Planning Committees, Regional Response Teams and other venues that allow the Coast Guard to build close relationships with key partners in disaster response. Organizational and personal relationships are built while participating on these committees and teams are of immeasurable benefit during a crisis situation.

The Coast Guard has built on these important relationships to improve our emergency response capability by actively working to implement the National Response Plan (NRP). The Coast Guard began implementing the precursor to the National Incident Management System in 1996 and has trained thousands of personnel on the Incident Command System, a central component of the National Response Plan. Since the NRP was issued last year, the Coast Guard updated its full range of contingency plans to reflect its guiding principles. Additionally, the Coast Guard has realigned and combined operational field units to provide full integration of emergency response capabilities, and directly support staffing for Joint Field Offices, when those entities are in place.

From an interagency perspective, the Coast Guard's relationship with the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency during this, as well as other emergency responses, has been excellent. The Coast Guard operates independently and receives no task direction from external agencies for search and rescue, aids to navigation maintenance, oil and chemical pollution, and reconstituting ports and waterways. However, we do provide support to other agencies as requested on a not-to-interfere basis with other assigned missions. In these instances, the timeliness and specificity of direction and requests from DHS and FEMA were adequate, and the Coast Guard was generally able to meet all of their requests. Taskings from FEMA were received via formalized mission assignments, as has been the case in previous disaster responses.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Although the Coast Guard is well positioned for emergency responses, there remain several areas of concern.

The Coast Guard is a small service. With only 39,000 personnel on active duty, a major emergency strains its capabilities and requires a careful balancing of risk in other areas. At the height of KATRINA operations, over 33% of Coast Guard aircraft were deployed to the affected region. We managed the impact on our nationwide readiness posture by incurring more risk in other locations. Canadian forces covered the Northwest Atlantic search and rescue mission, allowing us to divert forces to the Gulf Coast. Aviation training was postponed, and we decreased forces normally performing counter-drug, fisheries enforcement and migrant interdiction operations in the Caribbean and Southeast United States.

Closely related to the size of the Service, we have a limited capacity to respond to long duration events. While the Coast Guard is optimized for immediate first response, its limited “bench strength” makes it difficult to sustain these operations for a long period of time. Plans to undertake initial response operations and then pass responsibilities once a crisis has been stabilized are an important planning factor for Coast Guard commanders.

However, my most significant concern – and one which will affect our planning for future natural disasters – is that many of our disaster response assets have reached, or passed, their anticipated service life. The majority of our major cutters were built in the 1960s, and most of our aircraft are over 20 years old. With increased age come greater maintenance requirements, additional down-time and increased workload for maintenance and logistics personnel. The recognition of our need for ship and aircraft recapitalization is what led to the Coast Guard’s Deepwater Acquisition Program.

Fortunately, with your support and the Administration’s foresight to award the Deepwater contract in 2002, we are starting to field new assets to rectify this problem. Additionally, since 2001 the Coast Guard has invested extensively in new forces including 13 Maritime Safety and Security Teams, 170 new small boats, fifteen 87-foot Coastal Patrol Boats and four 179-foot coastal patrol craft to increase operational presence in the Nation’s ports.

By increasing multi-mission capability and capacity, the Coast Guard’s Deepwater Program is essential if the Service is to maintain its ability to respond to major emergencies. The requested cutters, aircraft, small boats, sensors, communication systems, and networks that tie them together into a “system of systems” will dramatically improve the Service’s ability to respond to disasters.

CONCLUSION

The Coast Guard is well-positioned to respond to domestic emergencies due to its unique blend of capabilities, capacities and relationships with federal, state and local partners. Our men and women performed admirably, but will require the Nation’s continued support to guarantee effective responses in the future. The continuation of the Coast

Guard's Deepwater and Rescue 21 projects are instrumental to our future success. We must also continue to improve operational integration at all levels of government in order to improve emergency response communications, planning and execution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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HOUSE SELECT BIPARTISAN COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE PREPARATION FOR AND
RESPONSE TO HURRICANE KATRINA

STATEMENT OF
ADMIRAL TIMOTHY J. KEATING, USN
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND
BEFORE THE
HOUSE SELECT BIPARTISAN COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE
THE PREPARATION FOR AND RESPONSE TO HURRICANE KATRINA

27 OCTOBER 2005

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Chairman Davis and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the role of our active duty forces in disaster response. My comments today will focus primarily on the actions U.S. Northern Command took to prepare for and respond to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The men and women of United States Northern Command join me in extending our deepest sympathy to the people of the Gulf Coast Region. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those affected by the devastating storms.

USNORTHCOM Operations. The Department of Defense has a long history of supporting civil authorities in the wake of catastrophic events with specialized skills and assets that can rapidly stabilize and improve the situation. All DoD support is provided at the direction of the President or Secretary of Defense and in accordance with the National Response Plan.

As directed by the Secretary of Defense, U.S. Northern Command supported the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster relief efforts. Hurricane relief was conducted as a team effort among Federal, state and local governments, as well as non-governmental organizations. USNORTHCOM was fully engaged in supporting the massive operation to save lives, reduce suffering and protect the infrastructure of our homeland.

USNORTHCOM began tracking the tropical depression that became Hurricane Katrina on 23 August. Before Hurricane Katrina's landfall in Louisiana and Mississippi, USNORTHCOM established staging bases and deployed Defense Coordinating Officers and Defense Coordinating Element teams to Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida to manage DoD response efforts in coordination with state and federal officials. These teams are normally not activated until a Presidential Disaster Declaration is made; however, as authorized by the Secretary of Defense, we deployed them early due to the magnitude of Katrina.

In addition, we alerted forces to be prepared to move as soon as the situation on the ground stabilized and the Department of Homeland Security, through FEMA, determined what assets were needed. We coordinated with U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) to provide heavy lift aircraft. We also worked with Joint Forces Command to identify available Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force units to perform missions such as imagery support and damage assessment, inter-coastal waterway search and rescue, aviation medical evacuation, and construction/bridge/utility engineering to restore key infrastructure. This enabled us to identify appropriate units to perform requested assistance quickly and provide transportation to the scene as soon as possible.

Shortly after Hurricane Katrina made landfall, we were given authority by the Deputy Secretary of Defense to deploy the forces we deemed necessary to preserve life and reduce suffering. We had not yet been asked by Federal agencies for these capabilities, but we wanted to ensure we could respond when needed. As the levees in New Orleans gave way and the magnitude of the disaster grew, we continued to lean forward by preparing and moving additional capabilities, including emergency medical teams and communications experts.

In anticipation of the significant role the Department of Defense could play in the rescue and recovery efforts, USNORTHCOM, at the direction of the Secretary of Defense, established Joint Task Force Katrina (JTF-Katrina). Located at Camp Shelby, Mississippi and led by Lieutenant General Russ Honoré (Commander, First Army), JTF-Katrina provided command and control of Title 10 assets deployed to save lives, mitigate suffering, and restore critical services. JTF-Katrina grew to include 24,500 active duty forces, over 200 fixed and rotary wing aircraft, and 20 ships at its peak. General Honoré and his staff provided pivotal leadership on the ground and did a superb job providing Department of Defense assistance in coordination with state

National Guard Forces and other federal, state, local, and non-governmental partners.

USNORTHCOM met every request for support received from FEMA. In support of the relief effort, Department of Defense forces conducted search and rescue operations, assisted with evacuations, organized a complex logistical system to deliver food, water, and other essential supplies, provided medical care, provided imagery support, conducted fire fighting and mosquito abatement missions, cleared debris, safely managed crowded airspace and assisted with mortuary affairs.

Throughout the operation, we worked with our interagency partners through on-site liaison officers who provided a daily assessment of anticipated requests for military support. In addition, we shared information through teleconferences with Joint Task Forces Katrina and Rita, Defense Coordinating Officers, FEMA and other interagency organizations, and the Secretary of Defense.

Relationships and lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina relief operations were extremely valuable in facilitating our response to Hurricane Rita. USNORTHCOM worked with FEMA to define requirements early and responded by ensuring Title 10 forces, imagery support, and search and rescue assets were in place ahead of the storm, helping to mitigate additional suffering.

International Cooperation. We are grateful for the generous offers of assistance from governments, individuals, and private citizens from around the world. More than 140 countries and international organizations offered to help.

The aftermath of this tragedy underscored the strong bonds of friendship with our North American partners. Canada deployed three naval vessels, one Coast Guard cutter, and divers. The ships used their helicopters to aid in search and rescue and supply missions; the Canadian Coast Guard and divers assisted in the recovery and restoration of critical navigation aids in our

channels. They were joined off the coast of Louisiana by a Mexican ship carrying all-terrain and amphibious vehicles, an ambulance, and rescue helicopters, as well as water and fuel. On land, the Mexican army sent a convoy of 49 trucks with a fully-equipped field kitchen along with soldiers and public health workers to help meet the basic needs of evacuees in San Antonio.

Conclusion. Our experience demonstrated we have adequate capability to meet emerging homeland defense and civil support crises. We are actively involved in efforts to compile lessons learned and incorporate them into future operations. As we do so, we continue to perform our primary mission, which is to deter, prevent and defeat attacks on our homeland.

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STATEMENT BY

**LIEUTENANT GENERAL H STEVEN BLUM
CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU**

BEFORE THE

**HOUSE BIPARTISAN SELECT COMMITTEE ON HURRICANE
KATRINA
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

FIRST SESSION, 109TH CONGRESS

**ON
HURRICANE KATRINA: PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, THE COAST GUARD, AND
THE NATIONAL GUARD OF LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, AND
ALABAMA**

OCTOBER 27, 2005

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COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

**STATEMENT BY
LIEUTENANT GENERAL H STEVEN BLUM
CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU**

Chairman Davis, members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Hurricane Katrina: the Preparedness and Response by the Department of Defense, the Coast Guard, and National Guard of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Today, the National Guard finds itself more than ever linked to the vital interests of our nation, both here at home and around the world. Over 140,000 National Guard soldiers are currently deployed in support of operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and dozens of other nations. At the same time, the men and women of the National Guard have responded magnificently to the catastrophic events of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma here at home. Over 50,000 National Guard personnel hailing from every state and territory - responded to calls for support during this difficult period. That is more than the United States employed during Grenada or Panama operations.

As the government begins the necessary process of assessing the effects of the hurricanes and the response to those events, the picture is one of laudable successes as well as areas requiring improvement.

I am particularly proud of the timeliness and magnitude of the National Guard's efforts in advance of Hurricane Katrina and our response in its immediate aftermath. National Guard forces were in the water and on the streets of New Orleans rescuing people within four hours of Katrina's passing. More than 6,500 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen

were in New Orleans by the second of September. The National Guard deployed over 30,000 additional troops within 96 hours of the passing of the storm.

More than 11,000 National Guard personnel remain on active duty today in Louisiana alone, with over 12,500 total personnel in the five affected states. In short, the National Guard response to the catastrophic events of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma has been and continues to be both timely and extensive.

While we have been successful in meeting the needs of the warfight overseas, there exists room for improvement in our capability to respond effectively to domestic mission requirements. Resourcing National Guard units deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom has significantly degraded the equipment inventory of the National Guard's non-deploying units. Every effort has been made to ensure that our deploying units are fully equipped and ready to support operations anywhere in the world. So far, we have transferred over 101,000 items of equipment in support of these missions. But these efforts have resulted in reduced inventories of many critical equipment items here at home, including trucks, radios and heavy engineering equipment.

Resources earmarked in current legislation will allow the National Guard to take its first steps on the road to recovery. Nonetheless, that road will be long and will require an order of magnitude increase in resourcing relative to that seen today. By working with

the Army and the Air Force and the Congress, I firmly believe we can meet this challenge.

Interagency relationships are fundamental to the success of the federal response to any disaster, and we must continue to foster strong relationships with the Department of Homeland Security and Northern Command. Indeed, coordination efforts to date point to the need for better planning, procurement of more equipment and interoperable communications, and joint training of the National Guard, active duty forces, and our federal partners.

As a full member of the national security team, the National Guard had met its mission requirements at home and abroad. But additional resourcing and better inter-governmental coordination is needed in order for the National Guard to be effectively postured to meet the needs of the future. By working closely with the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Congress, the National Guard will continue to be Always Ready, Always There.

Thank you.