

LESSONS LEARNED FROM HURRICANE ANDREW

4. P 96/10: S. HRG. 103-86

Lessons Learned from Hurricane Andr...

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TOXIC SUBSTANCES, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED THIRD CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

APRIL 19, 1993—HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA

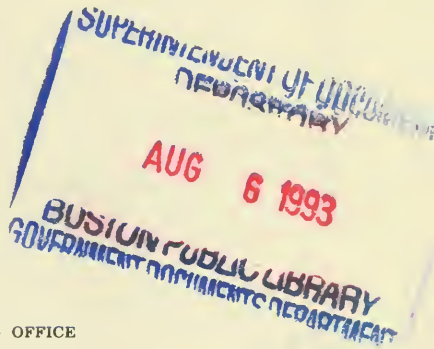
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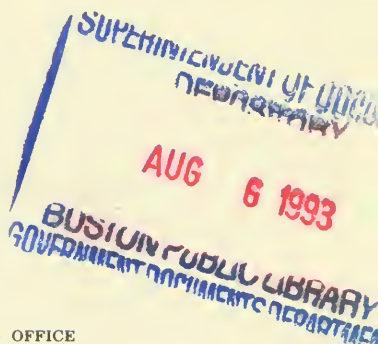


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LESSONS LEARNED FROM HURRICANE ANDREW

MONDAY, APRIL 19, 1993

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TOXIC SUBSTANCES,
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT,
Homestead, Florida

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:00 a.m. at 790 North Homestead Boulevard, Homestead, Florida, Hon. Bob Graham [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Senator Graham.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB GRAHAM, U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Senator GRAHAM. Ladies and gentlemen, I appreciate your participation here as citizens, and those who are here as part of the panel and presenters.

Our purpose today is to review, eight months after, the lessons that we have learned from Hurricane Andrew and continue to learn from those lessons.

The hearing today is going to be divided into four segments: the first will be a presentation and discussion on the issues that preceded the arrival of Hurricane Andrew—the preparation for the event; the second section will be on the events immediately following Hurricane Andrew; the third on the recovery effort, which, of course, is still ongoing; and then, finally, for one hour and fifteen minutes, we will hear citizen comments on any of those or other topics.

I would ask those who would like to comment during that period if you would please give your name to Ms. Hardin.

Ms. Hardin, would you please raise your hand?

[Hand raised.]

Senator GRAHAM. She will arrange the order so that everyone who wishes to be heard will have an opportunity to do so.

It has been eight months this month since Hurricane Andrew struck South Dade. The center of Andrew passed over this town in which we are meeting this morning.

Here at Homestead, no one needs to go study statistics associated with Hurricane Andrew in order to understand the storm. Its power, destruction, and financial impact and its effect on people whose lives were devastated by its passing are well known. Anyone who is here today who came into this building other than under the cover of darkness has already seen the wrath of Andrew and

what it has done in this community. And this view is eight months after the storm passed.

We are here today to talk about how we can cope with such a storm—how we can prepare for it, respond to the chaos it creates, and recover from its massive destruction.

We come to South Dade to examine and learn from how the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Nation's lead agency for responding to natural disasters, and other Federal, State, and local agencies dealt with Andrew.

At the outset I want to say for the record that we are not here to bash FEMA or any other agency. Overall, FEMA employees who worked the disaster should be credited with doing a good job under extremely difficult circumstances. Their hard work did and continues to make a difference.

Nevertheless, significant holes in the response effort caused fear and unnecessary suffering in the aftermath of the storm.

Our task today is to identify what works and what needs changing, and then to determine what specific changes are needed.

That said, let me offer my own assessment of FEMA's performance.

Without question, the best work in responding to Hurricane Andrew took place before the storm came ashore. Some three-quarters of a million people were evacuated, and the message was successfully conveyed that a massive storm was approaching.

In an event of this magnitude, there could have been thousands of lives lost. It was because of that effective pre-storm effort that the number of lives sacrificed to Hurricane Andrew was minimized.

In the crisis phase immediately following the storm, FEMA did poorly, but not necessarily through personnel failures. Rather, FEMA was asked to do a job which was beyond its capability. A disaster of Andrew's magnitude overwhelms an organization such as FEMA.

Today I will circulate draft legislation which I intend to introduce later this spring. (See p. 5.) This bill would authorize the President to send in the military in megadisasters to provide for the immediate needs of displaced citizens—shelter, food, safety, transportation.

The last stage of Hurricane Andrew begins today, and that is a massive recovery effort. I previously voiced my concern that FEMA has not been particularly victim-friendly. Examples that I witnessed here in South Dade include inadequate linguistic abilities of relief workers, inaccessibility of processors, use of acronyms and terminology not understandable to the vast majority of sufferers, and poor communication between inspectors and homeowners.

The more specific and immediately visible example that we are talking of today is the large amount of debris which remains accumulated on the yards and side streets of South Dade waiting to be removed.

More generally, FEMA needs to have a highly visible presence in the community as it coordinates the recovery efforts.

I plan to focus at some length this morning on the issue of the immediate response following a major disaster. This stage appears

to require the most extensive Congressional revamping of the current system.

The current system relies on assumptions that simply do not apply after a catastrophe of the scale of Andrew. Under existing procedures, local communities have the primary responsibility to assist the citizens after a disaster strikes. When local governments become overwhelmed, they turn to the State for money, manpower, and other assistance. When the State, in turn, realizes it cannot respond effectively to the needs created by the disaster, it can ask the Federal Government, under the aegis of FEMA, for help.

For most natural disasters, this procedure makes sense because it maximizes local control of the response effort. But this system assumes that local and State governments will have the ability after the disaster strikes to assess their needs and the extent to which they are capable of responding to those needs. It also assumes that the victims will have their basic needs of shelter, food, medicine, and safety provided for.

After Andrew hit, not only were the local and State governments incapable of providing for the residents of South Dade, but they lacked the ability even to assess the situation accurately. The temporary breakdown of communications and transportation, which characterizes a typical storm, was instead the total demolition of infrastructure—electricity, telephone lines, homes, etc.

Disasters of that magnitude transcend jurisdictional boundaries and are truly national emergencies; therefore, the Federal Government must have an immediate role in responding.

In catastrophes such as Hurricane Andrew, our top priority must be protecting human life and providing life support services.

Here in Florida, we lost valuable time trying to determine who should ask what person for what kind of assistance.

In my opinion, once the President has determined that a catastrophe has occurred, he should have authority to mobilize the military to provide immediate relief. Legal experts advise me the President probably has this authority already. My legislation would make that authority explicit.

Our legislation would direct training, equipment, pre-positioning, and other disaster initiatives, which would maximize the military's effectiveness after an Andrew-scale disaster.

I look forward to discussing this matter more as we move into the second part of today's hearing.

Before we turn to the first part, the discussion of the planning prior to Andrew, I would like to briefly introduce the people who have gathered here today to serve as panelists to present or to respond to the presentations that will be made.

Mr. Stan Czerwinski is with us from the General Accounting Office. He has taken a lead role in the General Accounting Office's study of FEMA and its response to Andrew.

Alvah Chapman is Chairman of We Will Rebuild and has been a leader in the recovery effort.

Kate Hale is the Director of the Dade County Emergency Management Team. Ms. Hale will present a statement assessing FEMA's performance in the response phase immediately following the hurricane.

Dick Hammond is with us from Maine. Mr. Hammond has brought several truck loads of donated supplies in the past several months, and would like to tell us of his experience as a private volunteer.

General John Heldstab is Director of Operations, Readiness and Mobilization of the United States Army. General Heldstab coordinated the military deployment in South Dade last August and September.

Tom Kirby is from the Dade County Farm Bureau and represents the diverse agricultural community in this area.

Frank Koutnik from the State of Florida's Emergency Management Division will lead off our discussion with his statement regarding FEMA's preparatory works before Andrew struck.

Dennis Kwiatkowski is here to present FEMA's perspective on the storm and tell us about some of the measures FEMA has taken internally to improve its response capability.

Arturo Lopez is Executive Director of the Coalition of Florida Farmworker Organizations. He will speak to the unique challenges which face migrant agricultural workers.

Lou Medin has come from the Institute for Simulation and Training in Orlando to present a proposal for training emergency response personnel with computer simulations.

Alex Muxo, City Manager of Homestead, is our host today, and I want to thank Alex for making this facility available. He will present testimony on FEMA's current recovery mission.

Bruce Netter was at Saint Ann's Mission and is now the site director of the Life and Family Support Center in the tent city adjacent to Saint Ann's.

Manny Rivero was recently appointed by President Clinton to be the administration's lead contact for Hurricane Andrew recovery in South Dade, and is involved extensively in the recovery effort.

Billy Wagner, the Emergency Management Director from Monroe County is here to discuss the special concerns of emergency preparation in the Florida Keys.

Again, I would like to thank each of you for your participation, and thank those of you citizens who have come to participate today.

[The draft legislation previously referred to by Senator Graham follows:]

103D CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. GRAHAM introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize the use of the Armed Forces of the United States to provide certain immediate relief and assistance in major disasters within the United States.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. MAJOR DISASTER RELIEF MISSION OF THE DE-**
4 **PARTMENT OF DEFENSE.**

5 (a) **AUTHORITY.**—Part I of subtitle A of title 10,
6 United States Code, is amended by inserting after chapter
7 18 the following new chapter:

8 **“CHAPTER 19—DISASTER RELIEF**

“391. Authority for use of armed forces.

“392. Forms of relief and assistance.

"393. Preparation for mission.

"394. Relationship to other disaster assistance authority.

"395. Major disaster defined.

1 **"§ 391. Authority for use of armed forces**

2 "Whenever the President determines it appropriate
3 for the immediate alleviation of damage, loss, hardship,
4 or suffering caused by a major disaster within the United
5 States, the Secretary of a military department shall pro-
6 vide, immediately upon the occurrence of the major disas-
7 ter, relief and assistance in accordance with this chapter
8 for the communities damaged by such major disaster. The
9 authority under this section may be exercised without re-
10 gard to whether a request for such assistance is received
11 from competent civilian authority of the affected State or
12 community.

13 **"§ 392. Forms of relief and assistance**

14 "Relief and assistance provided under this chapter
15 shall include, as necessary, the following:

16 "(1) Food.

17 "(2) Temporary housing or other shelter.

18 "(3) Transportation.

19 "(4) Communications.

20 "(5) Assistance for civilian law enforcement
21 agencies.

22 "(6) Health care.

1 **“§ 393. Preparation for mission**

2 “(a) TRAINING.—The Secretary of a military depart-
3 ment shall ensure that units and personnel of the armed
4 force under the jurisdiction of that Secretary are des-
5 ignated, equipped, and trained to carry out the mission
6 assigned under this chapter in a timely and effective man-
7 ner. The training shall include field exercises with Federal
8 civilian emergency relief agencies, State and local emer-
9 gency relief agencies, and the National Guard.

10 “(b) DEPLOYMENT.—To the maximum extent fea-
11 sible to ensure timely and effective performance of the
12 mission in the case of a major disaster, the Secretary shall
13 ensure that appropriate units, personnel, supplies, mate-
14 riel, and equipment are assembled before the occurrence
15 of a threatened major disaster at a site from which the
16 units, personnel, supplies, materiel, and equipment can be
17 rapidly deployed for the performance of the mission imme-
18 diately upon the occurrence of such disaster.

19 “(c) IMMEDIATE SELF-SUSTAINMENT CAPABILITY.—
20 Units and personnel deployed to provide relief and assist-
21 ance at the site of a major disaster shall be capable of
22 providing food and shelter for themselves without need to
23 obtain supplies, materiel, or equipment from civilian
24 sources at that site until transportation and communica-
25 tions capabilities sufficient to sustain the daily needs of

1 the local population and such units and personnel for food
2 and shelter are restored.

3 **“§ 394. Relationship to other disaster assistance, au-**
4 **thority**

5 “The authority provided in this chapter is independ-
6 ent of any other authority provided in law for the use of
7 the armed forces to provide relief and assistance in major
8 disasters.

9 **“§ 395. Major disaster defined**

10 “In this chapter, the term ‘major disaster’ means any
11 natural catastrophe (including any hurricane, tornado,
12 storm, high water, winddriven water, tidal wave, tsunami,
13 earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snow-
14 storm, or drought), or, regardless of cause, any fire, flood,
15 or explosion, in any part of the United States, which in
16 the determination of the President causes damage of suffi-
17 cient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster
18 assistance to supplement the efforts and available re-
19 sources of States, local governments, and disaster relief
20 organizations in alleviating the damage, loss, hardship, or
21 suffering caused thereby.”.

22 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—The tables of chap-
23 ters at the beginning of subtitle A of title 10, United
24 States Code, and part I of such subtitle are amended by

- 1 inserting after the item relating to chapter 18 the follow-
- 2 ing new item:

"19. Disaster Relief 391".

Senator GRAHAM. First, I'd like to call on Mr. Frank Koutnik for a statement on preparation before Hurricane Andrew struck. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF FRANK KOUTNIK, CHIEF OF OPERATIONS, DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Mr. KOUTNIK. Thank you, Senator Graham.

It is truly a great opportunity for me to be able to come to you today and just share with you some of the things that the State of Florida went through prior to the arrival of Hurricane Andrew.

We are excited in our own State because of some current legislation that has just been passed that put flood emergency management in the forefront where it needs to be.

We are excited also that Mr. James B. Witt has been appointed the new FEMA director, as he represents somebody who has been involved and has progressed to the State level, now as head of the national agency, that will have some true understanding of what we at the State level go through in these catastrophic disasters.

During Hurricane Andrew, I was the Bureau Chief of Operations. In that capacity, I shared a dual responsibility of running the State Emergency Operation Center. Having run that thing is basically—I was 12 hours on, 12 hours off. I was one of the people who ran on the 12-hour shifts.

What we do is coordinate all the State relief that was sent in to South Dade from our State Emergency Operations Center.

If I could, I'd like to run you through a very quick chronology of events that led us to this point and show you how FEMA interfaced with us and give you an appreciation for their role and what they did for us.

Beginning on Thursday, August 20, we activated our EOC for what was then Tropical Storm Andrew, a very disorganized system five days south of Puerto Rico. At that point, FEMA called us and gave us their assessment of what was going on and basically asked us what we were doing. There was immediate communication established with them.

On Friday the 21st our FEMA representative showed up at our State Emergency Operations Center to lend whatever assistance they could. But you have to understand, at that point we were still dealing with a rather disorganized tropical storm with very objective, limited impacts on this State.

So at that point, even though we were in a readiness mode, we had not geared up to any degree because we did not expect to have to deal with a category four major hurricane.

On Saturday, as Andrew was getting more organized, things were starting to crank up a lot more. We had asked that FEMA be represented in our EOC on a permanent basis. That request was approved, and we had full-time representation in our EOC.

I believe that was purposeful. I believe having them there in our EOC to bounce ideas off, to begin to talk about resource allocation, was absolutely essential for the State, and we applaud that effort.

It was that afternoon that we had a conference call with Doctor Sheets of the National Hurricane Center, and we were told that at

this point Hurricane Andrew—which caught us off guard—was now going to become a major storm and, not only that, its forward speed is going to increase.

So where we thought we had an extra day and a half to deal with Hurricane Andrew, we were now cut short a full day and a half.

At that point, the regional director was contacted by my previous boss, Mr. Bob May, who was the division director, and asked for whatever assistance could be forthcoming, more as a heads-up at this time—again, not looking at the major deployment at that point.

Sunday came around. FEMA had to go to their regional operations center at 12:00 noon. The Second Army activated their EOC at Fort Gillam at 3:00. We are, of course, fully activated at the State EOC.

By 8:00 that night, we hand-delivered to Mr. May the request for the Presidential disaster declaration based on the expectations of this storm. It was then signed, and we found out by 2:00 the following day that President Bush had signed that into effect.

In the initial stages, the only thing that I can say in any sense of a negative tone for this was this was the first major storm that we feel FEMA went through after activating their new program. There were some incidents out in the South Pacific, but I don't believe that it was ever activated to the degree that it was here—especially a catastrophic disaster.

Leading up to this storm, we had a one-half day training session on the new Federal response plan. What we found was when the Federal agencies showed up at our EOC—which we were very thankful for—there was some confusion on their part as to who had what role, who paid for what, who asked for what. So there was some misunderstanding on their part.

I would encourage us all to embark on this new training. It is greatly needed.

If I could, I would just like to go through the recommendations that we would offer this committee as far as how we could have used FEMA in a much better way.

We need the ability to not only ask FEMA to identify resources but mobilize them. Prior to a Presidential disaster declaration, this is an impossibility. Resources can be identified, but they can't be sent to a pre-designated area. That is not allowed outside of a Presidential disaster declaration.

Billy Wagner well remembers how he tried to air-lift his hospital patients out of the Florida Keys a full day in advance of Hurricane Andrew, meaning a full day before the disaster declaration was declared.

Based upon that, we could not use Federal resources to do that. We had to use—the State of North Carolina sent some guards down there.

That should be remedied. We should have the ability to tap into Federal resources on this side of a Presidential disaster declaration.

We need to waive the 72-hour match requirement. In the first 72 hours of a disaster, we would ask that all Federal requirements for matching be eliminated.

What this has the effect of doing is States have to tread carefully on the kinds of resources that are mobilized, knowing that one day we will have to find a 25 percent match to pay for it. Not that in this case we did that, but I can see in other States where budgets are tight that could be a very serious concern.

The FEMA director should have direct access to the White House is our other recommendation. We would ask that the Vice President be appointed as a FEMA contact—a coordinator of sorts—to act as a person within touch of the President who has a pulse on the Nation and can take the circuitous route that the current system allows where you have to go through this level and that level to get the type of Federal access needed.

We would see and very much approve of and endorse the need to have a 24-hour communications center set up in Washington, D.C., operated by FEMA, to have a hand on the daily pulse of the Nation, to find out in advance that there is something brewing, and there are these resources potentially needed—something that the State could report to on a daily basis on current operations of the State.

We would like to see that there be much more dialog between the State and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

We would like to see FEMA get into helping us identify risks indicative of each State. We don't need to be too terribly concerned about earthquakes in Florida. We do need to be very concerned about hurricanes. We would like to see the emphasis placed on that State's individual and unique needs and allow us to use our Federal funding to plan for these things. Currently it is not allowed, and it is very difficult to do.

Second, we would like to see the creation of what we would call "quick impact assessment teams" and have FEMA take the leads on this and let States support it.

These teams would be the first wave. Within 12 hours go in, quickly assess the needs, come out with a recommendation on what is needed.

As the story goes, in Andrew we directly asked Mr. May not to do damage assessment. I was in on that discussion. The reason we asked that was damage assessments up to this point, to our understanding, were only needed to create the Presidential disaster declaration. We already knew we had that, so why waste a full day doing a damage assessment. But we stopped short.

What we needed at that point was a needs assessment. There is a very clear differentiation between damage assessment and needs assessment. We need the ability to assess the needs, and assess the needs quickly, for people and for infrastructure.

When those assessments are completed, we would ask for the creation of what we would call "rapid response teams." These teams would then be deployed into the area to truly begin to fix and repair the lives of people on an immediacy type of basis.

Following that you would have your traditional FEMA-type relief where you are into a recovery phase, more long-term phase where you are writing damage survey reports and the like.

Last, we'd like to see the enhancement, creation, and support of additional mutual aid agreements among the States. We would like to see FEMA take the lead in this, to give the States, even by

region—FEMA region four, eight States, we should be in an eight-State contact with our own FEMA region, where if we run out of resources we can draw on the resources of other States.

To date, this has only been accomplished through the Southern Governors' Association. That could become a model nationwide. We would like to see FEMA's involvement with that—positive steps that would put them into a position of helping the States instead of hindering us to do what we know we need to do.

We would like to see the flexibility to develop State-specific response plans. To date, you really can't do that under some of the guidance, the CPGs, the community program guidance procedures that are currently enacted with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. We'd like to see those things revised to allow States to do response planning—the type of planning that we were so sure of at the State level.

We would like to see the cold war mentality eliminated within the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The old debate about civil defense versus planning should be a moot point at this point. We should not be into preparing for nuclear war any more. We should be into preparing for truly realistic, catastrophic events that will occur again and again.

As we all heard at the National Hurricane Conference, Doctor Gray predicts eleven main storms, three of which will be major storms. All we need is another one. How would you like to get another one right here, or the upper Tampa Bay area where you truly have catastrophic events?

Last, we would like to see FEMA revamp the exercise and training requirements to allow States to do things that are more realistic. We would like to see training developed at the Emergency Management Institute in Maryland on the Federal response plan: how to request Federal assistance, how to develop and deploy quick impact assessment teams, how to develop and employ rapid response teams, and what to expect within the first 72 hours of a catastrophic disaster.

I believe that last one is critical. A State must be educated on what it is facing in a catastrophic disaster.

Realistically, I can tell you as the Operations Officer for the State, I did not know what I was walking into. I had no sense of it. We were in Tallahassee, 500 miles away. It is difficult to hear the reports that everything is going, and to gear up to that.

We need FEMA there to tell us this is what you need to be looking at, this is what you should be thinking about prior to, and give extensive training to that.

I believe these actions are realistic and very achievable, and I think it will create an atmosphere in FEMA that is long overdue—positive change, positive interaction with the States. We'd like to see that. We'd love to work with FEMA. We believe that they are a very good organization that could be enhanced to better meet the needs of the State.

Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much, Frank.

Now I would like to open up the discussion to the other members of our panel for any comments on this first phase, the issue of preparation. I am particularly pleased that Mr. Wagner is here, be-

cause the Florida Keys represent an especially challenging area to do effective pre-disaster planning. I am interested in hearing Mr. Wagner's comments on what Frank just said, as well as any other remarks that he would like to make relative to the special needs of the Florida Keys.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM WAGNER, DIRECTOR, MONROE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Mr. WAGNER. Thank you, Senator.

I certainly appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of myself and specifically for Monroe County Emergency Management in regard to FEMA's role in responding to Hurricane Andrew.

I would like to limit my comments to the pretty strong preparations.

I certainly hope that my assistant, Andy Eames, can have the privilege and the opportunity to address the crisis situation. He is unable to be here today, but hopefully will submit that testimony to you.

First, I would like to address FEMA's role in our preparedness and response to Hurricane Andrew, including evacuation for Andrew.

I have been involved with FEMA and the Corps of Engineers role in emergency preparedness, and specifically in regards to regional hurricane evacuation, since 1981. I can assure you that there has not been a dollar spent on regional evacuation studies funded by FEMA and the Corps of Engineers—especially ours.

Our update to the original study was completed in June of 1991. It was funded by FEMA, the Corps of Engineers, the Hurricane Center, handling the storm surge, and the update of the storm surge model.

FEMA information which was made available to us was instrumental in the successful evacuation of both Monroe and Dade Counties, and also the evacuation of sections of Palm Beach, contributing to the very small loss of life during this catastrophic event.

It is most obvious to both Kate Hale, Director of Emergency Management for Dade County, and myself, that we need even another update in the study since Hurricane Andrew.

This catastrophic even identifies many additional problems, specifically in our transportation analysis. Monroe County in particular, is in need of a more refined SOSH model for the Key West area, which I consider the most vulnerable community in the United States.

Some problems and recommendations—

Senator GRAHAM. Excuse me. Did you say SOSH model?

Mr. WAGNER. SOSH is a term that is used for the numerical model that is used by the hurricane center in their efforts to determine what type of storm surge will be experienced by various communities along the coastline.

Mr. KOUTNIK. The acronym stands for simulate over the surge hazard from the events—how far the surge will go based on high tide, based on mid-speed, and everything else. It is very effective.

Mr. WAGNER. It is very effective for our planning purposes.

I'd like to address problems and recommendations regarding funding and resources. I would like to commend FEMA for the outstanding job that they have done in the regional work and evacuation studies, especially with their very limited funding and resources with which they have to operate.

These studies applied at the local and State government, and they have developed and updated various plans and procedures.

Mr. Bill Matthews of FEMA should be acknowledged for the leadership he has given as FEMA's work and program manager.

It is criminal that only \$800,000-plus is funded for this vital program. We need a strong partnership between two of our Federal agencies, and they are FEMA and the Corps of Engineers, on whom we depend for our technical assistance. Their assistance is not only used for preparedness, but also for response, recovery, and mitigation. We have observed the partnership and cooperation between these agencies. What is missing is the needed funding. It is imperative that Congress make the needed funding available now.

It should be noted that without the data that was made available through the southeast Florida regional evacuation study and update, I can assure you many more lives would have been lost. We may not be so lucky next time. All of us know it is just a matter of time before we experience another storm.

In the last 100 years, Monroe County has been directly affected by 40 hurricanes. Out of the 40 hurricanes, we have been affected by 23 major storms. In 1935, we were affected by three storms in one year—a category one; a category three; and a category five, the Labor Day Storm.

The second problem I would like to address is the use of military resources during the preparedness and response phase. It is imperative for Congress to change laws which currently prohibit the use of Federal resources and assets before a disaster occurs—especially the military resources—in an attempt to mitigate loss of lives.

It is becoming more and more evident that the only solution to addressing the problem which we face in our coastal communities is the ability of our military answers and resources.

Knowing now military's primary mission is national defense, I strongly feel a secondary mission certainly could be to train units to be available in time of a threat of a national disaster.

A specific example of this is the availability of military medevac aircraft to assist in the evacuation of hospitals and nursing home patients whose lives are at risk. Another use is to move vital equipment and personnel to an area to be ready to assist the recovery operations, as Frank indicated.

By making these military assets available, FEMA would be able to assure local and State government that plans and procedures could be carried out and missions to save lives could be accomplished instead of just hoping they may be available.

Third is our emergency broadcast systems—the EBS system. Our emergency broadcast system leaves something to be desired. It is imperative for our national security, as well as responding to natural disasters, such as hurricanes, that our EBS be the state of the art.

Congress must make Federal funding available and mandate the FCC to upgrade our EBS with FEMA's responsibility being increased for the overall coordination between Federal, State, and local governments.

Another area I recommend that the Federal Highway Administration and the Department of Transportation be mandated by Congress to identify a highway system which can be improved to help support evacuation of coastal areas. They should be required to assign a liaison to FEMA to coordinate and identify new routes, as well as highway improvements, and work with the State DOT to expedite their recommendations and ensure the required Federal funding to support these projects.

Two examples which would greatly help both Dade and Monroe County would be to expedite funding for the four-laning of the 20-mile stretch of U.S. 1 which connects Key Largo and Florida City, and also replace the Two Fish Creek Bridge, which is in dire need.

This isn't just an evacuation problem. This is an every-day problem. More lives are lost in that 20-mile section of road system than any other 20-mile section of the road system in the United States.

The second would be to address the feasibility of four-laning State Road 992, which becomes U.S. 27 north of Homestead up to south Dade Florida, just south of Lake Okeechobee. This would protect both South Dade and Monroe County residents that try to evacuate the southern section of Dade, which I found a problem, and also a return problem. It would give us another option. This would directly reduce our clearance time.

There are just two Federal highway mitigation programs which would save many lives in South Florida and the keys if hit by another category four or five hurricane.

Additional funding from NOAA earmarked for hurricane research and storm search is another recommendation. This would greatly help FEMA, as well as the State and local planners, better understand and address our hurricane problem.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to a most important problem facing the Florida Keys. It is the closing of the National Weather Service office in Key West, and the result of the new weather modernization program.

This office has been most instrumental in our hurricane preparedness and response programs, and has contributed a tremendous amount to our evacuation study and updates. Their meteorologist in charge has worked closely with FEMA and the Corps of Engineers during the studies, giving much technical support. The office played a most important part in coordinating our response, and specifically giving us critical data during and after landfall of Andrew.

As you know, we lost contact with the mainland and contact with the Hurricane Center, and the only information to track the system that we could get was from the Key West Weather Service office. They were able to give us vital advice when we could start our search and rescue operations in the upper keys—specifically for the ocean reef area that was hit hard—and also to assist Florida City and Homestead areas.

The loss of this office would be a tremendous loss to our preparedness and response program, and could possibly be the reason

for the loss of many lives in the future due to response to major hurricanes.

I certainly thank you, Senator Graham, for the opportunity to be a witness in this field hearing.

Senator GRAHAM. Mr. Wagner, what is the population of Monroe County?

Mr. WAGNER. Monroe County's primary population is just under 80,000.

Senator GRAHAM. And do you have any idea of how many tourists and non-residents were in the keys during the hurricane?

Mr. WAGNER. Senator, that was our biggest problem. We had in excess of 20,000 visitors that we know of in the Keys. One of the biggest problems in our planning efforts that we haven't addressed in the past is how many daily visitors we have to the Keys that we don't have a handle on. We know that all of our hotels and motels were jammed that weekend, and that would be the weekend prior to Labor Day, the last weekend before school started. So actually it was like a Labor Day weekend for us. And it presented a major problem to us.

Senator GRAHAM. So you had approximately 100,000 people. What is the shelter capacity in Monroe County, that is, how many people could you safely put in facilities that could have withstood a hurricane of Andrew's intensity?

Mr. WAGNER. Our biggest problem we are faced with right now, our plans and procedures have identified specifically to study that we do not have any structures that we could utilize for public shelter. So our plans and procedures don't open any shelters in the Keys, even in a category three situation. So we make a recommendation for evacuation in the Keys.

Senator GRAHAM. How long, in your estimation, would it take to evacuate 100,000 people from Monroe County?

Mr. WAGNER. Our biggest problem is we know that we are not going to get a complete response from everyone in a county. For the people that choose to evacuate, including the tourists, we are looking at in excess of 30 hours if they all evacuate. This last time we did not get the response that we anticipated, and we completed our evacuation process in 24 hours. We still had approximately six hours to go, and there was no traffic on the highway.

We can calculate from past experiences and from DOT that we can move approximately 1,000 automobiles an hour, with two persons on an average. So you have 2,000 people for six hours. That is an additional 12,000 people who would have had the opportunity that didn't take advantage of it.

It is a great concern of mine, particularly in the Key West area, because I can assure you in some of those areas where people didn't evacuate—specifically Stock Island, and the lower sections of Key West—if the storm would have slipped and went down south like we had in 1966, we could have lost in excess of 5,000 people with no problem.

Voice from Audience: Can I comment on that?

Senator GRAHAM. Sir, there is going to be time to have public comment on all of this.

Voice from Audience: I feel it is very important just to add something to it.

With the nature of Andrew and what happened here and people realizing the devastation that took place, not only would that problem be compounded with people leaving in this area—and they will leave. With the fluctuations going, and where it is coming ashore, we will have evacuation all over southern Florida.

Senator GRAHAM. Sir, if you would like to comment more fully, please let Ms. Hardin in the back of the room know and you can make a full statement during the public comment period.

Voice from Audience: Thank you.

Mr. WAGNER. Senator?

Senator GRAHAM. Yes?

Mr. WAGNER. There is one other thing I would like to point out.

One of our biggest problems is the fact that with this road system—the inadequate section in the upper Keys—many people that would like to plan on evacuation or evacuating to the mainland don't because they are afraid to get trapped on the highway, even though we have insisted on trying to make plans and procedures to prevent that. Psychologically, it has played an important part in our preparedness program.

If there is any further questions or information that myself or my staff can enter in these hearings, we certainly would like to have the opportunity to share it.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Mr. WAGNER. Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Doctor Lou Medin is Executive Director of the Institute for Simulation and Training, associated with the University of Central Florida in Orlando. He has been doing some work on what might be available through those technologies to assist in preparation for a major disaster.

Doctor Medin, would you like to comment on what has been presented here?

STATEMENT OF LOU MEDIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR SIMULATION AND TRAINING

Mr. MEDIN. Thank you, Senator Graham.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss what I think is needed to look to the future. Too often, what happens is that we put Band-aid solutions after the fact.

What we ought to be asking is: what can we do to better train and better plan for all types of civilian disasters, but, in particular, since we are discussing the hurricanes, what can we do?

First of all, we ought to be using state-of-the-art technology that exists today. That doesn't mean it is going to be a simple approach, but we need to develop an integrated, computerized, decision-making planning system.

The military has been doing this for years. Desert Storm was a good example of training simulation techniques. It saved a tremendous amount of U.S. lives, and also shortened the war significantly.

In the case of this disaster planning, why is there a need? Well, there are obvious answers. We want to minimize death and injury. We want to reduce the economic impact. We want to maximize logistic support. And certainly FEMA did a good job after the fact.

But how do we normally do planning today? Oftentimes we do have people get together and decide what the local organizations should do. But too often those training exercises are few and far between.

What we would suggest is—it's more than a suggestion. We have been studying this for three years. We have had many, many presentations to FEMA and a number of legislative committees. Basically we get general agreement that what we ought to be using is technology that exists today in military operations.

Exercises such as war games, command and control, mission rehearsal, take into account all of the variables that you would need in planning for a hurricane. For example, we ought to have a system—and models exist that would have to be improved—that would allow communication and training between city officials, State officials, Federal officials, and other organizations that ought to be in the system. And this technology is state-of-the-art.

It would allow a city official to practice what you do in case of a category one. Who do you call? What do you do in a category four? Who do you call? What type of logistics are you going to need? What type of medical facilities? Do you bring a Navy ship out of Newport and bring it down alongside the coast if that's necessary after the fact? Do we have communication to Fort Rucker so you can bring in helicopters?

Things of this nature can be practiced on a continuous basis. Now, can we do it economically? Yes. If all of this training is simulation, you don't necessarily need people to get together at one location. You can practice here in Homestead and communicate with Washington, or wherever else you would want to.

How does the military feel about this? We are in communication working with organizations within the military. For example, let's take one location, Fort Leavenworth, which is the Training Analysis Command. They do an awful lot of work on this. We talked to the civilians and military personnel at Fort Leavenworth, and they said they've got the models that could be easily—and the word "easily" I disagreed with—but they can be transmitted to what we are talking about today.

Training simulation—we ought to be doing that on a continuous basis. We ought to be experimenting and testing possibly once a month or once a week an exercise that could be done in a matter of hours after the system is developed.

After discussions, of course, all this comes down to dollars. Are there dollars available to do the development that is necessary? More times than not the answer is no. The dollars are available; they just have to be assembled in one location and avoid the politics that goes on with this.

Talking to FEMA, for example, you have two groups within FEMA. One group is real excited about doing this, and the other group says we ought to be continuing the way we are doing it where you bring in groups of city officials for two-week exercises in how to plan for various incidents.

I disagree. I think we are using techniques that are 30 years old—I'm exaggerating—but certainly they are manual or very, very primitive when we have the computer technologies.

Let me summarize. Basically, every time we have a disaster we all get excited and we say we ought to do this, and about a month after the disaster, or four months or a year, we go back with the same Band-aid types of training and simulation technologies. Let's stop it.

I can guarantee you there will be many, many disasters, and it will only mean it is going to cost us more, we'll lose more lives, and we will not be doing what we should be doing.

I really feel that Florida ought to take the lead. I can guarantee there is a lot of interest among a lot of Congressional delegations. The Army is real interested in doing this. The time to act is now.

Let's not get together another year from now after another hurricane or another major disaster and say, "What Band-aid treatment can we apply?"

Thank you very much.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Doctor.

Senator GRAHAM. Do any other members of the panel have comments on this first phase, the planning prior to the disaster?

Yes?

Mr. LOPEZ. Senator Graham, I have a question that I guess is addressing the statement of Mr. Koutnik.

Having been Executive Director of the Coalition of Florida Farmworker Organizations, and having gone through not by any means an emergency of the magnitude of Hurricane Andrew, but having gone through freezes and droughts, we always find ourselves saying, "You should have involved planning beforehand. You should have involved community action groups or community programs in any planning that was done at the State level."

I would just like to encourage the Department of Community Affairs that if they are going to do something—preparing new manuals, training sessions, whatever—to deal with the next hurricane, that they really consider working with the community groups in the area.

A lot of times decisions are made that are completely counter to what is expected, particularly when you are dealing with farm workers that have such a diversity in ethnic groups. Farm workers come in the form of Haitians, black, Anglos, Salvadoreans, Guatemalans, etc., etc., etc. A lot of times decisions are made on how we are going to serve those individuals and they do not work because there is a formula missing the people. The agencies that serve those groups are not asked to participate in any of the plans.

I would just like to encourage not only the Department of Community Affairs, but any agency that is going to be doing planning to try to involve community leaders and community organizations in their plans.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. Senator, did you want me to respond to any of the comments that have been made?

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. Thank you.

First of all, it is very exciting to be here to talk about emergency management issues in this kind of forum when people are talking about what needs to be accomplished and the kinds of things that

need to be done and the resources that are necessary. We don't get that opportunity too often unless we have an event like this.

One of the thoughts I would like to leave with you is some of the things that we are doing—some of the things that we have done I could go through, but some of the things we are doing. I'd like to address a couple of comments that were made and maybe run through the list that Mr. Koutnik referred to.

First off, with regard to our preparation for the storm, as Frank noted, we did have staff on hand at the emergency operating center. We were operating on a 24-hour basis in Washington, also. We had sent communication units and had backup units on the way. We had somebody at Dade County EOC also immediately after. As a matter of fact, I think an official from Florida City, when asked who was the first one they saw in Florida City, indicated it was a gentleman by the name of Jose Graves, who happens to be working out of our Puerto Rico Office, who walked in the door and presented himself and said he was there to assist in any way he could.

Part of the issues with regard to the delay has to do, I believe, with something else Frank mentioned, and that's the investigation of needs. I think that there was insufficient knowledge about the local needs at the State, at county level. That's something that we are going to have to do to strengthen, and we are operating right now to try to put in place a rapid assessment team, as Frank mentioned, using Federal agencies and appropriating the States so we can identify the needs and we can go to a governor in a more proactive mode and say, "Governor, this is what we found in our needs assessment. These are the resources that we have available. What do you need?"

The question of State and local authorities are still in a situation that we could not offer assistance unless the governors request it, but we think there is an awful lot more that we could do to identify those needs and bring the resources in much earlier.

With regard to the Federal response plan, the Federal response plan is a rather recent innovation, as Frank noted. It has been worked on for many years, but it started out as a catastrophic earthquake response plan and just recently has been expanded into an all-hazards assistance kind of evolutionary item.

The response plan was just signed off by 27 Federal agencies in the spring, and was still at the printer when Hurricane Andrew hit, so a lot of the agencies, although familiar with the content and the framework of the plan, had not had an opportunity for any hands-on, and, indeed, some of the States were still unfamiliar with what the Federal response plan covered. I think that could be rectified and is being rectified.

With regard to mobilization of resources, I'd like to go back to Hurricane Hugo just for a second and reflect on the GAO report which, at that time, indicated that it appeared as though FEMA had insufficient authority to do anything in advance of an event.

We have recently been working with our general counsel, and we have taken a more aggressive approach in reading the current statutes that we have, and we do think we have some authority that we can use—as long as nobody wants to stop us—to go ahead and

do something. But we need resources, and we need to talk to the White House about how to do that.

With regard to offering assistance ahead of time, we do not believe there is any legal authority to offer assistance in advance of an event to a State and local government. Local military commanders do have authority to help in some life-saving efforts, but the only provision that we have to offer assistance in advance of a declaration is under section 403(c) of the act, which we can use military resources on a reimbursable basis after an event.

I think that the legislative review and the rewrite that we are looking at right now will address that situation, and hopefully we can be in a better position to offer assistance in advance of an event, but I think that we can do a better job in mobilizing.

With regard to the 72-hour cost-share that Frank mentioned, we are preparing regulations now that will clarify that we will not be asking the State to match emergency assistance in the first 72 hours, or even longer. We'll worry about cost adjustments at the tail end when we get into recovery programs. So although the State has indicated it was not a question that existed in their mind, we will remove all doubt as far as the regulation we will be issuing this year.

I will skip over a few just to get to some that I know that people are interested in. We talked about quick assessment teams. We are working on that and also the impact teams.

I think that Frank has an excellent idea with regard to our regions working with the States within the region to work on an interstate compact for regional aid. I think that's an outstanding area that FEMA could take the lead in.

We are going to be doing a lot more with training.

He had a lot of items, and I'd like to address each one individually, but I think the major topics are the ones that I'll get.

With regard to what Mr. Wagner indicated, it is true that the hurricane studies that we perform with the Corps of Engineers are absolutely invaluable and have saved lives—countless lives. And it is true that they are only funded at an \$800,000 annual appropriation, which is probably not sufficient to continue the effort to address the needs across the country.

With regard to Mr. Medin's observation about the state-of-the-art technology and simulation training, a lot of those state-of-the-art techniques and so forth are wonderful, and we would like to take advantage of them. Again, it is a resource issue.

Just to put things in perspective, the funding for the Civil Defense Program, which is the program which supports the entire State and local response and preparedness infrastructure in the United States, is funded somewhere in the neighborhood of \$120 or \$130 million a year. I know that DOD does a wonderful job. I would think that's about the cost of a tank or two, and we could probably do a better job of maybe getting some funding down to State and locals if that is increased, and we are moving in more of an all-hazards arena so that the States can do more risk-based preparedness.

So I think that with some additional resources there is an awful lot more that we could do to help the States be prepared for a major event.

Senator GRAHAM. Are there any other comments on this first phase?

[No response.]

Senator GRAHAM. If not, the second phase is the crisis immediately after the event. A person who was in the middle of that crisis is the Dade County Emergency Management Officer, Ms. Kate Hale. Kate is going to make a presentation on her assessment of that stage, again followed by comments from the panel.

Kate?

STATEMENT OF KATE HALE, DIRECTOR, DADE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Ms. HALE. Pursuant to instructions received from Jeremy Bronson, staff to Senator Graham, this presentation is structured to address the following questions specific to the post-Andrew response of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to identify: one, where FEMA was successful; two, to look at what internal changes could improve efficiency; and, three, where legislative changes are required to maximize Federal preparedness.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency did many things right in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew, as well as suffer many failings. It is essential to identify clearly that its successes occurred where there had been appropriate planning and training, and that its failures resulted from gaps in that planning and training.

Systems and programs which are inadequate are non-existent and cannot be expected to function in a disaster. In particular, FEMA's early successes included its ability to mobilize key staff in anticipation of the event, to activate its command centers, and to identify a site for a disaster field office in Miami.

Key FEMA staff were in Dade county within hours of Andrew's exit and made early visits to the areas of impact, both on land and by helicopter, and those staff made contact with the appropriate local officials.

FEMA has some very dedicated, knowledgeable staff who moved very quickly. In particular, they established liaison with local officials, and by September 1 they had established 18 disaster operation centers staffed by 401 registrars, with additional mobile DACS and a tele-registration program.

Additionally, the Federal catastrophic response plan, as structured, provided for comprehensive and complementary functions to be addressed in an organized and rational manner.

It is essential that the process for requesting a Federal disaster declaration be reviewed and refined, particularly as it relates to a catastrophic and not a typical disaster.

Damage estimates required to support a declaration were not required in Andrew; however, their waiver left Federal agencies without the specific information demanded of them to release resources.

Further, the process of verbal requests through the ranks must be better documented and must be acknowledged by Federal agencies.

In a catastrophic disaster—particularly one that provides the advance notice of impact that hurricanes do—it is essential that life-sustaining resources—food, water, ice, generators, and medical services—be dispatched immediately after the storm passes and then, if not needed, be called back. To wait until detailed justification can be provided in an environment where communications and other elements of infrastructure have been destroyed makes no sense. It is a delay which can maim and kill as surely as the hurricane did.

The key to successful implementation of any plan is coordinated development and training. This was not done in the case of the Federal response plan. Local and State officials had not been introduced in the plan and involved in its development or formally trained in the plan, although a summary orientation had been provided for State agencies in July of 1992.

The Federal plan must provide for local and State agencies to coordinate complementary functions and response.

FEMA's employees were knowledgeable and committed; however, those first representatives were not helpful in providing technical assistance, which is a much-needed service in disasters. Further, I have learned that the very term "Inspector General" strikes terror in the hearts of FEMA employees, who fear that long after the intensity of the event their actions will be second-guessed by auditors.

Flexibility needs to be provided for those first FEMA employees to exercise their knowledge and expertise, to provide technical assistance, and to take actions without fearing for their job six months later.

Further, those employees who are the experts must be provided authority and not just responsibility.

FEMA and the Federal Government must develop a hurricane program which is commensurate to the risk of the 44 million residents of the United States and its territories who are vulnerable to nature's most awesome storm. The level of life and property at risk demands this action before our losses exceed our ability to meet and recover from them. This requires planning and coordination on the part of Federal agencies and requires that States be required to have sufficient plans as contingencies of Federal funding.

We must pre-contract proposed disaster services, provide for State and regional mutual aid to ensure the most cost-effective and immediate delivery of services to the stricken area.

The role of the Red Cross must be clarified. In disasters, their mass care role becomes one of emergency response, not charitable service. The immediacy of providing life-sustaining services must precede fund-raising. Either they should be compensated for this emergency response, or they should be replaced by the military, which can provide such services.

There are various models which could be utilized, including a joint command with the military. But a performance-based contract should be considered in exchange for their designation as the key Federal mass-care agency.

The role of the military must be defined and their mission be supported by training. No agency made more of a positive impact after Andrew than did the Department of Defense, because they

can deliver disciplined, self-contained, ready resources and manpower more rapidly than any other agency. They have no peer in their mission. Their role, however, should always be of support rather than command.

FEMA relies on a corps of reservists to augment its personnel resources, usually comprised of retired Federal employees. I would strongly recommend that FEMA train and utilize emergency management and other local government staff throughout the country to ensure quality control, while creating a greater capacity among local governments which will ultimately have to implement these programs locally if they are an impacted jurisdiction. This would be cost-effective. It would be capacity-creating.

FEMA must provide for a comprehensive local to State to Federal system which can function efficiently and effectively. We do not need a Schwartzkopf; we need system which functions so effectively that its manager must not be faced with situations which can routinely be anticipated and planned for.

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief Act should be amended to provide for response to catastrophic events as follows:

The 75/25 cost-sharing must be eliminated for catastrophic events according to pre-determined criteria to eliminate any hesitancy by State or Federal agencies and officials to take immediate actions to protect life and property. If not eliminated entirely, then a maximum deductible for each State should be provided annually so that the State legislators know in advance, and hence can provide for this disaster expense.

The victims of disaster do not care whether it is Federal, State, or local government which assists them. They are paying for all of it, and they have the right to expect that we will all be there.

State and local governments should be required to develop plans which maximize use of local and State resources effectively so that the demand for Federal resources is reduced. This, again, provides for greater resources at a much less expensive rate.

State and local governments should pre-contract for post-disaster services such as debris removal to ensure that the cost of such services is reasonable. After Andrew, the cost of most services skyrocketed to whatever the Federal Government would pay.

Finally, in view of the excessive fraud, which increases the cost to taxpayers for all disasters, I recommend strongly that both insurance and contractor fraud within an area designated for a Presidential disaster declaration be elevated to Federal crimes and vigorously pursued to protect victims of the disaster from a second victimization.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to being of any further information and support that I can to you as you move to ensure that the next government that is hit by a catastrophic disaster finds it better prepared to cope with recovery.

[Applause.]

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Ms. Hale.

General John Heldstab is the person at the Department of Defense responsible for emergency readiness and preparedness for the United States Department of the Army. He is here today to comment on the Army's role during the period immediately after Hurricane Andrew.

General Heldstab is here not representing the Department of Defense relative to policy matters which have yet to be determined by the Department, but rather to give his assessment of the Army's role in the weeks immediately after Hurricane Andrew.

STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL JOHN C. HELDSTAB, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, READINESS AND MOBILIZATION, UNITED STATES ARMY

General HELDSTAB. Thank you, Senator.

Unlike the others, I do not have a prepared statement. I will make a few comments.

As Kate Hale indicated, your Department of Defense assets, by their very nature, are geared to go into places where we function with virtually no life support. That is the design of the organization. So when you come into a megadisaster or catastrophic disaster such as Hurricane Andrew, the organizations I sent down from Washington were designed to be self-sufficient. Whether that was the Army folks out at Dade, the Navy that sailed out of Norfolk, or the Marines that came in, or the air crews that were flying in from Miami.

The problem, when you send military in, is they can become part of the problem if you are not careful by adding to the population of the area.

So the response, I think, is one of the things you get out of the Department of Defense in a disaster.

Now, the question, I think, before the group that has been addressed is: is the response timely? And under what circumstances does that come in?

I can tell you we moved folks within five hours after we were told to move them. I had people en route to south Florida. So I think in that regard we were pretty timely, because you must recognize that it is not commonly understood that all of those planes the U.S. Air Force has are not sitting on runways waiting for us to get on. They are, in fact, flying cargo because you and I, as taxpayers, pay for that whether they are sitting or not, and so we use them. So I first had to get my hands on aircraft before I could start doing this.

One of my greatest frustrations as we prepared to come down here was the inability to do things in advance—personal frustration. I only say that because it didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out we were going to have a hurricane strike south Florida. I had stuff all over the country. There were large generators which would power cities that I could not get here except by road, and that took some planning time. They ranged in location from Tennessee to Washington State. But I could get them all here if I could get them on the road. Unfortunately, at the time I was precluded from doing that.

I will tell you I took it on my own in Louisiana. I sent them there, and I figured I'd have to pay for it if I didn't use them. Fortunately, they were used.

So the inability to pre-position equipment where you can predict disaster was a personal frustration. Fortunately, in subsequent disasters in the immediate aftermath of Andrew in south Florida—

Andrew in Louisiana and Iniki in Hawaii—the leadership of DOD encouraged the preposition of resources just to mitigate the loss of life and property.

Military units, particularly those in the Army, are capable of responding by design on something we call an 18-hour sequence. I know there are some former military folks here in the room. It merely says from the time you push the button, 18 hours later airplanes are flying.

In Andrew we bested that record. In Andrew folks were down here faster than the 18 hours. That was because, while we could not move in advance, I will tell you there were all kinds of warning orders and preparatory orders that had been issued, just in anticipation that this would happen.

I guess I would conclude by saying let me make one final comment, because it has been commented on by a number of folks. I'll make two.

First of all, we talked about the Federal response plan. In the military we have a saying that says, "No plan survives the initial contact." What that really means is there is no perfect plan. Once you have the event, you've got to go back through and figure out what we did right, what we did wrong, and how we can improve the plan for the next event. I think Kate Hale has commented on that, and I think we would all be in agreement there.

The second point I would make is that the Miami Dolphins would not go into the football arena for the first game of the season never having met before. They wouldn't do it. And they sure wouldn't go into the Super Bowl never having played a couple of games.

In the military it is absolutely critical you rehearse the event. You rehearse for the event no matter what the event is. It is called training, and it is called exercises.

I think, from my personal view, one of the things that we need to focus on most in the disaster preparedness arena is getting all of the players on the football team—the State guys, the county guys, the local guys, and us Feds—together and do some exercises. That's what mitigates the confusion that occurs when you have catastrophic or megadisasters which, by their very definition, are highly confusing.

That's all I have to say.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much, General.

Any other comments on the period immediately after the event?

Mr. NETTER. Having been at Saint Ann's Mission putting together a hurricane disaster relief center, the brightest thing on the horizon was the arrival of the military. However, I would like to strongly request that FEMA, the State, and the county identify those who, regardless of their lack of preparedness, would be able to creatively respond to the need, and in any future planning bring those groups—churches, civic, benevolent agency, paternal organization—together to create what I would call a triple emergency system where groups of people would be looking out at Palm Beach, Dade County, and so on and so forth. With a disaster, you never know where the destruction will occur.

Had the Metro Dade Government Center Building been hit, where would that command center be picked up? Would that have been already in place?

These are things. There is a tremendous amount of preparedness that needs to take place. But we can't only count on the county or the State or the Federal Government. We have to get everybody who lives in Florida to participate, and we have to reach the population, and we have to get them involved for their own safety, because I don't think anybody is capable of doing it all if the average taxpayer does not get involved. It is up to us to create the arena that they would like to participate in.

Mr. KOUTNIK. May I comment?

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, sir.

Mr. KOUTNIK. I think the use of the military is absolutely essential for future catastrophic disasters in a specialized role. The only concern I have is that as we plan and as we exercise and as we train, we've got to know that they will be there.

What would have happened in the middle of Desert Storm if everything was on the job over there, and they needed everything we had been planning on here.

General HELDSTAB. Senator, may I respond?

Senator GRAHAM. Sure.

General HELDSTAB. The interesting thing about Desert Storm—and I'll use that as an example—while the folks at the Department of Defense were at the Gulf, I will tell you there were major formations of soldiers that never went there. There were whole divisions that were not there. I had as many people in the continental U.S. uncommitted during Desert Storm as we used in south Dade County during Andrew.

My problem would be the air. I will tell you while I had the soldiers and all the equipment, the air lift was clearly committed to Desert Storm. But an interesting thing about the United States is we have a great commercial air fleet. Those things we have to move, we may have to move by commercial air. That's the first comment I'd make.

The second lesson we learned during Andrew is that it is frequently faster to move by ground than it is air, because I had so many people lined up to get on this Air Force air flow, we started driving them in convoys because I could get them in south Dade County faster than I could wait for the airplane that was going to come in five days to pick them up.

So I don't think that would be a major problem, at least assuming a Desert Storm sort of scenario.

Senator GRAHAM. Secretary of Defense Aspin and the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, General Powell, in their recent presentation to the Senate Armed Services Committee, indicated that the domestic responsibility of the military would be a heightened area of Defense Department concern in this post-cold war era, including planning a specific line item in the budget for these functions.

So the Defense Department is preparing itself to assume greater responsibility and to have the specific capability to respond to these type of domestic events even though, at the same time, they might be pre-deployed in a foreign responsibility.

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. Senator?

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. I'd like to comment.

First of all, we also need to compliment the military. They do a fantastic job for us in support, and I think that is one of the issues as to what role the military plays.

Currently, I think they are support agencies for virtually every emergency support function in the Federal response plan, and they do a tremendous job.

I think something that Kate said, and something that Frank has alluded to also, is that in NAPA—the National Association of Public Administration—we did a study that indicated that civilian authorities should remain in control of a disaster response, with the military in a support role. I think that has worked well over the years and will continue to work well.

We share General Heldstab's concern about exercising and planning together, and I think that's something we are going to have to do more often.

We are planning a major Federal response exercise in June of this year. We have had one a year previously, and that is clearly not enough to educate and train the entire country on the evolving nature of the Federal response arena.

I think this is something we are going to have to work on and get the resources available. I hate to keep coming back to resources, but exercises of that magnitude do cost money. But, on the other hand, we do need to get out and train the States and locals on what the Federal response plan is all about.

With regard to providing detailed justification in the early days of a catastrophic disaster, there is no need for a detailed justification. I think what was being requested early on was identification of the need as to what was needed and where it was needed, and that gets back to my earlier comments about the need to go out and do a comprehensive needs assessment in the early stages and early aftermath of a large event so we can go to the governor and state the needs and we can bring the resources in.

General Heldstab mentioned the need to identify resources, as have we and many other agencies. The question again was the authority to mobilize and bring those resources in ahead of time. I think that's something in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew that we have clearly identified. We might have some authority; however, in legislative changes that we are going to be proposing we certainly need clarification of that authority.

The GAO, our own IG, and ourselves have indicated that there is not a clear authority in the law, but I certainly think we have enough that we can move up while we are waiting for clarification from the Congress.

With regard to the role of the Red Cross, clearly the Red Cross is the lead for the mass care function as it currently stands. They recognize their role, and they will be in a better position to work with the military in future operations. I don't think there would be any reluctance to work closer and to preclude what happened in the last operation.

Kate also mentioned the need to maybe use more State and local people. That is a problem that we have wrestled with over the years.

We have no problem with using other State and local officials. It kind of leaves them vulnerable for what might happen in their State. We have a cadre of about 2,000 disaster assistance employees to help us nationwide with any disaster declaration that occurs—and we work with about 40 disaster declarations a year.

But during the heights of Hurricane Andrew, just by way of comparison, on an ongoing basis, FEMA is funded with 302 people who are actively involve in disaster relief and are responsible to the disaster relief program on an ongoing basis—302 people. And there are an additional 46 who work on Federal response planning and exercising.

At the height of Hurricane Andrew, in addition to the storms we had in Louisiana and Guam and all the other disasters we had declared across the country, FEMA had on its payroll 6,139 paid employees, and our normal, ongoing staff is about 2,700. So our ability to expand is there. It also gives you an idea of the logistical problems we have in trying to address a storm of this magnitude.

With regard to the Stafford Act and the need to amend the Stafford Act to address the cost-sharing, an amendment is not needed. As I mentioned earlier, we can deal with that through regulation, and we are currently preparing those regulations now so there will not be a question in anybody's mind with regard to cost-sharing in the early days of a catastrophic disaster.

Senator GRAHAM. The General Accounting Office prepared a review of the operation of FEMA and other Federal agencies immediately after the event. Mr. Stan Czerwinski of the GAO is here today.

Stan, could you summarize your findings?

STATEMENT OF STAN CZERWINSKI, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF RESOURCES, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Mr. CZERWINSKI. Sure.

I think we would agree with most of the statements that you have heard today, Senator. Except there is probably one that we would take exception with. I think you have heard a call for additional resources. Within the climate we are in, we are trying to save money. What we would say is that you can take existing resources and reallocate them and get effective response essentially without costing much more money.

What we talked about probably are three general areas.

The first is the authority. The bill that you have introduced, Senator, is an example of the type of authority that we think would go a long way toward getting a response, a lot more effective.

What you call for is the President to be able to say, "This is a very bad disaster. The Federal Government is going to come in." In that type of authority, it would allow all of the Federal players to operate more efficiently.

I think General Heldstab referred to a second type of authority that he would say is needed, and that is before a disaster is declared we really need to be able to position resources and people offensively to be able to address it.

It is just not fair right now to have players like the military, for example, take a risk. What happens in some of the disasters—take Hurricane Iniki in Hawaii, and here in Florida—we like to have the types of things that you need already so close to a disaster that is going to strike.

You know you are going to need tents. You know you are going to need food, etc. It doesn't make sense to have them positioned half a country away.

However, if you bring in the supplies too near the potential disaster area and the storm, in this case, turns around and goes away, in this case General Heldstab was left holding the bag. That's just not fair.

What we think is that the authority given to the agencies has come a long way. What GAO is talking about is not costing additional money. Well, if the storm turns around, then that costs additional money. We would argue it didn't, because the other thing that you have heard about today is training and exercise. What you'd have is a good exercise.

So the pre-declaration authority and the post-declaration authority we think are essential to making more efficient use of resources.

We also think that within FEMA, itself, there are a number of resources that could be used a lot more effectively. FEMA, to their credit, started to do this.

I have heard a little bit about something called national preparedness, which has a classified nuclear preparedness function. Essentially, the core of FEMA's budget is allocated toward responding to nuclear threat. Given the current climate, we think the time is probably right to reallocate some of those resources toward disasters which are more likely to occur.

We think that shifting those resources into a national disaster scenario would allow you to do some of the things that Doctor Medin was talking about with modeling. Again, you are dealing with training. Instead of modeling and training for a nuclear bomb, model and train for hurricanes.

The third piece that we would talk about using more effectively are right here at the State and local level. The current Federal program for natural disasters calls for the State and locals to be first responders. We agree with that. But what you have to do is built the capacity where, when the State and locals cannot respond, the Federal Government can be there very quickly.

This happened in Andrew, but it didn't happen until four or five days, and in our minds that is much too late.

What you want to do is you want to minimize the number of times the Federal Government has to come in, and when the Federal Government comes in you want a very planned way of doing that.

There are probably two or three things that we think can be done to minimize the amount of time the Federal Government has to come in to provide this help.

The first thing, and probably most important, are the grants that are given to States. I think Dennis referred to about \$130 million in Civil Defense grants for States. What that means is that the

grants are given to States for specific purposes and States have to meet certain climates to get that money.

We looked at these and talked to a lot of State people, and they told us, "Yes, the grants are useful to us, but when you come right down to it they are not the most useful."

An example we were given was someone wanted to build an emergency operating center. Well, an emergency operating center is real nice to have when you have a hurricane. However, in the example we were given was that the emergency operating center, to be built with that money, has to be armed against nuclear attack. In some cases that is a real good idea. They can use the missile silos to be armed. In other cases you want a center that will do other things.

What we would say is to give the States more flexibility—not necessarily more money, but go ahead and use the money they have to meet their own needs. FEMA is really moving in this direction, and we are very pleased that we are seeing that.

Giving them more flexibility, however, also means that the Federal Government has to be responsible for how that money is spent. What we would suggest is that the Federal Government go in and have certain standards to look at how prepared States are. Right now we don't know how prepared each individual State and locality is. It just shouldn't come as a surprise when a storm hits that the State wasn't prepared to handle it. What we should know is how much they are prepared to handle and be prepared with a way to step in to fill that gap.

So I think that the Federal Government needs some standards to monitor State and local government with. But to just giving them the money and just monitoring isn't enough. What we want to see also is training geared toward disaster response.

When Hurricane Andrew hit, the GAO was asked by about a dozen different members of Congress to look at what happened. We looked at all we talked about—being prepared, about evacuation—and we looked at how the response went, and we discovered what very quickly became a pattern to us, and that problem was the dead response.

The situation that you had down here was intolerable. You can't have four or five days when you don't have any place trying to figure out what is going on, who does what, who I ask, how much is the problem. That just should not happen. What would contribute to that is the idea of training.

I think some of my folks talked to you, Kate, and if I could use an example that they gave me, they asked Kate what kind of training was offered, schooling. The example was training in how to do budgets, or whatever.

We then asked her: were you given training in how to assess damage? The answer was no.

Which would you rather have?

Ms. HALE. If I could make a comment, we have come up with a list of training things that we, as emergency manager, need to have, none of which is available.

Senator GRAHAM. Is the training currently prescribed from FEMA, or developed from grassroots?

Ms. HALE. It is prescribed from the top down at FEMA. It is not developed at the grassroots. I wrote a hurricane training course, which FEMA has now adopted after we, the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association, put it on for two years in a row for our own people here in the State of Florida, but that is a classic example.

There was, until that program—and it is now in its third years, two years of being offered by FEPA and one year of being offered by FEMA—the first and only training on hurricanes that is available. There is nothing else. There is no way to train all the local emergency management people and local government people around the United States on hurricanes except that one course.

I am two classes away from having a master's degree in business administration, but in order to be certified as an emergency manager, which technically I am not, I have to sit and take a course on creative budgeting that is a two-or three-day course I believe designed by FEMA. There is no waiver for this. There is no evaluation of pre-existing educational criteria. And we are not doing a bottom-up development of what it is we need to know to do our jobs and what kind of training we know needs to be offered to local governments in our jurisdictions to enable them to function appropriately, and it is desperately needed.

One thing I am hearing here is the need for a great deal of flexibility and site-specific training and preparation, given the special needs of individual communities and the kind of disasters they might face.

The general was discussing the need for more training and field-based exercises between the military and the civilian agencies and others who might be involved. Is there any conflict here in terms of the site-specific nature of the response with local conditions and the need to operate with an agency like the U.S. Army as a single entity in the megadisaster.

Mr. CZERWINSKI. If I can take a shot at that question, I don't think there is a conflict. I think we are talking about our multi-pronged approach to disasters.

When the majority of disasters occur, we don't have hearings like this about them because the State and locals are able to handle it.

What we think we have done is that the ability of State and locals to handle these types of disasters can be improved so that you have even fewer of these. But there are going to be situations when no matter how well the State and locals are prepared they are not going to be able to handle the disaster, and then you are going to have to have the Federal Government in and have a top-down approach.

To have that work, you have to have practice, you have to have agreement, you have to have understanding of roles, and you have to have leadership at the very, very top.

We think that in many cases FEMA is placed in an unwinnable situation. For them to be able to get this kind of control and direction, it just isn't happening with an agency at that level. It has to come from the White House.

That is one of the key points that we are making in our recommendations—that the tie-in from FEMA and the President has to

be explicit, and he then has to dictate. When things are tough, what is going to happen?

It has to be working with the locals, too.

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. That's the kind of exercise, though, that we are conducting in June and have done previously. We are conducting a six-day earthquake exercise in the midwest with all the Federal agencies, with the States, and with the locals. I'm sorry—that was last year. We are doing one in Utah this year in June. Last year we did one in the midwest United States. Previous to that we did one in California. So we have tried on an annual basis to move these large-scale Federal-State-local interaction exercises around so we can build experience.

We certainly agree that more training needs to be done and more exercising needs to be done to hone that system. What General Heldstab said earlier is very true. He said it is an evolving process. You exercise, you work, you plan. you have an event like Hurricane Andrew and you learn and you fix it and you keep moving forward as best you can.

Senator GRAHAM. I have a couple of questions on that.

Is the military going to be involved in these training exercises?

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you have some similar training exercises planned for hurricane or major storm scenarios?

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. Normally they have been earthquake exercises, only because we feel that the really big catastrophic disaster is going to occur in an earthquake scenario.

I would think that in the aftermath of Andrew the planners are looking at conducting some major hurricane exercises. But in the past they haven't.

As I said earlier, the Federal response plan is designed around that catastrophic earthquake that will occur one of these days, and so we are trying to address those needs. But those exercises can be moved around and could be made hurricane exercises, or whatever.

I think that FEMA recognized in the mid-to late 1980's that the concepts that we had in place for that catastrophic earthquake would work for any major disaster, and that's when we started making an all-hazards type of response plan. That's, again, how it has evolved through the years.

Senator GRAHAM. Could I ask the General—are you satisfied with the military's involvement?

General HELDSTAB. We're involved not only with FEMA exercises, but other Federal agencies do exercises, as well. For example, the Department of Energy ran one in Alaska on a rupture of the Alaska pipeline—obviously catastrophic from an environmental standpoint.

We are involved in as many exercises as we can be. But military exercising is merely one component. I think the whole structure has got to be exercised, from the local all the way to the Federal.

Ms. HALE. Senator, if I could make a comment, the only exercises of the Federal plan prior to Andrew were relative to earthquakes. The plan was designed, as has been stated here, for earthquakes.

Hurricanes are a different phenomena. We have notification in advance. We have ability to pre-stage, to pre-deploy, to take action in advance to ensure that as soon as the storm passes through we

have the ability to take action immediately to sustain life and protect property.

We who are hurricane-prone remain very concerned about whether or not we would see anything different next time than we saw this time—that period of confusion, that pre-deployment, that authority.

I would love to see FEMA come together very quickly, reviewing the lessons of Andrew, and tell us in hurricane-prone States and local governments exactly how things will work next time, what we do if we are hit this summer, and how the response will be different when you have that imminent danger that lets you know it is there two, three, or four days in advance.

The Pentagon was monitoring this storm the week before, as were many, many other agencies. This wasn't a surprise. And since we don't have to worry about the element of surprise, we need to have that explained.

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. Just to add to that very quickly, currently there is—I can't tell you how many task forces are operating right now to address the lessons learned from the Hurricane Andrew experience to fix the Federal response plan. Every Federal agency—all 27 of them—are working in various aspects, whether it be pre-deployment, whether it be logistical support, or whatever.

The target date for completing some of that work—you can't do it all—the date for getting some of that work done is June 1, so we will be back down to tell the States what has changed in the Federal response structure.

The issue of pre-deployment again is an authority that FEMA needs clarified in legislation; however, just for the record, again, we believe that we have identified authority in the Stafford Act that would allow us to pre-deploy and pay Federal agencies for that pre-deployment even if the hurricane turned around and went away, so that in the future there will be resources for pre-deployment and there won't be any question as to how fast we are going to have to bring it in, and we are going to do a better job of needs assessment.

So I think some of those issues that we brought up several times in this forum have been addressed and will be addressed when the hurricane season comes—the issue of needs assessment, the issue of pre-deployment—those are not going to be issues next time around when a hurricane comes.

Mr. KOUTNIK. May I?

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Mr. KOUTNIK. The idea of having the flexibility at the State level for hurricanes—like Kate said, we need plans, exercises, and training that are oriented toward the needs of the States.

We have one training officer at the State level, and that is it. Just one. He had to spend 80 percent of his time on a curriculum that was developed for him in Maryland that may or may not meet the needs of the State.

I hope you all caught what Kate really said. In the official eye of the Federal Government, Kate is not an "emergency manager" because she has not completed some course that Kate doesn't need to take—creative financing.

In our State that might not be a need. In other States that might be a need. There might be a need to go and learn how to drum up money.

We need to have the ability to create a curriculum that is very indicative of the needs of the State. As Kate mentioned earlier, FEPA had to take the lead on this on organization within the State.

So I would encourage us to promote the flexibility issue and to allow us to do what we know we need to do to prepare for the disasters we know we will face.

Mr. MEDIN. Senator, may I raise one question, if I may, sir?

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Mr. MEDIN. One of the issues that I totally agree with is carrying out exercises, but let me state, since we do an awful lot of training, that unless we keep up the training on a continuous basis it will be less effective, and you'll lose an awful lot of effectiveness. Unless we find techniques—not to go back to what we are proposing—that will allow you to practice throughout the year without assembling large groups of people at one location—for example, in the military, since we are limited in how many training exercises can actually be performed at the national training centers because of cost and what have you, we can practice with the techniques that we are proposing.

Another thing I would suggest to FEMA is that they look at a program that exists right now within the military on a daily basis on joint universal lessons learned. It is a program that exists, for example, where we'll put into this program the lessons that we have learned from Desert Storm and other previous exercises. That's not to say that we won't make that mistake in the future, but at least we will know what has happened in the past—what were the good things that happened, and what were the bad things that happened.

Assuming you do have a database of that nature, on the other hand, it has got to be accessible to people in a very rapid mode so, again, it would make it a little easier to tackle these problems.

But I would suggest that, from our standpoint, that to only train people once a year is doing nothing. They've got to keep their training up on a continuous basis.

Senator GRAHAM. Mr. Hammond?

Mr. HAMMOND. Senator Graham and members of this distinguished panel, it is a privilege to me as a farmer from Maine and a private citizen who knows exactly what most of these people have gone through, since I lived through a flood in 1987, and found the Government's intervention very unacceptable.

I would like to make a comment in hopes that I am correct.

It is my understanding that in the first several days of this disaster State and local officials with the Red Cross felt that they had this catastrophic disaster under control.

I understand that the American Red Cross said they had established feeding centers in Florida City and Homestead when, in fact, no such feeding centers, to my knowledge, were ever established until the military came in and set up field kitchens four to five days after the disaster. If I am wrong, you can correct me.

Another thing that bothers me is that if someone from FEMA or State and local government makes a major decision, whereas lives are concerned, they have to fear for their jobs. If I make a major decision, I lost my crop. I can always plant another one.

My question to you is: how much is human life worth?

Down here we had thousands and thousands of our neighbors with nowhere to go and no way to be taken care of. And I am only speaking as a private man who, like I say, went through a flood and lost everything I owned. The intervention of State and Federal Government took six days. In fact, we lived anywhere we could in any conditions we could find.

I understand that some decent people down here said they had to loot grocery stores to get something to eat, and there were people drinking water out of busted taps. Sanitary conditions, even to this day, Senator, are not well. This disaster still has not gone away in eight months.

I have trucked five loads of goods down here personally on my own basis to help you out without funding from anyone, so I owe no alliance to the Government or anyone else.

My question is—and I would hope that I can address in phase three more of what we have done—why are people afraid to make major decisions when a catastrophic disaster of this nature affects the lives of so many hundreds of thousands of people? Why doesn't somebody get off their duff and do something here to help these folks that still have nothing?

I'm sorry if I offend anyone on this panel, but personally I don't think this was handled right from the get go.

That's all I have to say at this time.

[Applause.]

Senator GRAHAM. I appreciate your comments. Also, I want to thank you as a representative of thousands of people from across the country who responded in extreme measures to folks here in South Dade who were in terrible need and came down with food and other needed supplies. They and you also raised morale tremendously at the scene by being there when they needed that type of thing.

Mr. HAMMOND. It is a grassroots thing, Senator. Myself, a friend of mine, and my father-in-law—I guess I should really thank my wife, who stays home when I make these trips and says to me, "Do you think if you make a few more this would straighten out to where you can come home and take care of your family?"

I think if someone does not care what happens to his neighbors, whether it be Florida, or Alaska, or wherever it might be, no matter where we live—our geographic location should make no difference—then we, as Americans, are not what I consider helping each other. And if I can do this, so can many other people.

I have been embarrassed when people ask me, "Why are you doing this?" I say, "Why not?" If this happened to me, I would hope that—as Kate just said here, I was very impressed with her testimony, "Why don't we help each other and find someone who can take charge of these types of things?" I think your bill is going to have a great deal to do with that.

Do it. Let's find the man.

Right here, as far as I am concerned—and I have said this before—I think the military should be the ones to come in and really put this thing together, although I understand the military doesn't wish to be in charge of civilian disasters. I can't find anyone I think is more qualified.

I have nothing against FEMA. I think they are doing a great job. I think they have made mistakes because, again, someone did not go in charge and take charge of the situation for these people here.

But I do think the people in south Dade County, Florida, were acting as responsibly as anyone I have ever seen, and I do believe the people of Florida should be commended for having to live through this condition with the limited help that you have received.

Senator GRAHAM. Are there any other comments on this second phase of our hearing?

Mr. NETTER. Yes. I am operating a tent city. We have had to evacuate it four times. The first one was the winter storm.

Our evacuations take on several forms, depending on the location we evacuate to. However, we are really good at it now because we have done it so many times.

Practice is extremely important. When I went through the military, they sent me to one base for training, and another base for jump school. I would like to see Florida develop a hurricane disaster training center that is specifically set up to cover all aspects of training all the different groups that participate and becoming real good at what we might have to do again.

Folks, every time there is a thunderstorm, the people we have living in tents have got to move. We can't sit around wondering how or where or anything. We just do it.

Right now, my staff—every one of them—is capable of evacuating the site by themselves with the assistance of the population. We need to practice, and we need to come up with some plans so we can save lives and, in all probability, save a lot of the costs and prevent a lot of additional damage from taking place.

People trying to get creative, trying to make certain things work, in the long run destroy many things. However, hopefully one day Kate will call me and it won't have to do with evacuation.

Senator GRAHAM. I know there were several members of the audience who indicated a desire to speak. We are going to do one final segment, which is going to be on the recovery phase.

City Manager Alex Muxo is going to make a statement and we will have discussion among the panelists, after which we will open it up to anyone who would like to comment.

Again, if anyone wishes to speak, please give Ms. Harlow your name. She is going to assemble the list of citizens who wish to speak, and you will be called upon in order, beginning at approximately 11:45 to noon.

The third phase of our discussion focuses is going to be on the phase that is still ongoing, which is the recovery effort. Nobody has been more involved in all phases of this disaster and continues to be an integral part of this phase than the City Manager of Homestead. Mr. Alex Muxo has done an outstanding Service to the citizens of this city, and has been joined in this effort by the mayor

and city council members, and the many hundreds of dedisated citizens and employees of the State.

STATEMENT OF ALEX MUXO, CITY MANAGER, CITY OF HOMESTEAD

Mr. Muxo. Senator Graham, first of all, on behalf of our community, I would like to thank you for being here today and hosting this program and hearing. I think it is very important.

One of our biggest concerns was that as time passes people would forget the importance of working and the challenges ahead of us with hurricane season coming up. So, on behalf of our community—and I know that you have spent tireless hours in our community since day one of the storm. On behalf of all of us, we really thank you for that.

I testified a few weeks ago in Washington regarding the response effort. If you look behind you, there is a plaque of Hurricane Andrew relief of the task force division. I'll tell you that's a part of our community that will never be forgotten. If it wasn't for the response of the military and the help that we got, I don't know where we would be today.

I hate to say this—and I know that Phil May is in the audience, and he has just been a tremendous asset through it all, and if it wasn't for his efforts it would be much more challenging—but it is almost like we are now faced with Hurricane Andrew II. I hate to say that, but I need to so I can show you the dramatics of what we are faced with today in dealing with the bureaucracy and the rules and regulations.

I don't think it is a question of money or having the dollars available there. It is really a question of the interpretation of the regulations.

I would like, as it relates to FEMA—there was \$2.6 billion authorized under the emergency hurricane response bill which you really led the charge in getting that bill passed. Of that \$2.6 billion, only approximately \$900 million has been expended to date with regards to Hurricane Andrew.

One of the biggest challenges we are having is having to deal with the bureaucracy and the red tape. I know that there is always going to be some of that involved, but it gets more and more challenging each day as time goes on.

Let me just give you one or two specific examples so that you can see what I'm talking about.

Right now the city of Homestead has over 650 DSRs that have been put into the system to get reimbursement.

Senator GRAHAM. What is that an acronym for?

Mr. Muxo. Damage survey reports. We have known them as DSRs since day one. That is how you start the process in order to be able to get reimbursed and paid for by the Federal Government.

In one case, we had to shut down every single account in the city of Homestead for electric service because we lost every single one of our services. Our electric system was totally destroyed. So what we had to do was, as we brought the system back on line we had to add additional storage capacity to our computer system. We have got an area that would allow us to try to recoup the dollars for the

expansion. That's over \$250,000 for additional capacity. We would not have had to add that capacity if it were not for the storm.

We started this process in December of 1992 to get that DSR approved and written. Today, four and a half months later, we are still having to deal with that one DSR. They have only approved of about 20 percent of the request—and 12 individuals have reviewed that request from the Federal and State level.

Each time a new person comes in and reviews it, it creates a new problem or a new question. So the bureaucracy involved is just incredible.

In terms of the housing and the emergency response under the tents and the trailers, right now we estimate that crime has gone up in the trailer parks somewhere about 76 percent from numbers that we had before. This is taking additional local resources to respond to that from police and other entities, and there isn't an area that we can really put through in these rules and regulations to get reimbursement for overtime or additional cost. So that's a burden on the local community.

Then there is a question which is really probably—and you'll see it on your tour today—the biggest challenge that we have today is trying to get through the FEMA process and the regulations. And it is not really, I think, as much the people administering it as it is the way the rules and regulations are written that ties their hands.

I think what you are going to find is that what we need to do is go back and look at what is in place now and, after we have had this disaster, see what we need to do so streamline the process and make it more effective.

But in terms of being able to clear the debris and the abandoned buildings, the rules state that you can go back and, if the building has been declared an unsafe structure—which we have had in many cases done—the property owners have said, "You are able to go on my property, tear the building down, and clear it."

However, FEMA is coming back in a lot of the cases and saying, "It is more cost-effective to board up the building than it is to tear it down."

Well, when you board it up you are going to have an ongoing maintenance problem. You are going to have to board it up month in and month out because people are going to go and try to break into that property.

So in a couple of cases we have demonstrated that it is more cost effective to go in at the beginning and tear the building down. Plus, it is sensitive to the community.

When you drive through downtown Homestead today, you can see businesses that have reopened next to abandoned buildings. I can tell you that the message it is sending out there is like this community is not coming back. It is a ghost town.

So somehow we need to streamline the process so that we become user friendly. I know there is red tape in bureaucracy, but it is really getting to the point now, eight months into this, of a lot of frustration.

I can try to answer any questions that you or any other panelists may have.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Alex.

Mr. Alvah Chapman chairs the We Will Rebuild effort which came into being just a few days after the hurricane cleared. He has been working actively to mobilize private and public sector support for this recovery.

Alvah, I want to thank you today for the great service that you have provided to this community in this, as well as so many other areas of private service.

I am interest in your comments as to your assessment of the recovery effort.

STATEMENT OF MR. ALVAH CHAPMAN, CHAIRMAN, WE WILL REBUILD

Mr. CHAPMAN. Thank you, Senator Graham.

I would like to add my thanks to the others for your being in this community once again and convening this hearing. This is an important activity and once again demonstrates your commitment to the recovery and rebuilding process.

The rebuilding process is underway, but it is slow and painful. But, having been that way many, many times I am encouraged by the number of people and efforts I see, despite the tremendous problems that we continue to face as a community.

We have had a good working relationship with FEMA. We have not had too many direct dealings. But the major concern that We Will Rebuild has—and reflects the concern this entire community has—is there needs to be an accelerated removal of trash.

This is a very, very serious problem in this community. It is not only a potential health problem, but it is an enormous morale problem. People have to go over a mountain of trash on the streets, and it is very demoralizing. That is a major concern.

I realize that in many ways the mountain of trash and debris is a sign of rebuilding. As homes are rebuild, the construction debris is piled outside and that has to be hauled away, so it is a good sign. But we are going to need to put major, new efforts on the part of Dade County and FEMA for removing its debris with great expeditious commitment to get this done.

One other factor I would like to mention is if some way could be found that some FEMA trailers could be used to house the voluntary builders that are here in this community in great number.

We have a marvelous resources of over 1,000 volunteers who have come in this community from all across America. Most of them are affiliated with religious organizations who are rebuilding the homes of our poor people in this community. In many instances, they are living in tents. Some of them are living in church classrooms and that sort of thing. But they do not have proper accommodations.

We have spoken with you about that, and regulations prohibit us from using them for these people because they are not storm victims, but if these trailers could be made available, it would enable us to attract more people, and these people could be more active in rebuilding the homes of poor people in our community.

If that could be done, we would certainly be in favor of that. I understand it would take an amendment to existing regulations.

Those are our two concerns—debris removal and some type of accommodation for the volunteer builders.

Senator GRAHAM. I'd like to focus for a moment on this issue of debris removal, because it is a health issue, a rebuilding issue, and it is a spiritual stab at the community seeing all of that still piled around.

What is the cause of delay in getting the debris out, and what could be done to get it removed?

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. I'd like to address that.

First of all, just to talk about the total amount of debris here, so far we have removed about 14 million cubic yards of debris, and we are expecting about 20 million cubic yards of debris before the operation is done. We will have expended about \$500 million just to clear debris.

The debris right now is frustrating to us also, Senator. We are going to be meeting this afternoon with county officials to find out what could be done to accelerate it.

There is nothing that I am aware of that would stop an acceleration of debris. The county has the authority to add additional contractors. If there is a lack of contractors, we can always go back to bringing in Federal contractors, which I don't think anybody wants to do at this time.

But it is very frustrating to us when we continually hear about the piles of debris and the assistance is available. I plan to sit down myself with the local officials today and find out what perhaps could be done to accelerate it. It is a frustration that we all share.

Our director has been down there, and Secretary Mara has been down there to talk about debris, and we have talked about it. If it is a question of existing contractors not being sufficient—it is not a question of resources at this time; it is just a question of getting enough people to do the job.

Ms. HALE. Senator Graham, I would like to add something here because certainly this has been a paramount issue to Dade County and to the local governments of this jurisdiction.

First, there is more debris than any community has ever had to deal with in the history of the United States—a tremendous, tremendous amount of debris. It is going to require additional resources.

Second, we have had problems in disposing of the debris because Dade County passed a ban on burning because of the implications it was having for public health.

Last week—unless something has changed on this—for example, \$27 million in DSRs were disallowed for Dade County because we were no longer burning.

We need to be more flexible. We need to look at ways of expanding the whole debris clearance and removal process.

Mr. CHAPMAN. Senator Graham, one other point.

I think what we have now is that until about six weeks ago FEMA had taken the position that there was going to be one last pass, that there wasn't going to be any additional funding as of March—or whatever the date was—for debris removal.

After Secretary Cisneros' visit to our community, I think that his recommendation or position that he took was that FEMA needed to fund debris removal in this community until there was no more

debris to take out. I really don't understand why the \$27 million for Dade County has been unauthorized. Clearly, where is the debris coming from if it is not from the storm?

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. FEMA is committed to stay here as long as the need exists and to fund whatever effort is going to be needed to clean up debris. The last pass announcement was probably not a good idea, but it was——

[Laughter.]

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. It was a concept of the part of FEMA for the people here to try to accelerate removal of debris that is inside of homes out to the driveways so it could be cleaned up in a more expeditious manner. It was a misinterpretation of what was trying to be accomplished.

When we met with Secretary Cisneros we assured him that we would be here as long as the debris existed. It was an effort to accelerate, and was probably not something that should have been done because it just wasn't essential at this time. But we will be here as long as is necessary.

With regard to the \$27 million of suspended DSRs for burning, that's a little bit more of a complicated matter.

The burning of the debris had been discussed and coordinated with the Dade County commissioners and was approved. The \$27 million represents some costs that were incurred by the Federal Government to put some equipment in place.

It is my understanding—and we are willing to revisit the issue—that both Federal and State EPA did air quality testing and found there to be no health threat.

We are willing to revisit it. If the State and Federal EPA can document there was a health threat, then we will be glad to revisit the issue.

Ms. HALE. Senator?

Senator GRAHAM. First Tom, and then Kate.

Mr. KIRBY. You said you were meeting with county officials and——

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. State and county officials this afternoon.

Mr. KIRBY. This afternoon? That's a pretty nebulous term. Who is calling the shots at the county, and who are you meeting with, sir?

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. Tony Clemente.

Senator GRAHAM. Kate?

Ms. HALE. Just a personal comment here—not an official one. I can tell you that because of the smoke and the burning that was going on before the ban, while we were working the kind of hours we were working, I had to take time out and bring a machine into the office because I was on a breathing machine four times a day, and sometimes more often, because of severe allergic reactions to the debris. That was throughout the community. So it wasn't——

[Applause.]

Mr. HAMMOND. Senator, could I ask one question?

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, Mr. Hammond.

Mr. HAMMOND. Is any debris being picked up at this time?

[Voices from audience answer both yes and no.]

Senator GRAHAM. Who knows the current status?

Mr. MUXO. Senator, there is a complement of contractors, but one of the things the city of Homestead is having to do is put out a new contract—an RFP to get new contract—because we are operating under a contract that was given about three or four months ago, and we think there could be a substantial savings now that the initial emergency is off.

The county I know has another contract that they are working under, but I think there still needs to be—I think what happened is that part of the problem was that when the last pass comment was put out there, everybody—I think it was effective in the sense that a lot of people put their garbage and debris out into the driveway, and it created so much that now the community has more than it can handle.

I think it was effective in that sense; however, it is taking a lot longer to get out. But right now there are ongoing contracts for debris removal.

Senator GRAHAM. Alex, could you give an indication of how many debris-removal programs are ongoing in the city of Homestead?

Mr. MUXO. Right now the city has two contractors. That means in manpower they have probably about 30 individuals. But county-wide I don't know the number.

Mr. CHAPMAN. I talked with County Manager Nino about ten days ago, and he told me that he had eight contracts in force, and they were adding five more, giving them thirteen. But I did not really understand what thirteen contracts meant to the removal rate.

There is obviously some attempt to remove the debris out of the way, but what there needs to be is a clean-up to offset the effects of the "one more pass" because the "one more pass" got it out there and we need a massive effort to get on top of it or we are going to have a serious problem.

Senator GRAHAM. Maybe when we get into the next phase, if there is someone here who can talk more specifically about that, they could tell Ms. Harlow and we can hear from them.

Anything else on the debris removal issue?

Mr. Wagner?

Mr. WAGNER. Yes, Senator.

One way I believe it could have been corrected is the areas that were chosen to be burn sites. I believe they could have been chosen where they could be utilized for wind direction and that would have alleviated a lot of problems with the smoke.

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. I think there was also an effort to put some more efficient burners on site, which has been stopped. There are certain burners with which there would be no smoke in there, but that effort has been stopped also.

Senator GRAHAM. I will raise a second issue, which was the question of housing for volunteers who are participating in the recovery effort.

Dennis, what is the situation in this area?

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. It is not a regulatory problem, but a legal restriction. The law calls for housing only to be available to eligible disaster victims. That's not something that we can waive our regulation.

We have gone to our general counsel before to seek a ruling, and that will take a legislative change.

We are going to review other areas in which we can help the county localities put their social services assistance back in operation quicker, which might alleviate some of the problems in the tent cities, and so forth.

But the issue of using mobile homes for other than disaster victims is not something that we can address without a legislative change.

Senator GRAHAM. In other disasters, when you have a surge of people in the disaster site to assist in emergency recovery efforts, what kind of housing are they in?

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. They normally just use what is in the area. It has never been a Federal provision before.

Senator GRAHAM. So what is different about this situation is that there isn't anything out there.

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. What is unique about this situation is the housing stock has been so severely affected. Rather than commuting, some of them are choosing to stay in tents because they probably have no other option. Some are doing it for economic reasons. Some are doing it because they don't have an option. That's why I think we need to look at restoring some of the social services network, as I said earlier.

Mr. CHAPMAN. Sir, I would like to make it clear for the record, too, that these volunteer builders are not complaining. They are committed to working. They are not complaining. They are here day by day doing this job. But we, as their committee of representatives, would like to see them housed better in our community to show them they are welcome and they don't have to live in tents.

Senator GRAHAM. Mr. Netter?

STATEMENT OF BRUCE NETTER, DIRECTOR, LIFE AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER, CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr. NETTER. Senator, since Alvah raised an issue of tents and people living in tents, I would like to discuss the tent city for a moment.

The center is a federally funded, FEMA-backed, State-enforced, Metro Dade-administered project, operated in physical operation by Metro Dade, the Archdiocese of Miami, and HRS. Does that simplify things for everybody?

[Laughter.]

Mr. NETTER. The purpose of the tent city, which is what many people don't like to hear down here, was as transitional housing for families who were victimized by Hurricane Andrew.

Last week, Mr. James Dewitt, the newly confirmed director of FEMA, visited the center. We raised several specific issues during that visit. Resolution of these issues would go a long way to help find suitable housing for our clients who, once again, are not out-of-town people, are not people who came here for any other purpose other than the fact that they were our neighbors and were severely hurt by Hurricane Andrew.

One of the qualifications for being taken into tent city was that, at most, you were 125 percent impoverished, which means that you are, at the very best, at the lower end of the economic ladder.

The first issues deals with the decision out of Washington immediately after the March winter storm that forced evacuation from the site and damaged all tents, that clients would not be offered trailers or relocation monies.

FEMA lawyers, we are told, felt that since all residents were returned to new tents at the center, that this was considered suitable and equivalent to what the residents had before, thus fulfilling FEMA legal obligations to provide for housing for those in a disaster zone.

This decision, which we hope to see reversed, does nothing to help all of us find a solution to the central problem of getting people out of tents before the onset of the next hurricane season only a few months off.

The second issue deals with relocation allowances provided those eligible for FEMA housing following Andrew. The rate of such payments is based on pre-Andrew rental rates in the area. The problem is simple: those rates do not provide enough money to rent anything at current market rates in south Dade, assuming that we could even locate places to rent.

The second issue deals with the fact that FEMA does not provide for first, last, and security deposits in this assistance package—items required by landlords. Today, eight months after the storm, I discovered, as did the FEMA representatives who I had shown this statement to, that, in fact, FEMA would provide first and last. But here was a FEMA representative and myself making this discovery eight months after the storm.

Many of the people who received several months rental money that could not find a suitable house or apartment to rent because they did not have first and last chose to do something in appropriate with the money by moving in with somebody else, or perhaps spending it where they should not have spent it, thus making them ineligible to even receive any additional FEMA assistance.

This is public information that should have been available to people from the beginning. Finding out eight months later that yes, we could have gotten that help, doesn't do these people any good, and they are living in the tents that we are evacuating at the rate of once every ten days.

The bottom line is that FEMA relocation assistance does not work. Instead, many families were not able to secure housing to have anything to do with getting into something that was real.

This raises certain problems with our population that might not be the same with everybody else.

Most of the people who are at the lower end of the economic ladder have not always had the finest education, have not had the finest skills, have not had many of the capabilities or abilities that we have to seek out attorneys, to know that they can turn to the system.

Many of these people at the first hint of a question run from the system because it has been something they have been taught to do all their lives.

I would like to see all of these issues addressed. I would like to see FEMA help us provide trailers at the very least. And trailers are certainly not a safe haven in a hurricane, but compared to a tent it is a wonderful home.

Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Any other comments on the debris, tent cities, housing, or other issues relevant to the current recovery effort?

Yes?

Mr. KIRBY. Senator, I would kind of like to go back to phase two just briefly.

Perhaps something could be written into your legislation that would be a very defined line of authority at the Federal, State, and local levels. I'll give you an example of what I mean by that.

One of your fellow Senators, a few days after the storm, wanted to tour this area by ground and called me to set up a tour for him. After some discussion with staff, due to his time constraints and what all was going on in the community, staff decided it might be a good idea to have a police escort.

I initiated a call to FEMA and was referred to the military and then was referred to the local law enforcement agencies. You name it, and I talked to them, only to be told by the Florida Highway Patrol, after about 15 telephone calls later, to please call them the next morning at 8:00 to remind them that they needed to provide a police escort.

Somebody needs to be in charge and needs to be able to make a call. Whether that call is right or wrong, somebody, of all those levels of government, needs to have the final say.

Moving on to the recovery effort, what is going to happen to Homestead Air Force Base is still questionable. Unfortunately, we lost our baseball team here a few days ago. Agriculture is basically the only industry that we have still got going for us, and we've got problems there and can't find anybody to listen to those problems.

Our nursery industry, which comprises about one-third of the entire industry, was told that they were getting 64 percent cost share from the emergency conservation program administered by USDA after they went out and spent hundreds of thousands, and probably millions of dollars. Based on what they had been told by government officials, they thought their formula was then cut in half, with maximum payments cut in half.

We can't seem to—after calls to Washington and to every office we can think to call—find out where that is. We are told that it is sitting on somebody's desk in the Office of Management and Budget.

We have called Mr. Cisneros' office, we have called Mr. Espy's office, we have called all of our legislative offices, and we can't find out where that is.

I tried to call Mr. Pitt last week. I was given three different phone numbers and three different addresses, and he wasn't at any of those places.

We can't seem to get anybody to listen. Everybody keeps talking about let's build more houses, let's get things moving again. I suggest to you that we probably do need some more social services, and we are going to have a lot more social services that are going

to be needed if we don't get this industry back up and going and provide jobs that are so desperately needed in this community.

If you provide jobs, yes, you do need the housing, but you are not going to need the level of social services that we are looking at down the road.

Senator GRAHAM. Tom, maybe some of the people who are now getting back upon their feet will begin to help the economy. I'd be interested in any further particular concerns of the agriculture community during this recovery period.

Mr. HAMMOND. Senator Graham?

Senator GRAHAM. Yes? Mr. Hammond?

Mr. HAMMOND. I would like to close off what I should have said at the beginning.

Being a private citizen, I don't follow, I suppose, all of the ways of the system works.

First of all, I am concerned when I see the price of the local motel in this town. I stayed here a few years ago and it didn't cost me \$100 a night. I notice now it is pretty close to that. I would almost say price gouging, but I suppose that is not the proper saying.

On a Federal level, I can understand what Tom is talking about. I have, as I am sure you are aware, I have gone through Senator Mitchell's office and Congresslady Snowe, Congresslady Meek's office, and different places, trying to find out how the Federal Government works.

I am more confused now than I was before I went to Washington. However, the only thing that I was trying to find out at that time was how I could get some surplus foods to bring down here instead of going door to door to my neighbors trying to get a can of canned goods from each individual in the State of Maine.

We have gone neighborhood to neighborhood—my associates and I—in the past two trips I have been down, talking to people about what their problems are, trying to ask what we can do to help you in our own little way.

The most problems I have found are many of the neighbors feeling that they have been ripped off by the contractors. Someone told me that people came in to put roofs on their homes and ended up putting a half roof on and then taking their lumber and their money.

Someone showed me the interior of their home where they spent \$30,000 to repair, and I found two by fours.

But, again, you can't really blame that on the contractors, either, because a lot of the contractors have done a good job. I think it is a select few.

Many of the neighbors I spoke with have had problems in learning how to deal with FEMA. One lady in needing help from FEMA was told to go to the airport in Miami; however, she had absolutely no transportation or any way of doing so.

From what I understand, there is a FEMA office locally set up here in Homestead—and you can correct me if I am at fault. I'm kind of curious why, if she needed help here, she had to drive all the way to Miami when she had no facilities to do so.

I have considered it an honor to be on this panel. I didn't mind driving 1,900 miles to come here to say what I had to say.

Another thing, I have also been to tent city. I think that what they are trying to do is to help an awful lot of people who need their help. Congresslady Meek has informed me that she is going to stand by this, and I understand you have been very much involved, Senator, in trying to make things better for people there.

But I do believe there is an awful lot to be done.

Number one, I still say from day one you've got to have someone in charge, someone to say, "I'm going to take the ball. I might get fired for it. So be it." Somebody has to say, "We are going to do this, this, and this," and take the responsibility, and not worry about the fact he doesn't have a job tomorrow. Many of us who lost everything we had have no jobs either. The people that were affected by this hurricane the most also have no jobs.

It is my understanding that when President Bush came down here and made his splash, that he stated that Homestead Air Force Base would be reopened. I saw that on TV somewhere. All the things I have heard lately say it is on the closure list, which I don't really know. I have no personal knowledge of that. But I'd like to question that fact.

And I also understand there is some money available to help people that need jobs to try to help this area regroup, and I haven't been able to find out anything on that, either.

So, in closing, I would like to say that it is a privilege to have spoken here. All the people I have met in south Dade County, Florida, who needed help I feel deserve it. And I will continue to come back as long as my health allows me and I don't go completely bankrupt doing so, to try to help you folks as much as I can.

If any of you have any questions of me, I will give you the answers.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Hammond.

Mr. Lopez?

STATEMENT OF ARTURO LOPEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COALITION OF FLORIDA FARMWORKER ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. LOPEZ. I would like to thank you, Senator, for inviting me to this hearing.

As I mentioned earlier, I think that it is very important that all of the organizations that are on the front line dealing with the emergencies be involved in any planning and any formulation of an emergency plan.

I represent the Coalition of Florida Farmworker Organizations, and I also represent the South Dade Hispanic and Farmworkers Coordinating Council's disaster relief program.

This program was started within hours after the hurricane hit. As was mentioned earlier, we have been involved in dealing with several emergencies, so we were able to call upon all of the organizations that we know assist farmworkers, including the Farm Bureau. I'd give many thanks to the Farm Bureau and to the Senator here for some of the housing that the farmworkers are now residing in.

Unfortunately, our farmworkers have traditionally been some of the hardest workers and the least recognized in the area. They are involved in doing work that very few of us are capable of doing or enduring. We have to pay a tribute to them because of that.

I also have to state that, unfortunately, it took a disaster like the one we have to improve the farmworker housing for our community. Some of the farmworkers are now living in some of the best housing that they have lived in since they started doing farm work. So all bad things bring good things.

We were able to work very closely with the city of Homestead. We worked closely with FEMA in making sure that the services that were available to the general public would also be available to the farmworker population.

We were concerned that because of the location of the migrant labor camps in this city, the language, the transportation, and sometimes even the questionable legal status of some of the farmworkers, that the services would not reach our constituents.

We spoke with FEMA. We were able to convince FEMA that they should not only have one station to serve those persons that were applying for FEMA, but that they should also go to those targeted areas where farmworkers were not able to get transportation to get to the site there in town. So they were very recipient in that area.

We encouraged and we insisted that they have Creole speakers. We also asked that they have speakers that could deal with our Lebanon farmworkers.

Most of you that are here from Homestead realize that our farmworkers in this area include Haitians who speak Creole, we have Guatemalans that have their own special language, we have Hispanics that range from Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans—all those races. And we have a very different culture—a culture that sometimes prevents us from going out and getting what belongs to us, or when we are in need of obtaining.

So it was important for us to make sure that the farmworkers realized that they were not the only ones that were in need, but that other people were getting this service and that they should also take advantage of the services that were available.

Some of the concerns that we have were that we thought that FEMA was not as timely as they should have been, and having—it seemed that they had just been through Hurricane Hugo—we thought that they should have been a little better prepared to deal with our situation than they were.

We were concerned that FEMA could not communicate with many of our constituents. FEMA lacked flexibility in many instances.

FEMA needs a short-term plan as well as a long-term plan to deal with any disasters that hit the community such as our farmworker situation.

Most of you know that tourism, the air base, and agriculture were the three highest leading income producers of income for south Dade. We were going to have crops coming into the area. We were going to need farmworkers. We were hoping that FEMA

would take a more active role and help us find housing for the farmworkers.

Of course, FEMA was saying to us they were not here at the time of the hurricane, so we cannot help them. What FEMA does not understand is that they have been here for the last 50 or 60 years, and a trailer that the Rosales family needs to come and occupy year after year after year to do farm work was no longer here. In my eyes, that person was affected by the hurricane.

I think this is where flexibility has not existed. This is where we have to work with FEMA officials.

The computer system that FEMA has, the 1-800 number, in some instances it was good. In many instances we found that we could not get help from the 1-800 number for our clients. We are still having some trouble with the computer system.

We feel that FEMA needs to be somewhat politically free. An instance where I feel politics had an impact or had something to do with FEMA was when they closed the tent cities early.

We were shocked when our organization found that the President had come into town, and FEMA had informed him that the tent city was going to be closing. Here we had people—our organizations were going out and coming in to our meetings and asking, "Where do we place these people? We have all these people that are being evicted and don't have a place to live. Now the tent city is closing. Where do we go with these individuals?"

FEMA, of course, was saying, "Well, you have to go to Red Cross." Red cross was saying, "Well, you have to ship them out to Palm Beach." We were saying, "Then how are we going to get to work the next day when the vehicles are not in any condition to travel?"

So we had our problems with FEMA. We had some good FEMA representatives that came to our office on a daily basis for meetings; however, they were out in the front lines with us. They were seeing the problems that we were having, but they could not communicate the problems—rather, I should say they communicated the problems we were having to the buildings, and the building officials would say, "Well, those are the FEMA regulations. This is the way we have done it in the past, and we are not about to change." So we had some difficulty in that area.

Some of the feeling—we were sorry to see the camp division leave. I think that, regardless, we had some people that were from Central America that were a little bit shocked when they saw the uniformed individuals helping us out in the streets, and they came to our offices, and we assured them that they were not military, but they were here to help. They were in a different situation, and they should not be afraid to approach any individual that had an Army uniform.

One of the problems that we did have were the individuals with the green uniforms, which was Immigration. Those we didn't want to see in town at all. At one point the Department of Justice agreed that they would send out a letter and tell Immigration that even though some of them came down here to help, they should not wear their uniforms when they came down to help, but should come down dressed as civilians and not drive up in their Immigration cars but come up in their own cars.

We were grateful to those Immigration officers that were here to help and removed their uniforms. We are not as grateful to those Immigration officers that have come back and are out here scaring some of the people who are not sure about what their legal status is.

Those individuals are eligible for FEMA services. And when you are telling them they are eligible for FEMA services, and then, on the other hand, Immigration is going around harassing them, and in some instances arresting individuals that look Hispanic and look like farmworkers—unfortunately, a lot of times Immigration mistakes anyone with brown skin as being illegal, and so the last time that they had some raids they picked up some individuals that were born here in Homestead but didn't have any identification on them. Later on they were let go with an apology. But that's the concept, and I think that as long as FEMA is in the area, Immigration should be asked to stay out.

Recommendations that we have are that training and practice is what makes an individual effective in many events that are undertaken. I think that is what we have to do in the community. We have to undergo some training so that we can learn to deal with some of the problems that a hurricane brings to us.

We recommend that those individuals that are in the front line be involved in the planning and implementation of any such plans.

We understand that FEMA has its procedures and has its structures, and they have worked in other areas. Some of them didn't work here, and they should be flexible enough to make changes when they are needed.

Local resources should be utilized. We have a lot of individuals that were out of work that could have served as interpreters for FEMA who have worked as FEMA employees. I'm sure that some of them did, but there were a great number of them that could have aided in that effort.

Again, we recommend that there be a long-term plan to deal with the effects that a disaster has in a community.

Employment, for example—we are having the industry—you heard from Tom Kirby a few minutes ago. The industry and groves—a lot of trees were damaged. Some of them are not going to be in production for many years. This also affects the farmworkers. There are no plans to deal with the displaced farmworkers at this particular point.

Disasters—unfortunately, everyone considers them—there are some individuals and people listening that consider them a way of making money off of someone else's problem. I think that if the Army could have been kept here longer and helped with the removal of debris, maybe we wouldn't have had our difficulty of sifting out bidders and bringing in individuals from out-of-State to clean up debris.

I was shocked to hear how much the people that carrying off debris were being paid. I was shocked to see that at one point those trucks were not even a quarter of the way full, and they were going to get paid as much as if the truck had been filled to capacity.

The computer system should be revised. Maybe there is another way of having some of those computers hooked up to the area that

is affected by the agency. If FEMA can be the lead agency, they should deal with all phases, utilize all Federal resources, and prevent some Federal resources, such as Immigration, from coming.

Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Kate, you had some comments?

Ms. HALE. Yes. Very, very quickly.

I think, in addition to the assessment teams that have already been recommended to come into an area, there are two assessment programs that we need to have in place immediately while we are responding in those first few hours after the storm, and they should be separate and distinct in that immediate response function.

But we need to have teams that can come in and assess housing and the economic sectors. To assess housing, they'd get some general handle on the extent of potential dislocation, not only of victims, but on services and businesses, as well as the incoming services upon which we are going to be dependent. We see that again both in terms of housing and facilities for them to locate into.

With the economic sectors, they'd get a good sense within the first few hours what economic sectors are going to be badly impacted, so that we can look at ways of stabilizing what is going for us in rebuilding and what is lost.

One of the concerns that I have is the number of SBA loans that went out to businesses immediately that, because the Air Force base is gone and surrounding housing is gone and because it is going to take so long to rebuild, these businesses do not have the hope of staying in business for another year, despite that loan. They didn't have that hope at the very beginning before they got the loan. All they have got now, beyond what they had before, is an SBA loan to repay.

We need to have some strategies. These assessments would then allow us to do two things—to look at developing policies where policy needs to be changed rapidly to look at recommendations and programs, but to come up with quicker strategies to safeguard the two things that are absolutely essential for maintaining a community past that emergency phase.

Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Kate.

Are there any other comments by members of the panel?

[No response.]

Senator GRAHAM. If not, we have approximately 20 citizens who have indicated their desire to speak. It is now 12:05. I'm going to ask if the citizens could make their presentations in approximately two and a half to three minutes so that we will be able to get through everyone who is on the list.

I'm going to call groups of five, and ask if they would assemble themselves at the podium so that we can move as fully, but also as expeditiously as possible.

I will call you by name and association. If you wish to make any further identification, please feel free to do so.

The first speakers will be: Bob Boulenger and Susan Gubber, both representing South Miami Hospital; Danny Hellms, B&D

Farms; James Chatham, a Homestead resident; Hollis Drank, a Homestead resident.

Susan?

STATEMENT OF SUSAN GUBBER, SOUTH MIAMI HOSPITAL

Ms. GUBBER. Thank you, Senator Graham.

We really appreciate you all coming down here and listening to us. I know this is not your first time.

I am Susan Gubber, and I am representing South Miami Hospital in Homestead. I have with me today Bob Boulenger, who is the chief operating officer of the hospital.

When the hurricane hit, it did us in with water and it did us in with electricity, and for five days the hospital was closed down. But, thanks to people like Lou Campbell and Jeff Currick and Eliza Perry, the city of Homestead, Alex Muxo, they got us back on line. We could have closed our doors and taken hurricane interruption insurance; instead, we stayed open and we took care of anybody that came through our doors.

We had doctors actually taking care of leaks in the hospital instead of patients, and we had nurses who had no place to live. We finally wound up putting them on house boats off-shore.

On December 1, I came on board with the hospital and I was stunned to find out that we had over a million dollars in DSRs written, and yet we had not collected a penny.

I went up to Tallahassee and met with Governor Childs, and his chief of staff, Tom Herndon, got on the phone with your chief of staff, Senator, Buddy Shorestein, and together, within four days, they got us \$800,000 in FEMA money.

I am here to thank you today, but also to tell you that it was very difficult for me to have to go up to Tallahassee and get it that way instead of getting it the normal route through FEMA.

I had contacted Phil May. At that time he was angry, he was hostile. He was probably overwhelmed with what went on. But it was not a happy experience.

I must say that Allen Crabb and Paul Foster should get the Congressional Medal of Honor. Paul Foster has just about camped out in our facility and worked with us hand in glove to make sure that we are getting our adequate DSRs written.

Now we are upon a problem of trying to document every single patient that comes in through the doors, and that has been difficult.

Surely the woman who falls over debris and breaks her hip is as a result of the hurricane, but it has been very difficult for us to run a hospital and write these DSRs in a way that documents every single patient.

We are the second-highest supplier of indigent care in Dade County, but everything over 11 percent which we have been doing in the past has been extremely hard to document. We are taking care of patients and not doing the job of documentation as we should be doing.

What I am here asking you today is that—and FEMA is very much aware of this—is to try and reimburse us for everything over the normal 11 percent indigent care that we do and don't ask us to

cross every T and dot every I, but to just give you those numbers over the 11 percent so that we can collect our FEMA reimbursement.

I have Bob Boulenger here, who is going to give you a very short update on specifics with the hospital.

STATEMENT OF BOB BOULENGER, SOUTH MIAMI HOSPITAL

Mr. BOULENGER. Thank you, Susan.

Senator, members of the panel, I just want to give you a brief overview of the hospital so you know what we are talking about.

We are a 120-bed, not-for-profit community hospital. We serve the middle keys, all the way up to Kendall Drive. We are currently, right now, the largest employer in Homestead. Prior to the storm, we saw about 50 patients a day in our Emergency Department. Right after the storm, we saw 300 patients a day. Now we see about 100 patients a day in our Emergency Department.

Our indigent care load has gone from about 11 percent—and this is completely unreimbursed care that we provide—to 30 percent right after the storm. Right now it is at about 19 percent for the hospital. What that translates to, in dollars and sense, is that the hospital loses about half a million dollars a month due to this unreimbursed care.

Let me touch briefly upon the successes and the failures that we saw in health care's perspective immediately following the storm.

The speed of the response—as Susan mentioned, if it weren't for the city of Homestead, we wouldn't have gotten going as quickly as we did. What we did do on our own completely through private sector is we drained the generator, we drained water, we had nurses fly in from other community hospitals around the State and around the country. This was all done through private sector. The military didn't show up until about a week after. We wouldn't have gotten going as quickly as we had if it weren't for the benevolence of other community and non-profit health care organizations within the State.

The other failure that we see is the volume of data that is required and the delays that it takes. Susie touched upon that. Sometimes you have to wait three or four months for any reimbursement from FEMA, and the DSRs take a long time to fill out and then respond to all of the additional requests for information to fill out those DSRs.

There has been a strictly defined period of reimbursement for these DSRs. Originally it was going to be 60 days or 90 days. Now it is through March 31st. We are on pins and needles at the hospital right now as to whether our existing DSRs as have been written will continue through March 31st or will go to September. We continue to lose \$500,000 a month. If there is not some additional funding provided to the hospital, this hospital is going to be in dire straits. We are right now the only hospital in the community.

There has also been limited assistance to local physicians. The local physicians are an essential support mechanism of providing health care for the community. We have 300 physicians on staff. They had one DSR for a small amount of money, which has still

not been disseminated. I believe that it is coming out this week, but it is really not enough.

I want to end on a very positive note. The successes are—if it weren't for FEMA, the doors wouldn't be open right now. FEMA has given us \$1.7 million so far. They have reimbursed us 75 percent of the value of the existing DSR that is supposed to expire March 31st. But if it weren't for FEMA, we wouldn't be there.

But how long will it continue? Will it be there when the community recovers? Those are the issues that we are dealing with right now.

We ask for your assistance in them, and for this to be a lesson for future hospital providers in areas of major disasters.

Thank you for your time.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Susan.

Mr. Danny Hellms?

STATEMENT OF DANNY HELLMS, B&D FARMS

Mr. HELLMS. Thank you.

I want to applaud a lot of people for doing an outstanding work helping this community—Kate, the military, Senator Bob Graham.

What they said about the hospital is very true. It is their effort in this community.

My problem may not be as great, but I feel that I am an individual trying to help Homestead. I have been here for 22 years with my brother. We have a unique problem. It is minute compared to what you all have to face, but it is a small ingredient when we go and try to help.

We are involved in agriculture. The military came in. They needed our agricultural land to utilize for tent city. That's fine. I felt obligated to the citizens to do that and allow that after that had been done.

We are facing the situation where we have a piece of farmland that is contaminated and still sitting there. We want to get on with recovery. As a matter of fact, as an industry we were the first to deal with Hurricane Andrew. Our crops were in the ground the week after.

I have been on a trail of bureaucracy through FEMA, through people who don't care, trying to come up with an answer. And I am pleading with someone to give us direction so we can add to recovery of Andrew by providing jobs, which we currently do, and carrying forward with rebuilding this community.

That's all I've got to say.

Again, I thank you and greatly appreciate your being here. The things that were said and done are positive aspects of what we hope will not happen again.

I would not even be here and I would not even be complaining, but I see the inadequacies transpiring, whether they be indigents or residents, and some of them are pocketing money and putting it in their pocket. And those funds could be utilized to a greater benefit to this community.

I want to thank you very much.

Senator GRAHAM. Tom Kirby would like to make a comment.

STATEMENT OF TOM KIRBY

Mr. KIRBY. Senator, I would like to make a comment to the panel.

Mr. Hellms grows green beans, and thank goodness for the bean growers. The price has been up on green beans this year unfortunately.

Mr. Hellms has a claim against the Federal Government. Dan came into my office shortly after the hurricane and I immediately then placed a call to Tony Clemente, Cliff Walters, and the county manager's office. I was told that his problem was in the loop and that his property would be cleared.

Several weeks went by and nothing happened. We called Phil May. We called Shelly Boome, we made Henry Cisneros aware of it, we have made Charles Resnick aware of it. Senator, we have brought it to the attention of your office. We have brought it to the attention of Frank Wayne, chief of staff for Henry Cisneros. We have brought it to the attention of everybody that we can bring it to.

It is unconscionable because every day that goes by this man is being denied the use of his land and the claim against the Government goes up. And we, as taxpayers, will end up having to pay for it. That's why I was referring back when I made my first comments that somebody at the Federal level has got to be in charge. Somebody has got to have authority. Somebody has got to be able to say to the Department of Defense, to FEMA, to the county, and everybody involved, "Gentlemen, sit down and work this out. Come to a bottom line resolution on this claim. Get the land cleared up, and let's go." That is not happening.

It is eight months after the storm, and the man still can't farm his land.

Senator GRAHAM. I think Mr. Hellms has already talked to Whit Chase. Whit, would you raise your hand.

Whit is the person in our office that works with agriculture issues. Whit, I'd like for you to get as much information about this case as possible, including what can be done to move it forward.

Mr. KIRBY. Senator, there are other farmers who are facing the same problem.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Tom. I appreciate that.

Next will be Mr. James Chatham. I'd like to ask if speakers could spell their names before speaking so that we are certain we have it right on the record. And then Mr. Thomas Drake. After that, Mr. Tom Sickel, Sandra Rea, and Maria Garza. If you could please come forward.

STATEMENT OF JAMES CHATHAM

Mr. CHATHAM. Senator Graham, distinguished visitors, my name is James Chatham. That's C-H-A-T-H-A-M. I would like to address a few items here that I have that cause concern to me, and probably about 30,000 other military retirees.

Although I am here in my uniform, I don't represent the Government. I am only representing myself. Let me make that clear before we get on with this.

The rebuilding of Homestead Air Force Base is a concern because of the use of the commissary, the exchange, and the hospital. I know that is a sore point for a lot of military retirees. We'd like to see that redone somehow, some way, so that we could have the utilization of these facilities and continue on with our military benefits, because if we don't there are going to be about 30,000 of us people here in Homestead.

Debris pick-up—we know that is a health hazard. It has been two months now they have been telling us they are going to do this. We'd like to know when. I agree it is a health hazard. I have taken my stuff to the dump already in my little pick-up truck, but the neighbors—a lot of neighbors have got a lot more stuff that they need hauled out to the dump that is beyond mine any anybody else's capability to do that.

The contractor problems—I, myself, have gotten my house almost rebuilt, so I have been pretty fortunate. I had good enough insurance and good enough resources where I could do that. A lot of people don't have that. A lot of people still live in trashed houses. As a matter of fact, all the houses all the way around my house are still trashed. And there is debris that is shoulder-high. My wife is stressed to the limit having to look at this stuff all the time.

FEMA and the military is another sore point on my part. I agree with your legislation, Senator. I agree that the military should take charge and FEMA should handle the money. FEMA can set a bank up and direct traffic. They are good at handling money. That's their job. They are supposed to come in and figure out what we need and continue on with that.

The military can come in, immediately take charge, set up perimeters, whatever they have to do—clear roads, get people food and water and essentials. Let FEMA handle the paperwork.

Training is another thing. We should all be trained. It should all be a team effort. It shouldn't be just one person working one against the other. It should be a combined effort. If you take your hand and put it together, you've got a weapon there.

The Red Cross—we didn't see them in our neighborhood until about a week after the hurricane hit, and then they finally came around after we didn't need them. The Army had already come down there. They said, "What do you need?" We said, "We need security." They said, "Fine." An hour later, three helicopters landing across the street from my house, and all these people came out, and the guy came out and set up camp and started patrolling and we didn't have to worry about it any more. Our neighborhood was secure. We got MRE, water, ice, and everything we needed to sustain ourselves for the next week until we got the grocery stores open.

That's about all I have, except for vacant houses and apartments and trailers and so on and so forth like that.

Vacant houses are a problem because people come around and stay in them. We found a couple of people we had to run out in the vacant houses by my house.

The trailers—that is going to be a problem. As soon as the next hurricane hits, they are all going to blow away again and you are going to have a whole town full of nothing.

That's all I have. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much, sir.

For you and anyone else who may like to go beyond what you can do in the limited time, if you submit a written statement, it will be included in the record of this hearing.

Mr. CHATHAM. Thank you, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Drake?

STATEMENT OF THOMAS DRAKE

Mr. DRAKE. My name is Drake, D-R-A-K-E, just like a duck.

I would like to comment on the comments that have been made. I am not like the people who have gone on and said they were glad to be here. I'm not glad to be here. I wish I could be back in my home that we had prior to Hurricane Andrew.

I am glad to see that all the people found enough to justify their job to stay in the government. And I am also glad to see that they all agree that had they made one simple phone call to the military we wouldn't have had the problem. We'd have had the military come in and take over, and they could all sit back in their job and watch it and draw their money. I don't see why they are worried about their jobs. Just call the military and send them down here and then say that damn general down there didn't do what he was supposed to, and you've still got your jobs.

[Laughter.]

Mr. DRAKE. I would like to tell Mr. Hammond up there that I was sorry to know that he, with his intelligence it looked like he had, bothered to go to Washington for the solution to anything.

I would like to say that we did not go on faith. However, the association they sent us was not mentioned. The Salvation Army fed us and cooked meals on the first day after the hurricane, and that was, with most cases, within walking distance of our house, or anyone else's house.

The Churches of God around here—which I'm not a Church of God—provided cooked meals. Of course, you had to like stew, but you had a cooked meal.

Senator, my complaint is with the United States Post Office. I wrote you a letter on this. I wrote Senator Warner from Virginia about this. We to this day have not yet got a letter delivered to our house since Hurricane Andrew.

On June 6, 1944, we invaded Normandy. On June 8th we had mail delivered aboard those ships. Here it is eight months after a hurricane, and the Post Office still hasn't delivered a letter to my house.

I cannot understand why the United States Government failed in every respect, as far as I know, in assisting us before, after, and during the hurricane. That is my personal experience.

FEMA has not given me one dime and has not given me one sense of satisfaction on anything. No one, to my knowledge, assisted me in evacuating Homestead, or even told me to.

So until the Army came in—and I will have to say that the Army did come in with their hospitals and helped us. I went up there and had to get a tetanus shot and I had to sign my name 46

times to get it and do the paperwork for three and a half hours and 46 signatures, but I did get the tetanus shot, and I appreciate that.

I think that's about all I have. Thank you.

[Laughter and applause.]

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Drake. I see you got your name right.

[Laughter.]

Senator GRAHAM. Tim Sickel? Then Maria Garza, and after that Doctor Roy Phillips.

STATEMENT OF TIM SICKEL

Mr. SICKEL. Thank you, Senator Graham. My name is Tim Sickel, S-I-C-K-E-L. I represent a group of individuals who are called "People Helping People, Disaster Relief, Inc."

We started August 29th, five days after the storm, to assist Hurricane Andrew victims. The reason we started was most of us were in the Red Cross, and we were sick and tired of the red tape and the bureaucracy that goes with large organizations. We felt that we could do the same type of job on our own as far as distributing food and clothing and shelter to needy victims.

We fed 8,000 people a day hot meals for two months. We had military staying on our compound. The land was donated to us. The Tenth Division distributed a lot of these articles.

Senator, we appreciate your support of the JTPA and the Department of Labor and some others with the government. The question is: why can't we, as a legitimate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization receive Federal funding for grants to help rebuild south Dade? When I say rebuild, we mean not only people's homes, but their lives, as well.

We are still feeding hundreds of people through referrals through the Red Cross, through HRS, through United Way, and other agencies. HRS was coming in and taking out 13 truckloads a day of food to help Hurricane Andrew victims.

A lot of people know how to beat the system, and we realized we had to cut our operation down so that these people are forced to get back on their feet. We can't continue to keep feeding them without them trying to assist themselves. That's not what we are for. We are to help rebuild the community. We can't compete with Joe's Market up the street.

We have done all this. Believe it or not, we have done over—and listen to this—\$55 million worth of distribution and rebuilding for less than \$34,000. We have absolutely no administrative expenses in our organization. It is me, myself and there are six other people in People Helping People who have given up their comfortable lives all over the United States—and there are about 25 of us now—to help these people.

I have been living in a tent for eight months. I'm not very comfortable. I've got a four-bedroom house on the beach at Fort Lauderdale that two people in Homestead that lost their homes are using. I don't mind sleeping on a rack at night if it is to help these people.

Sir, I am asking you personally today to please help us rebuild the lives and homes of your constituents here in south Dade. As

you know, so many of these people do not have insurance or are extremely under-insured. It is agencies like ours and the We Will Rebuild program that continue to operate with your help.

My question is: why, when we can send hundreds of millions of dollars to Russia to rebuild that country, can't our own Government allocate just a small amount of money to assist us to help our own hurricane victims.

I was brought up under the belief that charity starts at home. Do you agree?

Thank you, sir.

[Applause.]

Senator GRAHAM. Mr. Sickel, if you could contact Mr. Bronson here sitting in the front row and give him the information about your situation, we'll see what we can do to be of assistance.

Mr. SICKEL. I also want to add one quick thing. As far as FEMA is concerned, without them we wouldn't be here. We, ourselves, are victims of the tornados that hit March 13th. Our compound was completely destroyed. We lost about \$3 million worth of property. Without FEMA, we wouldn't be here today.

We are going to continue to operate until that last roof is put on the house and that child can go to bed without looking up and seeing stars.

Thank you, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Sandra Rea?

STATEMENT OF SANDRA REA

Ms. REA. My name is Sandra Rea. My last name is spelled R-E-A. I lost everything in the hurricane—my house to the tornado. The first month I drew my disability, I have been in touch with your office. You said you would try to help me. I greatly appreciate that, because I am now uninsured as of the first of March, I had to go in to Port Ritchie, Florida, to get a doctor—I was having chest problems—because I cannot afford medical insurance. He said I was on the verge of a heart attack. He has me under medication, but I have to be back here in Dade County to see that my home is rebuilt.

I was wondering, since your office did say that you had been in touch with rehabilitation to see if they would review my case, because they say I am making too much money on my disability. I drew my first disability check in August just before the storm hit, and they had me on Medicaid but they took me away from me. I am due Medicare when I'm 57. I'll be 56 this next month, so I have one more year to go.

Senator GRAHAM. Ms. Rea, if you could also check with Mr. Bronson or with Ms. Rodriguez of our Miami office, we will follow up and see of what assistance we can be on your specific situation.

Mr. REA. I would like to say to Mr. Kirby that he is right. I have been on the phone. Doctors have me on nerve pills. You just don't get anyone that can give you an answer to anything. Your office, Senator Graham, was the first response I have had. I just need one year of Medicaid and then I will be on Medicare.

I'd also like to say thank you to the gentleman from Maine. I think he knows what we are all going through personally.

Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much.

Ms. Maria Garza, and then Doctor Roy Phillips. After that we'll hear from Bill Townshend and Doug Ulmer.

STATEMENT OF MARIA GARZA

Ms. GARZA. Thank you, Senator.

My name is Maria Garza. My last name is spelled G-A-R-Z-A.

First, I would like to clarify information. I work for the county, and I understand that there are 18 contracts or 18 contractors for picking up debris south of 88th Street. In addition to that, the county has four crews removing debris. That does not include the rural areas because that is being taken care of by USDA. You had asked earlier about that.

First, I would like to thank you, Senator, for allowing us the opportunity to speak to you on issues that are very close to our heart and very frustrating, actually.

I spent the night of the storm in my house with my three children in a closet while my husband was closing up the windows that were broken by the storm.

In the morning, when we were able to look out in the street and find out exactly what had happened after a terrifying night and morning, it was not easy to think straight and to find out and concentrate on the next step. We were afraid for our life. We were afraid. At least in my case I still had a roof over our head. We had a lot of water damage and everything else, but our house was fine.

Then I know that there are organizations and agencies that have said that they were here within hours. Frankly, sir, I can't remember anybody being close to my house or anywhere in my block within hours after the storm—or days, for that matter.

I know that as a resident of this area and having worked very closely on a lot of community projects improving the quality of our lives in the area, I decided a couple of days after that with the children we'd go out and see what we could do.

When FEMA came and a lot of things were happening and they were able to sort of start doing some things for the community, there was a lot of confusion.

I know a lot of people said that one person needs to be in charge, and that is true. I will have to say that again. I know it has been repeated, but I have to say it one more time, sir. There has to be one person that has to be in charge of making the decisions.

In the community we had FEMA representatives in the area. This was two weeks after they had been working here. I volunteered my services, as well as others that had worked with me in the past, specifically to volunteer to translate. The language problem was a very serious problem. They were not being able to communicate with the citizens. So I volunteered. They did not accept that.

Finally, about three weeks later or two and a half weeks later they were able to bring by legal staff speakers from the Puerto Rico area. That's fine, but in the meantime they did not utilize the

resources that were available to them when we were telling them we were available for them.

I remember specifically two weeks attending a public meeting where several so-called hierarchy from FEMA were present. I remember vividly that there were people starting to speak, and there were frustrations on the services of FEMA available to them.

These representatives were quite rude to the public. You have seen the examples such as, "Well, that's your opinion of what happened or of what we are doing." That was said in several locations to different people, including myself. I was very disappointed by that treatment. I felt the gentleman that spoke here earlier—I feel like if this had happened in any other country, I know we would have been there with a lot of assistance and this would have happened to be sensitive to the needs of the different cultural background.

I have to highly speak of one of your staff members, and that is Lula Rodriguez. Lula Rodriguez spent a number of hours. I remember waking up and going out into the community at 7:00 in the morning, and Lula was there. She was there at night, at 10:00 or 11:00 at night. I want to commend her and thank her for being there for us. I really appreciate that.

Most of the staff from your office were very helpful. Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Ms. Garza, I'm sorry but—

Ms. GARZA. My time is up. Is that what you are saying?

Senator GRAHAM. Well, just one more thing.

Ms. GARZA. We know that in hurricanes we do get advance notice. Hopefully the next time we will be better prepared, and what we are going through should serve as a lesson for all of us that are doing something on hurricane recovery.

Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much, Ms. Garza.

I appreciate the kind remarks about Lula, who herself lost her home in the hurricane. She was a victim, as well as being so helpful to others.

Doctor Phillips?

STATEMENT OF ROY PHILLIPS

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you very much, Senator Graham and panel. I am very glad to be here.

I am here to first of all give you good news. Tomorrow at 4:30—I was hoping that you would be around, but I understand you will be out of town and back to Washington—we are having a groundbreaking ceremony. We will be investing \$28 million into this city to help rebuild and help provide educational opportunities for people so that they can rebuild and get back on their normal lives.

I want to thank you, and also want to thank members of the military for the work done in terms of helping, and also FEMA. We have been able to work very closely with these organizations, helping us to get our facilities back in order.

We are using and have used the south campus as one of our shelter centers. It is very unfortunate that the roof caved in. I am hoping that the State will help us to be more flexible next time in

using dollars to really help us to get our facility back in order to be able to withstand these kind of hurricanes.

I want to make certain recommendations to you because the college certainly wants to be of service to the community and needs to help with disasters in the future.

I think it is very important for the State as well as for the Federal Government to use the community college network as communication linkage. We have over 28 community colleges in the State. In this city we have over five, Homestead being the fifth. We certainly have a communicative network with all segments of our community, and we'd like to serve in the capacity of getting out information.

One of the problems we often face is adequate, timely information to the citizens.

We have over 100,000 students that attend our campus. Certainly, we can get word off right away to a lot of these students in time of disaster.

The second thing that I would like to offer—and we are very much interested in the kind of proposals that you have in training. Of course, our community college is one of the best institutions in the country and the State, and we would like to be part of a network in training volunteers. We have a lot of students who would like to become involved—students who are already here in Homestead and Dade County. These students would like to be made use of in terms of providing services to that community. This is very, very important.

Also, in terms of long-range training, we have a proposal into the Federal Government in terms of working with whatever becomes of the Homestead Air Force Base to locate out there maybe a regional training center, because one of the needs in this area that is really paramount at this time is to train a lot of people who are unemployed.

We had a lot of poor people in the south Dade area who were unskilled, and if we are going to attract industries in this area, we need to bring people up to a level of speed and skills, so we would like to present you later on with a proposal that we would like to have you look at. We have met with authorities and members of the Housing Department in order to look at some long-range needs for training people in the area.

We would like to also encourage you to help us to work to make this area an enterprise zone so that we can provide incentives to industries that come down and locate to use our force of labor in this area.

Last, we would like you to help us with the transportation. One of the problems we have is that we have a lot of buses, but after those buses are gone we need ways of getting people to jobs. We are hoping that DOT and others can invest dollars in this community so the people in the Homestead area can have access to jobs in other parts of Dade County.

Thank you very much for listening to me on these issues.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Doctor Phillips.

I'm sorry I can't be with you tomorrow.

Mr. PHILLIPS. But you will be with us May first as a graduation speaker.

[Laughter.]

Senator GRAHAM. Mr. Bill Townshend, Doug Ulmer, and then Amy Smith, David Block, and Ruth Campbell. Please be prepared in that order.

Bill?

STATEMENT OF BILL TOWNSHEND

Mr. TOWNSHEND. My name is Bill Townshend.

I'm a projects manager with the South Dade Soil and Water Conservation District, which is a grassroots organization locally to assist farmers.

We have learned a lot of good things from the hurricane. One of the things is this issue of burning. We were able to get FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers to do some experiments with mulching and chipping. We found out that it saves money, it saves resources, and it saves the environment. To date, we have delivered 3 million yards of mulch to south Dade farmers, and we have 3 million more yards of mulch on order to be delivered.

One of the things we were able to do is persuade the USDA to come in with the Soil Conservation Service and do the debris removal in the agricultural areas, so we are out there as we speak today removing debris from roadsides and chipping every bit of material that can be chipped and returning it back to farmers.

We would like to invite the Senator, if he has time, to a work day at these chipping sites, because it is very exciting to see this type of recycling happen after a disaster.

Something that disturbs me as we had the small storm that we called "Andrew, Jr." that came through the State—FEMA and the Army Corps went to the middle part of the State of Florida to help with the disaster up there, and what did they do? They started burning right away. When I asked and inquired and jumped up and down about why they were burning, all these contractors had all this equipment that they didn't get to use in Andrew.

If it saves money, why do we go back to burning? The things we learned from this storm we have to transmit to other national disasters. If we don't transfer this information, nothing is going to happen.

The other thing that I'd like to ask—and this is something that has bothered me personally—is that through this whole disaster I never could find a Florida State Department of Agriculture. I asked Senator Graham where is Bob Crawford. We would really have liked some input and some interface with the State, and they just were nowhere around. The Federal people came in and everything else, but nowhere was the State Department of Agriculture.

I thank you for your help. You have helped us on specific issues, and Senator Graham has been very attuned to what is going on in the agricultural community down here.

Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Bill.

Tom would like to—

Mr. KIRBY. Bill, Bob Crawford might not have been involved with your organization; however, he was very, very busy rebuilding the Florida City State Farmers' Market and had it up and open No-

venember 15 in order to process fruits and vegetables out of here. So Mr. Crawford was here and his staff was here 24 hours around the clock in several areas.

Senator GRAHAM. Doug Ulmer?

STATEMENT OF DOUG ULMER

Mr. ULMER. Good afternoon. My name is Doug Ulmer, U-L-M-E-R. I am a district conservationist for the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service. My primary reason for speaking to you is to give you a brief update on the debris removal question that Mr. Chapman formulated.

The United States Department of Agriculture has entered into at least two contracts, and we are currently underway to remove debris from south and west Dade County, and I do have the coordinates and more information on that.

Primarily, we will not be picking up within the city of Homestead or within the city of Florida City. As Bill mentioned, the primary reason was to remove woody debris, mulch that, and return it to the farmer for replacement or improvement of their topsoil, and then removal of the construction debris and taking that to the landfill.

Most contractors are currently under approval. We think that will last between one and two months. That is the basis that the money is sufficient for that.

One thing I want to do is take my USDA hat off and speak to a couple of issues as a resident.

The air quality question that was raised by EPA—I don't know where they were taking their air samples. Maybe Miami Beach. But we were living down here in the midst of this, as Kate mentioned. My daughter has asthma, and I had several people that have children in our neighborhood that have asthma and respiratory conditions that had to take their children and leave Dade County and move to central Florida for several months to be separated from their families, and they would not have done so if it were not for the poor air quality.

I would like to thank you very much for this forum. My hat is off also to Senator Graham's office. They have been very, very attentive and in tune with our needs down here. This is something that a lot of politicians have not been.

Thanks for the 82nd Airborne who set up camp at our church and ran a Winn Dixie for us, basically, as a relief agency—probably the most professional organization I have ever had a chance to deal with.

Also, I want to compliment FEMA. The chipping and grinding—trying something new. This has been a phenomenal success. Let's learn from our blessing here and move on.

One thing, briefly, that Tom Kirby touched on in regards to the covenant that the United States Department of Agriculture formed with many landowners immediately after the storm—myself, ASCS, and many others, Farmers Home Administration people sat up in public meetings with people from Washington standing right behind us, and we supported and told people that they could count on 64 percent cost-sharing. That was very, very surprising to us to

be caught out on the end of the limb as it was being sawed off behind us.

I think that you can certainly appreciate the interest that we have to live with the people under this much stress on a day-to-day basis, and then have people actually threaten us as USDA employees oftentimes with bodily harm and that type of thing.

I think this is the issue that I would like to point out to Senator Graham's office. We do need the money. We have more or less promised it. Let's help the people.

Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Doug.

Amy Smith, David Block, Ruth Campbell, Jerry Pierre.

STATEMENT OF AMY SMITH

Ms. SMITH. Senator, thank you.

I am Amy Smith. I am with Parrot Jungle.

Parrot Jungle is a small, privately held tourist attraction that has been a part of this community since 1936. We employ 89 people.

We certainly have praise for the response efforts—particularly Ms. Hale and the military and Mr. Hamilton. But recovery for the small business may as well be non-existent.

The FEMA-SBA disaster assistance loan program is a disaster—at least for us. Eight months ago, Senator, I personally stood in line for that FEMA phone number. Eight months later today we are on our third loan officer. All have been based in Atlanta. They need to be here now.

This is not an abstract intellectual discussion on emergency relief. These are people's lives. We, as small business, are responsible for the lives of those 89 individuals. We get no help. We only get red tape and continued frustration.

If the Government and emergency officers on this panel, the best in the business, cannot get through this red tape, how do you think small business fares?

If you cannot help us or don't want to help us, just tell us no. Don't start programs that cannot reach the people who need it.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Ms. Smith. With what agencies do you currently have an application pending?

Ms. SMITH. The FEMA-SBA disaster assistance loan program.

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. FEMA does not have a loan program. It is Small Business.

Ms. SMITH. Right.

Senator GRAHAM. Small Business Administration?

Ms. SMITH. Correct. The SBA with the FEMA dollars that are designated particularly for this disaster.

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. No. There are no FEMA dollars with SBA. SBA is a program of their own, and they take your applications and process on their own. They are not connected to FEMA.

Senator GRAHAM. Ms. Smith, again, could you give some pertinent details to Ms. Rodriguez, and we'll see what we can do on that.

David Block?

STATEMENT OF DAVID BLOCK

Mr. BLOCK. Good morning, Senator. Thank you for coming down to help us and being Johnny-on-the-spot with your staff. I think everybody down here appreciates what you have done to help us clean up.

My contribution is I am part of a salvage team that is involved in the clean-up, and we are doing work for the USDA Soil Conservation Service in mulching and returning mulch back to the farmers. That is a much more cost-effective procedure than burning it because you don't have the associated trucking costs.

And trucking was the main cost right after the hurricane that led to some abuses with half-empty trucks and trucking it from one side and burning it and taking the stumps that didn't burn and the toxics to another site, and then trucking those to a third site. That was a serious problem.

The Corps of Engineers statistics show it is much cheaper than trucking. They left the debris actually in the farmers' fields, which became ground cover to the dry season to keep the moisture in, and which will deteriorate and become a nice mulch.

What we are doing now is taking the debris off the streets, grinding it in the farmers' fields or grinding it in the farmers' fields and leaving it and returning it to other farmers and fields, making sure that it is spread amongst not only the big market farmers, but the small farmers, as well. It is going to help agricultural production in the future.

I think that another agency to look to for assistance for future disasters might be the USDA. They seem to be appropriate for what we are doing down here.

I think Kate Hale's suggestion that we have a disaster response plan with pre-contracting with contractors is a good idea for several reasons, one of which is that you could take local contractors and provide the contracting into districts, and you'd have contractors within the districts who give preference to local contractors or who are themselves local contractors within their districts—say southeastern U.S. or Florida and Georgia. They would be prepared sort of like a firehouse concept. They are like firemen. When the bill rings, they already know what to do, and they are plugged into the Federal, State, and local response teams that are part of the governmental structure.

We have some ideas if someone would want to pursue that—Kate Hale or yourself, Senator.

I would love to have you do a work day down on our site helping grinding some of that. We need a good, strong back.

Senator GRAHAM. This one day is going to become a year.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BLOCK. One last comment. Our efforts are somewhat hectic because USDA has a funds requirement so we are not going to be able to complete the job because of USDA's lack of funds. I understand FEMA doesn't normally fund USDA projects of this sort. But it would be a shame for this thing to stop when it is half done and we need to get the debris cleared off the streets of south Dade. If

FEMA could work with USDA to get this job completed, I think that would be good.

Thank you, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. I wonder, Dennis, when you have your meeting this afternoon, Dennis, that you indicated you were going to have on debris removal, if this issue of the relationship of USDA to FEMA could be addressed.

Mr. KWIATKOWSKI. Yes, sir. We'll do that.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Ruth Campbell, vice-mayor of the city.

STATEMENT OF RUTH CAMPBELL, VICE MAYOR, CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA

Ms. CAMPBELL. Yes, sir. Vice-mayor of the city of Homestead.

Thank you, Senator Bob, for bringing us together today.

I would like to direct our attention to the vast population that we have in the FEMA trailers and tents.

This is something that I think we all need to focus on as to—what I'd like to see is an inventory of each park or gathering—we have them in parks in Homestead and the surrounding area. If we could inventory each trailer as to who is living there, where they lived before the storm, where they want to live as soon as they can find a place to live, where they worked before the storm, where they are working now, what help they need if they are not working now—maybe it is babysitting.

But I think we are going to find that—and this has been alluded to—we need training for people.

We have had excellent contractors that have come with all kinds of credentials and expertise to come into our area to help rebuild, and they had to leave because they couldn't find the trained help. They could get help, but the help couldn't do what they needed to have done, and they have had to leave.

This would need to be done with great sensitivity, because we can't go in and say, "I'm from the Government and I have come to help you," because that is when they are going to clam right up then. But if we could do this, it would be a help to these individuals and to our community. They are our community. They are our people. So we need to see how we are going to introduce them into proper housing and a proper job.

Thank you very much.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much, Madam Vice-Mayor. I want to commend you and the other members of the city government for the outstanding job that you have done under terrible circumstances.

Jerry Pierre? And after Mr. Pierre we'll hear from Alice Smith, Carlos Watson, and Clayton Bogges.

STATEMENT OF JERRY PIERRE

Mr. PIERRE. My name is Jerry Pierre, and today I represent the Haitian community.

Since 1989, I have sent letters to Mr. Bush and Mr. Clinton about the problem that we have in our society.

I am one of the Haitian teachers at South Dade Senior High School. We teach the Haitian students how to understand the system. There is a radio station, 90.9 FM, for the Haitian community. We also have formal times when we get together and put our own money and give them information on where to go.

Yes, we understand that FEMA did a good job. But in my community we are people who never received a penny from FEMA. Some did get money, but they already spent that money. They have to pay for houses, clothes, food. Some of them support a family, and also a family in Haiti. Where should they find that money to return?

I am a U.S. citizen. I have an education. I pay my taxes. I have a high school diploma and a college degree. I need to replace my property.

My community has been abused by some of the officers of Homestead Policy Department. There was an officer who stopped me. I am sorry to say what I have to say. He told me, "Do you speak proper English?" He told me I speak as a black man. I told him I am a black man, but I am not above the law. He told me to shut up or I would be arrested. I said, "What would you arrest me for?" He said, "because I feel like it."

I want someone to let them know that we need to have the same freedom, the same democracy that everyone has in this country.

I also appreciate Mr. Senator because he told me what to do about my wife in Haiti. I could not pay you any money for that, but I would be glad to shake hands with you for that.

Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much.

Ms. Alice Smith? And then Mr. Carlos Watson, Clayton Boggess and Peter Bulton.

STATEMENT OF ALICE SMITH

Ms. SMITH. I'm Alice Smith, S-M-I-T-H. I am here as a resident of Homestead. I also have had specific training. I was a chapter manager of the American Red Cross for 16 years in Connecticut.

I have had training. I went through manager's training of the Civil Defense and the Civil Preparedness in the 1950's and 1960's, but those things are in written documentation. There is training available, but I guess over the years it has gotten waylaid. But there is training available and the Federal and State offices do have it.

I do want to thank the gentleman from Maine. I guess you are the one that maybe brought us up here this morning. I don't think you are completely right. I was here right after the storm. There were feeding centers available. They were even in my neighborhood. So they were here.

I can't say enough good things about the Army and the men and women from Camp Drum in New York. They helped very much. We really needed that work. I am kind of old for this, and our home was completely destroyed.

Also, the Red Cross was here on the third day in my neighborhood doing damage assessment. They knew that we had four walls

and half a roof. So if that information didn't get sent on to the President, it should have.

Also, our Kate Hale did come over and pleaded for help. I think she said, "Where is the Cavalry?" if I'm not mistaken.

We are back in our home. We got back on March 1, maybe because we are retired and we had time to deal with our insurance companies. We did get a contractor immediately—the second day after the storm. And we found our mayor and our city manager and the city of Homestead very helpful. They had tents over in Harris Field. You could get anybody to help. Everybody was there. Everybody.

I really feel that we have had much help. It was a little slow, I have to admit, finding FEMA. I probably could be complaining about how slow they were. But I do want to say to FEMA people we had a huge pile of trash. Not only was the burning terrible, but the dust was terrible. Anyone of our age group with our physical ailments could not stand the burning.

We came down every day from Pembroke Pines—a month, as a matter of fact. We passed the airport. The burning that came from that airport went from the Turnpike to Palmetto Expressway and was intolerable. You cannot burn.

I guess that's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much.

Mr. NETTER. I'd like to say a word about the Red Cross. They were here, and they were feeding. They had a lot of feeding stations open, and they were assisting before the military came. I think that needs to be noted for the record.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Mr. Carlos Watson? And then Clayton Boggess and Peter Bulton and Jack Leonard.

STATEMENT OF CARLOS WATSON

Mr. WATSON. Senator Graham and Major General and Mr. Chapman, it is a privilege to hurriedly change your schedule to be here as a disaster victim to express some thoughts.

I have some thoughts, not necessarily in the order that I would have liked to structure them in, but things I think need to be at the surface for you, Mr. Chairman. The thoughts—unwisely, I intentionally avoid my personal needs and interests in order to focus on things which I think your command, Senator Graham, needs to know.

First, I emphatically support the idea that the military should have lead role. I have observed it first-hand, and that is the only feasible solution I see in the future.

I want to mention perhaps the biggest dissatisfaction I would have expressed from the podium here. This is a great city—Homestead. I have spent decades here. We have a neighborly friend named Florida City. I am very, very disappointed that when hurricane relief is discussed, too often Florida City is an unknown entity, is excluded. Please let us do something about that from now onward. Both are lovely cities. I have never lived in Florida City, but it needs attention as much or more than Homestead.

To continue, FEMA should employ more people from the disaster area. I would like to see Senator Graham include in his bill some aspect of giving priority employment to the victims and residents of major disaster areas. In the long run, it would save our Federal and State governments money by those individuals earning for physical reasons, as well as psychologically. That will ensure a better quality of life to regroup from their suffering.

Too often FEMA bypassed trained and skilled persons as Ms. Garza said—not only volunteer, but for employment. Too much disaster money leaves the disaster area. More should stay in places like Homestead and Florida City.

Half a million dollars to remove trash—there is no reason why disaster victims should remain unemployed in these jobs. Many of them should be required to contract to be employed not only for trash, but other contractual agreement throughout. It would be better for everybody concerned.

Senator GRAHAM. Mr. Watson, I'm afraid that your time has expired.

Mr. WATSON. Well, I hope you will recognize, Mr. Senator, what I am saying are things, much of which you have not heard and need to hear, and would let me continue a little more. Thank you, sir.

Governmental housing—

Senator GRAHAM. Mr. Watson, I'm afraid we've got these other folks that we need to hear from, and then we are going to be taking a tour with our visitors so we can see some of these areas.

If you could take about another 30 seconds to wrap it up, and then if you have anything else you would like to get in the record, if you could give us a written statement we'll be certain it appears.

Mr. WATSON. Thank you, sir.

Governmental housing should be made available to the victims. The bulk of Federal and State forces should not leave a disaster area at the same time. On one particular day you need them, and they were gone within two to three days. It should be tapered off.

Tent cities should not be closed so early.

Disaster training I will bypass.

The criminal elements throughout the trailer—I intentionally went by one of those sites before coming here so I could speak. Believe me, it is not 75 percent increased; it is hundreds of percent, because most crimes are not—and as I went there before coming here, more than six squad cars were at neighboring places there.

Training should be done by the military.

Senator GRAHAM. Mr. Watson—

Mr. WATSON. I will stop, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. If you could give us the name of that area where you said there was a sharp increase in crime, that might be a site we would like to include in our visit.

I appreciate very much your bringing these matters to our attention.

Mr. WATSON. Yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Mr. Clayton Boggess.

STATEMENT OF CLAYTON BOGGESS

Mr. BOGGESS. Clayton Boggess, B-O-G-G-E-S-S.

I'm a nurseryman here in Dade County. I have been a resident here for 14 years. This is our second disaster we have gone through. The first was a freeze.

With this, we have gone to ASCS for some help. ASCS has told us that they'd give us 64 percent of the clean-up. A lot of us wouldn't even bother cleaning up because we just couldn't afford it at the time. But with the reassurance of 64 percent coming back, we went ahead and did it.

In the middle of this, it is cut to 32. And it had to be cleaned up completely before you received anything on it. I understand now that it has been brought back up to the 64.

The money has been allocated, but ASCS hasn't been able to get a hold of it. They are not able to distribute it.

We are nurserymen. We employ a lot of farmworkers. But we employ them year-round, not just seasonal. We keep these people employed year-round. We'll have to let everybody go. We're going out of business. The nurserymen are being held up last for any type of payment.

I understand that last week, or the beginning of this week, they just started issuing nursery applications for review. Farmers have been paid.

We need some more help, and we need to get our businesses back together in Homestead.

I can't collect unemployment. I'm self-employed.

Another issue I wanted to address is that we are trying to get as much help down here as possible. Mr. Lopez is worried about somebody wearing a green uniform and scaring off illegal aliens not being able to ask for help. If I employ an illegal alien I am fined daily, yearly—\$20,000 a day. I don't want any illegal aliens here. I can't afford it.

As for the farmers, it is true we all need the help. We all need employees. We have all got to get our crops in. But what good does it do to make a \$60,000 a year profit and then have to pay \$160,000 in fines because you had an illegal alien working for you?

As for FEMA, I believe there is money in FEMA that can be put other places. You have jitney buses out there right now. I try to maintain properties. Jitney buses are using them. They park them for hours at a time. There is trash all over the place. They are urinating all over the place. There is filth. They are causing accidents. They are pulling out in front of people driving 15 miles and hour down the road, running stop signs. That needs to stop. That money needs to go somewhere else.

That's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Boggess. And if you have some ideas of where you think we ought to go on our tour in order to see some of the situations you have described, please give that information to Mr. Bronson or Ms. Rodriguez.

Mr. WATSON. Senator, the vice-mayor said it is in all trailer parks. The best solution is move the trailers from the parks to the properties of land owners. They want to do it, but it has not been done.

Mr. LOPEZ. Senator, I think what I said was that the people whose legal status is in question. Even though there are a lot of illegals there, when I spoke I was addressing those whose determi-

nation hasn't been made. But there are a lot of illegal aliens out there, and they are being employed, and it is——

Mr. BOGGESE. Excuse me. I've got one man, one Social Security number. During the time of the freeze, I went to go get help. I wrote to Bob Graham. I was told to go to the Armory and get financial help through the Government. I went, and on the application they listed six places for your Social Security numbers and alias names.

I stood in line for over an hour and a half after they called my number because nobody spoke English in the building. I didn't know they called my number. Today I can't get any help.

I have two businesses. Both of them are gone. I am mowing lawns and washing windows. But the Government knows that these people are coming in and filing under alias names and using Social Security numbers from God knows where, and collecting not one welfare check or two, but up to six welfare checks. That's not right.

The people in the United States are—there are schools. Everybody can learn to speak English. I had workers that worked for me that spoke no English at all. I was able to communicate with them, they were able to do a good job, and I paid them a good wage.

Yet, when I, a business owner, am in trouble and need help, I cannot receive any help, but my workers can.

My workers are not there any more. I let the last one go two weeks ago. I am working on my own. They are all collecting unemployment or welfare and food stamps, getting help. I can't do that. Me and my family can't do that.

Mr. KIRBY. Can I ask you a question, sir?

Senator GRAHAM. And while you make the comment, Mr. Bulton, please step forward.

Mr. KIRBY. If you had received the ASCS co-payment, would you still be in business?

Mr. BOGGESE. Yes, I would. I received 32 percent, and that was——

Mr. KIRBY. If you had gotten the 64 percent in a timely fashion, would you still be in business?

Mr. BOGGESE. Yes, I would.

Mr. KIRBY. Thank you.

Mr. BOGGESE. Yes, I would.

Senator GRAHAM. Mr. Peter Bulton.

Mr. BULTON. Thank you, Senator.

I am very disturbed about one thing, and that is the—it appears that the government is stealing the top soil from South Dade. I live about five miles west of here out in the county, where the county doesn't know I exist out there. I had a very modest five-acre nursery. I specialized in mature oak trees. I no longer have the oak trees. I no longer have the house. I have a trailer now.

The oak trees were planted and lined with cement. When all the oak trees got blown down and died, they were taken out. The Army, thank goodness, helped me do that. But every oak tree took with it about a cubic yard of top soil.

In addition, in the process of scooping up all this debris, its rotors would also scoop up topsoil all over Homestead, Florida City, and south Dade.

The Army Corps of Engineers and their contractors have taken the trouble to shake out this top soil and separate, which would be a wonderful thing if we could get it back again.

You may or may not know, but top soil is a very precious thing here in south Dade. We have about one inch of it naturally.

Unfortunately, the top soil is gold to the truckers and to Dade County, because to the truckers it represents a very high-density load, they get more money for it. Dade County collects, I understand, \$45 a ton for every truck load that leaves Dade County.

After the Army Corps of Engineers has gone through all the trouble of separating the top soil out of it, now the truckers are taking this top soil and shipping it out 75 miles up the pike to dump it in the Pompano landfill. I think that's a crime, and I am very upset about it.

That's all I have to say.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Jack Leonard, and then our last speaker will be Mr. Joe Geller.

Jack?

STATEMENT OF JACK LEONARD

Mr. LEONARD. Hi. Senator Graham, I am going to be a little different from the rest of the people that were up here, because I have some positive things to say about what has happened down here.

I work for the Archdiocese of Miami. I am site director here at Florida City and Homestead. I also work with an organization called the Alliance of Central American Farmworkers Association, which deals with the Indian population here. I am also on the board of a foundation out of Pittsburgh called Heavenly Cause.

Also, we have a coalition of 22 churches—the mainline churches—that are helping churches in Florida City and throughout Homestead. We have in place a magnificent group of people down here that have volunteered and have worked and worked and worked.

One of the things that we have run into is the flow of information. Recently I have been working with Ray Phillips over at Miami Dade Community College trying to get the young people involved, because the young people of 18 to 25 have not been listened to here. They have no voice here. There is no input from that group. The students have said, "We have stayed through the whole thing. We are the future of Homestead and Florida City. We are the future of south Dade."

For example, I have had lots of questions about agriculture. Is there a place for middle management in agriculture? It is the flow of information down here, Senator Graham. A lot of people down here really don't know what is going on. We go to meetings, and people say, "I got this form from SBA, but you need to be a Harvard School graduate to figure out exactly what I am supposed to answer."

There are small business people here who are going under. Those are very important, too, to keep the city going. But when they went

to the SBA they came back with booklets and booklets, and they turned to people like us at the church and asked us.

At this point, Senator Graham, we set up a food bank—the Archdiocese at Sacred Heart Church. I left the office this morning, and there were 1,274 families that have applied for our social service since February 15.

The crisis isn't over. We started this food bank. I have 1,274 stories of families that are asking for help who don't know where to go for help. They are all people who have been employed, have had small stores, have worked for the public, have worked in a car wash, and they don't know where to turn at the moment.

There are so many people here in Homestead that really want to roll up their sleeves and get to work, but they don't know how to do it.

There is the plant/nursery business. The plant/nursery business is so important to this town, but if we don't have a school to teach people what to do in irrigation, what to do with pesticides, what to do with all the things they need to know, the maintenance of equipment—the nearest agricultural school we have here is in Fort Lauderdale.

If I have a person here who needs training in middle management or plant/nurseries, we have to make arrangements.

We have all the things possible, Senator. Everybody is for it. But there are a lot of things that people here need information about.

Also, about the evacuation warning, a lot of the students at Miami Dade, for example, when I asked what they felt, they had some good answers. One of them said, for example, FDL has this speaker system that warns us, "This is a test." A lot of people were asking how come that wasn't used to warn us about the hurricane. It wasn't. It wasn't put in place. However, every month on a Saturday afternoon that goes off.

The students at Miami Dade Community College asked me those. How come the Army was sent to Somalia, and how come we are doing all these things for Russia, when a lot of these students here would like to start up their own business. How do we get that information?

There are a lot of people down here thinking and talking about it. They are little people. I think there ought to be some networking back to them.

Thank you.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Geller?

STATEMENT OF JOE GELLER, DADE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Mr. GELLER. Senator, I am Joe Geller. I am with the Dade Democratic Party. I am also working with the city of Homestead trying to avoid some of the severe consequences of base closure.

I'll try to be very brief so I don't get in trouble here with Mr. Bronson. I have just a couple of quick points.

Let me just say, Senator, that this is mostly for the record. I know that you have been a leader in Congress in fighting for the

people of south Dade and that you are familiar with most of these issues. So this is more for the record than anything else.

Two quick points. One, our Democratic party locally, like people all across Dade County and Florida, is working to try to do something about the problems down here. We have been able to participate in building houses for people who were homeless. I have to say it is distressing to us—and we have been able to put several hundred persons—but literally a block from where we are working—and I'll say the address. It is 226th Street, 115th Avenue.

One block from where we are out there trying to help put people in houses is one of these areas where there is tremendous debris that has not been removed, huge trash piles. I know we have heard a lot about that today, but whatever is being done, it is not enough and it is not quick enough. If it means issuing a couple more contracts to get this done quickly—if we end up with a terrible disease problem here from vermin caught by this debris, it is going to add to the problems we have already seen and knock this community back.

The other thing, very quickly, is in terms of the future of this area. Obviously, the Base Closure Commission is doing its work, and we know that you are fighting very hard for that. Our President has spoken at great length about the needs of defense conversion. This is an area that is unique because, as people know, we have had the luxury of three to five years to wind down the base. This base was closed last year.

If this community can get the kind of assistance that I know you are fighting for, if it can get Defense conversion funds, if it can get job training funds, if it can get public health funds to fight what is going on, if high-speed rail can be put in so that we can have this Air Force base be used for civilian as well as Federal Government use and have good communications and good ability to move people and cargo back and forth between the Port of Miami and the airport, if we really use this area right, this can be a boon for the area of south Dade because this can be a model of what can be done in this country when the various resources of the Federal Government are targeted.

Thank you for holding this hearing, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much.

I appreciate so many people waiting so patiently and then providing us with their own personal experiences. I also want to thank all the members of the panel for their very generous participation and the insights that they have shared, which are going to be extremely valuable as I take this information back to Washington.

This hearing was under the aegis of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. I would like to thank the chairman, Max Baucus, and the chairman of the subcommittee with jurisdiction over FEMA, Senator Harry Reid, for authorizing this hearing. They will now be receiving a copy of this record.

As I indicated earlier, it is my intention to take the information that we have gained here today to further define legislative issues where Congressional action is required in order to prepare the Nation to be better equipped to deal with not only the balance of issues here in South Dade, but also with future disasters.

One of the things that seems to move the human spirit that has just gone through a tragic circumstance is the desire to learn from that tragedy, and not just to have it end as a totally negative event, but to use it as a means to better the future.

It is in that spirit that many of you have spoken today. Future Americans will some day be better prepared to respond to and rebuild from a disaster, and will be able to learn from our hard-learned experiences.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

[Whereupon, at 1:43 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, to reconvene at the call of the Chair.]

[Statements submitted for the record follows:]

TESTIMONY OF

FRANK J. KOUTNIK

BUREAU CHIEF OF PLANNING
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

BEFORE THE:

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

APRIL 19, 1993
HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA

INTRODUCTION

Good Morning, I'm Frank Koutnik. This is truly an exciting opportunity to address this committee. Overall, our state is equally excited about the future of emergency management both nationally and statewide. We applaud the appointment of Mr. James Lee Witt, the new director of FEMA, as he is one of the first FEMA Directors who comes to the agency with an extensive and very successful background in emergency management. This position is truly not one for the uninformed. We are also excited about our own Florida Legislature for their foresight to pass landmark legislation that will allow our local and state emergency management agencies to usher in a new age of excellence in emergency preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation activities.

I realize the purpose of this subcommittee is to hear testimony on how well was FEMA prepared to respond to Florida prior to hurricane landfall.

During Hurricane Andrew, I was the Bureau Chief of Operations in the Division of Emergency Management. In that capacity, I was one of two Operations Officers in charge of coordinating the state agency response to Andrew in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).

To have a better understanding of FEMA's pre-landfall preparedness activities, I'd like to quickly describe a chronology of events leading up to the morning of August 24 and describe to you how FEMA interfaced with our agency.

THURSDAY, August 20

The Division of Emergency Management began a partial activation of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to track what was then *Tropical Storm (TS) Andrew*. FEMA calls to find out what, if any, actions we have taken at this point. According to the National Hurricane Center (NHC), initial indicators do not favor any rapid intensification. The SEOC and FEMA are only in a readiness mode.

FRIDAY, August 21

Jim Kerrigan, FEMA-Thomasville (Region IV) arrives at the SEOC to determine our status and what actions we plan on taking. We hold a conference call with the NHC, and are again told TS Andrew could grow, but it would be Tuesday or Wednesday of the following week before we would have to be concerned about it. We inform FEMA of our activities and do not make any request of them based on the information we had been given.

SATURDAY, August 22

FEMA arrives at SEOC in the morning. State is still monitoring the situation. TS Andrew is only north of Puerto Rico at this point, and showing signs of strengthening, but still moving relatively constant. We inform FEMA we have been in contact with each of the Atlantic coastal counties, and all of the South Florida Counties on NAWAS to inform them of the situation, and to determine what activities they were involved in.

At 2:30 p.m., Dr. Sheets, Director of the NHC calls the SEOC and requests a NAWAS (National Warning System) conference call with all counties. The SEOC arranged this call. It is at this time we are told of Andrew's rapid intensification

potential, and warned of a more westerly movement, which would take it somewhere between Palm Beach and Ft. Pierce by late Monday or Tuesday as a Category 2 or possible Category 3 storm.

Additional key state staff are notified, and begin to report to the SEOC. State agencies are told to report to the SEOC by 8:00 a.m. Sunday morning.

The SEOC calls Mr. Major May, Director, FEMA Region IV to inform them of our activities and requests liaisons be permanently placed in the SEOC. This is accomplished by the following morning.

SUNDAY, August 23

FEMA is represented by three staff in the SEOC, which is now fully activated. Andrew is now a Category 3 storm, and has doubled its forward speed, making landfall imminent 1.5 days earlier than previously expected.

FEMA activates the Regional Operational Center at 12:00 p.m. in Atlanta and the Second Army activates its EOC by 3:00 p.m. at Ft. Gillim. FEMA activates the Federal Response Plan, and directs the Advance Emergency Response Team (ERT-A) to report to the SEOC by 8:00 a.m., Monday, August 24. Luckily, many of the ERT-A team were able to report to the SEOC by 6:00 p.m. Sunday night.

By 12:00 p.m. Hurricane Andrew has intensified to a Category 4 storm and expected to impact in the Dade County area.

SEOC staff ask FEMA for assistance in locating generators, food, etc., to send to the impacted area. They acknowledge this request and begin to identify resources.

The ERT-A team begins to respond to many requests for assistance from the SEOC to include activation of D-MAT teams, securing food, locating generators, locating debris clearance equipment, etc.

By 8:00 p.m. the State formally submits to Mr. May a request for a Presidential Disaster Declaration prior to landfall based on the expectation of massive devastation. By 2:00 p.m. the following day, President Bush signs the declaration for South Florida.

MONDAY, August 24

1. Andrew makes landfall as a Category 4 hurricane with 145 mph sustained winds, with estimated wind gusts exceeding 200 mph.

OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

1. This was the first time the Federal Response Plan (FRC) had been used in its entirety. Being new, some of the Federal Agencies were unsure of their role, authorities, and responsibilities to the state. Also, the state had only had a four hour training session on the FRC in July. The plan had not been exercised with the state to any degree of expectations.
2. There were many areas FEMA could have helped the state, but as a matter of current policy, could not. These are identified in the "Recommendations" section

of this testimony. There were, however, several areas that we did experience difficulties in during the time immediately following landfall. These included:

- a. Difficulty in locating and getting D-MAT teams into the impacted areas quickly.
- b. Difficulty in getting MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) located and shipped into Dade County. Eventually took Governor's Chief of Staff, Tom Herndon, calling President Bush's Chief of Staff, Jim Baker to expedite this process.
- c. Problems in assessing the costs of refurbishing the D-MAT teams. State was told they had to buy all necessary supplies to replenish the teams. This caused confusion and wasted time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. We need a greater ability and flexibility to not only identify Federal assets, but mobilize these assets prior to a hurricane making landfall.
- 2. We must be able to then use these assets prior to a Presidential Disaster Declaration. Example: We needed to MEDIVAC hospital patients out of the Florida Keys a full day prior to landfall and a Presidential Declaration. This can not be done under the current Stafford Act. Local and state governments can "prepare" for the arrival of a hurricane and be reimbursed for their efforts after the fact, yet they can not secure federal assets in this preparedness phase.
- 3. We need to waive the federal match requirements for the first 72 hours after landfall for it has the unintended consequence of causing states to be hesitant, if not reluctant to accept needed Federal assistance because of the potentially high costs causing financial repercussion later on.
- 4. The FEMA Director should have direct access to the White House, perhaps through the Vice President, who would serve as the White House Coordinator on response and recovery decisions.
- 5. FEMA needs to establish a 24 hour communications center in Washington D.C. that would monitor all emergency situations nationwide on a daily basis; and, receive resource requests from all states.
- 6. In preparation for emergencies throughout the year, FEMA needs to establish direct dialogue with each of the states to identify individual risks and weaknesses. There should be a FEMA representative stationed in each state to facilitate this dialogue.
- 7. In order to prevent 24 hours from passing following a catastrophic event before we know what the critical situations and needs are, FEMA needs to organize and develop with the states, Quick Impact Assessment Teams to determine the overall magnitude of the damages and potential resources required to meet the needs of victims. The emphasis should be placed on:
 - a. People and their immediate needs such as water, food, etc.

- b. Infrastructure such as roads, bridges, etc., to life support.
- 8. Once the Quick Impact Assessment Teams report their findings, FEMA needs to develop the capability to deploy Rapid Response Teams (RRTs). These teams would be comprised of non-impacted federal, state, local and private organizations specially trained in disaster response and recovery operations. For example, the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), U.S. Army's deployment of mobile field kitchens, etc., are existing capabilities that need to be tied in together to form the RRTs.
- 9. FEMA needs to work closely with each of the states to develop this mutual aid network and system to inventory resources across the nation that can be used for the RRTs. A good example is the current work being undertaken by the Southern Governor's Association to develop such a mutual aid system.
- 10. All states should be given the flexibility to develop procedures that support solid state response plans that each state can train for and exercise regularly.
- 11. FEMA guidance on the development of state and local emergency plans should deal with real consequences such as how to handle: isolated and displaced people; destroyed infrastructure; and, long-term recovery and reconstruction practices.

The planning given prior to Hurricane Andrew reflected a cold war mentality. We need to be able to plan for post-cold war era that will get our nation ready for the 21st century. We believe the debate over "civil defense" verses "all hazards" planning should stop with the "all hazards" approach being fostered. There should be an assessment of the unique risks associated with each state that drives this type of all hazards approach to planning. For example, Florida should be able to spend a lot of time and money to develop hurricane specific plans and procedures based on our vulnerability to hurricanes.

- 12. FEMA needs to revamp the training and exercise requirements for state and local governments. FEMA's guidance and orientation has not caught up with the Federal Response Plan, as it needs to. There needs to be courses developed on how to execute the FRP, request federal assistance, develop Quick Impact Assessment Teams, develop Rapid Response Teams, what to expect in the first 72 hours after a catastrophic disaster, etc.

CONCLUSION

Most importantly, emergency management must become a priority business of the national government. It has become so in the State of Florida as the recent passage of House Bill 911 has catapulted Florida's emergency management into the preeminent position it needs to be statewide, as it should become at the national level. There must be a partnership developed from the "White House to the courthouse" and turn the knowledge of recent catastrophic events such as Hurricanes Hugo, Andrew and Iniki, and the Loma Prieta Earthquake into an opportunity of unprecedented stature. I believe these actions are realistic and achievable, and will create a new climate of positive change within FEMA that is long overdue.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

MAYOR, Jack London, District 2
 Mayor Pro Tem, A Earl Cheal, District 4
 Wilhelmina Harvey, District 1
 Shirley Freeman, District 3
 Mary Kay Reich, District 5

**United States Committee on Environmental and Public Works
 Subcommittee on Toxic Substances, Research and Development**

**Reference: Field Hearing regarding FEMA Response to Hurricane Andrew
 April 19, 1993, Homestead, Florida**

I certainly appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of myself and the Monroe County Department of Emergency Management regarding FEMA's role in responding to Hurricane Andrew.

I would like to limit my comments to the pre-storm preparations. In the very near future I hope to address issues which arose immediately following landfall, specifically during the first two days of Search and Rescue and trying to set up a Command Post and EOC in Florida City in order to coordinate a recovery operation. I would like to submit my comments to the crises. Andy Eans, my Assistant and Senior Planner/Coordinator, hopes to have the opportunity to address the crises immediately following the storm and the recovery process. Mr. Eans was our on-scene representative in Florida City and directed our Recovery Operations for Monroe County and Florida City.

First, I would like to address FEMA's role in our Preparedness and Response to Hurricane Andrew, including our evacuation during Andrew. I have been involved with FEMA's and the U.S. Army COE's role in Hurricane Preparedness and our Regional Hurricane EVAC Study since 1981. I can assure you that there has not been a better dollar spent than those used in the Regional Evacuation Studies funded by FEMA and the U. S. Army Corp. of Engineers, especially ours. Our update to the original study completed in June of 1991 was funded by FEMA, the Corp. of Engineers, NOAA, National Hurricane Center and Florida Department of Community Affairs. I feel the information which was made available to us was instrumental in the successful evacuation of both Monroe and Dade Counties, contributing to the small loss of lives during this catastrophic event.

It is most obvious to both Kate Hale, Director of Dade Emergency Management, and myself, that we need even another update to our study since Hurricane Andrew. This catastrophic event identified many additional problems, specifically in our Behavioral

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and Transportation analysis.

Monroe County particularly is in need of a more refined SLOSH Storm Surge Model for the Key West Area, which I would consider the most vulnerable community in the Continental U. S.

PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

(A) Funding and Resources

I would like to commend FEMA and the C.O.E. for the outstanding job that they have done in the Regional Hurricane EVAC Studies, especially with their very limited funding and resources with which they have had to operate.

These studies are vital to local and State Government in their efforts to develop and up date hurricane plans and procedures.

Mr. Bill Massey of FEMA should be acknowledged for the leadership he has given as FEMA's Hurricane Program Manager.

It is criminal that only \$800,000.00 plus dollars are funded for this vital program.

We need a strong partnership between two of our Federal Agencies, FEMA and the U. S. Corp. of Engineers on whom we depend for the technical assistance. Their assistance is not only used for preparedness but also for response, recovery and mitigation.

We have observed the partnership and cooperation between these agencies. What is missing is the needed funding. It is imperative that Congress make the needed funding available now!

It should be noted that without the data which was made available through the S.E. Florida Regional Hurricane EVAC Study and Update, I can assure you many more lives would have been lost. We may not be so lucky when the next major hurricane strikes our coastline, and it is just a matter of time.

(B) Use of Military Resources during the Preparedness and Response Phases

It is imperative for Congress to change laws which currently prohibit the use of Federal resources and assets before a disaster occurs, especially the Military resources, in an attempt to mitigate the loss of lives. It is becoming more and more evident that the only solution to addressing the problem which we face in our coastal communities is the availability of our Military resources.

Knowing that our Military's primary mission is National Defense, I strongly feel a

(3)

secondary mission certainly could be trained units to be available in time of a threat of a national Disaster to be tasked.

A specific example of this is the availability of Military Medivac Aircraft to assist the evacuation of hospitals and nursing homes patients whose lives are at risk.

Another use is to move vital equipment and personnel into an area to be ready and to assist in the Recovery Operations.

By making these Military Assets available, FEMA would be able to assure local and State Government that plans and procedures could be made to carry out missions to save lives, instead of just hoping they may be available!

(C) Emergency Broadcast Systems (EBS)

Our EBS leaves something to be desired. It is imperative for our National Security as well as responding to National Disasters such as Hurricanes, that our EBS is the State of the Art.

Congress must make federal funding available and mandate the FCC to upgrade our EBS with FEMA responsible for the overall coordination between Federal, State and Local Governments.

(D) I recommend that the Federal Highway Administration and Department of Transportation be mandated by Congress to identify how our highway system can be improved to help support evacuation of coastal areas and reduce clearance times. They should be required to assign a liaison to FEMA to coordinate and identify new routes as well as highway improvements, and work with the State DOT to expedite their recommendations and ensure the required federal funding to support these projects.

Two examples which would greatly help both Dade and Monroe Counties would be to expedite funding for the four-laning of the 20 mile section of U.S. 1 between Key Largo and Florida City and the replacement of the Jewfish Creek Bridge.

The second would be to address the feasibility of four laning State Road 992 which becomes U.S. 27 north of Homestead up to South Bay, Florida, just south of Lake Okeechobee.

There are just two Federal Highway Mitigation Projects which would save many lives when SE Florida and the Keys are hit by another Category 4 or 5 hurricane.

(E) Additional Federal funding for NOAA earmarked for Hurricane Research and Storm Surge Models. This would greatly help FEMA as well as State and Local

(4)

Planners better understand and address our Hurricane threat.

(G) Finally, I would like to call your attention to a most important problem facing the Florida Keys. That is the closing of the National Weather Service Office in Key West as a result of the new Weather Modernization Program.

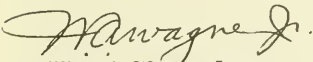
This office has been most instrumental in our Hurricane Preparedness and Response Programs, and has contributed a tremendous amount to our EVAC Study and Update. Their meteorologist-in-charge has worked closely with FEMA and the Corp. of Engineers during the studies, giving much technical support. The office played a most important part in coordinating our response and especially giving us critical data during and after landfall of Andrew. After we lost contact with the National Hurricane Center, Key West Weather was our only source of information tracking the storm and it's location. They were able to give us vital advice when we could start our Search and Rescue Operation in the upper part of our County at Ocean Reef and assist Florida City and the Homestead areas.

The loss of this office, in my opinion, would be a tremendous loss to our Preparedness and response program, and could possibly be the reason for the loss of many lives in the future during our response to a major hurricane.

I certainly want to thank Senator Bob Graham for giving me the opportunity to be a witness in this Field Hearing, and being able to testify.

If I, or any of my staff, can assist you in the future, we certainly would look forward to that opportunity.

Sincerely,



William A. Wagner, Jr.
Director
Monroe County Emergency Management

United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Testimony

Before the Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent
Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate

For Release on Delivery
Expected at
10:00 a.m., EST
Wednesday
January 27, 1993

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Recent Disasters Demonstrate
the Need to Improve the
Nation's Response Strategy

Statement of J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General,
Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division



Madam Chair and Members of the Subcommittee:

We appreciate the opportunity to be here today to discuss our work on how the nation responds to disasters.

Several recent catastrophes--especially Hurricane Andrew in South Florida--have led to growing dissatisfaction with the nation's system for responding to large disasters. As a result, you and a number of other congressional leaders have asked us to examine the adequacy of the federal strategy for responding to disasters and to develop solutions for improving it. Our testimony today discusses the results of our work to date.

In summary, we found that the federal government's strategy for comprehensively and effectively dealing with catastrophic disasters is deficient. The strategy lacks provisions for the federal government to comprehensively assess damage and the corresponding needs of disaster victims and to provide them with quick, responsive assistance. The federal government also does not have explicit authority to adequately prepare for a disaster when there is warning. Finally, state and local governments, for the most part, do not have adequate training and funding to enable them to respond to catastrophic disasters on their own.

In the case of Hurricane Andrew, the combination of these factors resulted in such shortcomings as inadequate damage assessments, inaccurate estimates of needed services, and miscommunication and confusion at all levels of government--all of which slowed the delivery of services vital to disaster victims. Hurricane Andrew also demonstrated that for large, catastrophic disasters, the military has the capability to respond to the immediate needs of disaster victims in a highly effective manner.

The nation may well face disasters or emergencies that could affect even more people than Hurricane Andrew. We could experience stronger hurricanes and earthquakes, radiological or hazardous material releases, terrorist and nuclear attacks, or civil disturbances such as the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Accordingly, we are making a number of recommendations to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) aimed at improving the way the federal government (1) decides whether state and local governments need assistance, (2) uses existing authority to effectively provide assistance, and (3) enhances state and local preparedness in order to minimize the amount of federal assistance needed. We also are suggesting matters the Congress needs to consider that would give federal agencies explicit authority to prepare for and respond to catastrophic disasters.

Because leadership is so important to an effective response to a catastrophic disaster, we also discuss options for improving federal leadership.

BACKGROUND, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

FEMA was established in 1979 during the Carter Administration to consolidate federal emergency preparedness, mitigation, and response activities. FEMA has a number of responsibilities, including the coordination of civil defense and civil emergency planning and the coordination of federal disaster relief. The disasters and emergencies to which FEMA may respond include floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, hazardous material accidents, nuclear accidents, and biological, chemical, and nuclear attacks.

The fundamental principles that guided FEMA's creation included implementing the disaster priorities of the President; drawing, to the extent possible, on the resources and missions of existing federal, state, and local agencies; and emphasizing hazard mitigation and state and local preparedness--thereby minimizing the need for federal intervention. Consequently, FEMA's primary strategy for coping with disasters has been to (1) enhance the capability of state and local governments to respond to disasters, (2) coordinate with 26 other federal agencies that provide resources to respond to disasters, (3) give federal assistance directly to citizens recovering from disasters, (4) grant financial assistance to state and local governments, and (5) provide leadership--through grants, flood plain management, and other activities--for hazard mitigation. FEMA conducts its disaster response and civil defense activities primarily under the authorities of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, as amended.

The Federal Response Plan is FEMA's blueprint for responding to all disasters and emergencies. The Plan is a cooperative agreement signed by 26 federal agencies and the American Red Cross for providing services in the event that there is a need for federal response assistance following any type of disaster or emergency. The present version of the plan--developed following dissatisfaction with the response to Hurricane Hugo in 1989--was completed in April 1992. Hurricane Andrew was the first time the plan was fully used.

The Plan outlines a functional approach to federal response and groups the types of federal assistance that may be needed under 12 categories such as food, health and medical services, transportation, and communications. For each function, one agency is charged with being the primary provider of the service, with several other agencies responsible for supporting the primary agency. For the mass care functions (such as food and shelter), the primary agency is the American Red Cross.

In order for FEMA to activate the Federal Response Plan and for a state to receive life-sustaining and other services from the federal government, the governor must obtain a presidential declaration that a major disaster exists under the Stafford Act. The governor's request must be based on a finding that the scope of the disaster is beyond the state's ability to respond. After the President declares a disaster, FEMA supplements the efforts and resources of state and local governments and voluntary relief agencies, which are expected to be the first responders when a disaster strikes. Over the past 10 years, presidents have declared an average of about 35 disasters annually. FEMA officials stated that catastrophic disasters requiring life-sustaining services from the federal government occur, at most, 1 to 2 times a year in the United States.

We reviewed the organizational structure and disaster response activities of FEMA. We also evaluated the federal, state, local, and volunteer response to recent catastrophic disasters, focusing on Hurricane Andrew in South Florida, and consulted with a panel of experts who represented a cross section of views on disaster response. These experts included a number of former federal agency heads and other high-level officials from the Department of Defense (DOD), FEMA, and FEMA's predecessor agencies; an emergency medical program director; state emergency management directors; and members of academia specializing in intergovernmental relations during disaster response.

As you requested, we focused our review on the immediate response to catastrophic disasters. Therefore, we address neither long-term recovery activities for catastrophic disasters nor any aspect of the response to less severe disasters. We define catastrophic as any disaster that overwhelms the ability of state, local, and volunteer agencies to adequately provide victims with such life-sustaining mass care services as food, shelter, and medical assistance within the first 12 to 24 hours.

HURRICANE ANDREW REVEALS INADEQUACIES IN FEDERAL RESPONSE TO CATASTROPHIC DISASTERS

Hurricane Andrew in South Florida showed that FEMA's response strategy, implemented through the Federal Response Plan, is not adequate for dealing with catastrophic disasters. The Plan is based upon the premise that an increasing number of the 12 functional response areas will be activated, depending on the gravity of the disaster. Although all of the Plan's 12 functional areas were activated for Hurricane Andrew, the response was neither immediate or adequate. The key reasons for the Plan's failure include the absence of provisions for rapid assessment of the disaster's magnitude and the lack of a specific functional responsibility to respond to the extraordinary requirements of a catastrophic disaster.

The federal response to Hurricane Hugo in 1989 highlighted the fact that the federal government may be the only entity capable of quickly providing the large amounts of life-sustaining services needed immediately after a catastrophic disaster. For example, FEMA's own internal evaluation of the lessons learned from Hugo noted that "it is quite clear that in an extraordinary or catastrophic event that overwhelms the state, the federal government may be the principal responder."¹ In addition, the report recommended that a plan be developed to address the need for a federal response to significant natural disasters.

The Federal Response Plan developed by FEMA after Hugo, however, does not have a support function that addresses the performance of damage and needs assessments, even though the Plan itself recognizes that the magnitude of damage to structures and lifelines will rapidly overwhelm the capacity of state and local governments to assess the disaster and respond effectively to basic and emergency human needs. Instead, FEMA relies on state and local governments to identify services needed from the federal government once they have determined they cannot adequately meet their own needs. In practice, their request for federal assistance must specify the type, amount, and location of the needed services. State and local governments were unable to do this because of the overwhelming nature of Hurricane Andrew, causing delays in services.

Response to Hurricane Andrew Did Not Meet Needs

State, local, and volunteer agencies fell far short of providing the amount of life-sustaining services needed in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Andrew. For example, during the first 3 days after Andrew, the combined efforts of state, local, and volunteer agencies provided enough meals to feed about 30,000 disaster victims a day, although Andrew left about 250,000 people homeless and potentially in need of mass care.²

A number of disaster victims told us that the relief effort was inadequate. They said that they survived by resorting to such actions as looting grocery stores to feed their families, drinking potentially contaminated water from leaking faucets, and staying off looters by living in makeshift dwellings set up in front of their homes.

¹"Response to Hurricane Hugo and the Loma Prieta Earthquake: Evaluation and Lessons Learned," FEMA, May 1991. Unpublished.

²Accurate statistics do not exist on the exact number of people who stayed in the immediate disaster area. American Red Cross statistics show, however, that about 84,000 residents were temporarily sheltered in the disaster area in that organization's centers alone.

In addition, local officials, who in many cases were victims of the storm, knew that they were unable to meet their citizens' needs for life-sustaining services. However, they were having trouble communicating with one another and with the state, and were unable to request specific assistance.

FEMA regional officials told us that they knew by the second day after the disaster that the American Red Cross was unable to fulfill its mass care response role. These officials then offered to provide the state with whatever assistance it requested. However, Florida did not immediately request significant amounts of additional mass care because it had the impression that the state/local/volunteer network was doing an adequate job. For example, the state official who managed Florida's emergency operating center told us that the American Red Cross officials informed him that it had established feeding centers in Homestead and Florida City. In fact, Homestead and Florida City--perhaps the two hardest hit areas--did not get such help until the military set up field kitchens there 4 to 5 days after the disaster.

The American Red Cross officials with whom we talked did not agree that they fell short of meeting disaster victims' needs. While they stated that the American Red Cross met its expectations, they also said that their projection of disaster victims needs may have been low because of a lack of good information on the extent of damage.

By the second day after the disaster, FEMA headquarters officials said that they had realized that a massive amount of relief would be needed from the federal government--and that Florida was not requesting it. Concurrent with the designation of the Secretary of Transportation to oversee relief operations, the President also directed increased federal assistance, particularly from the military, to South Florida. At that point, significant amounts of relief supplies began flowing into the region.

In the long term, the nation is likely to face far greater disasters than Hurricane Andrew. Terrorist and nuclear hazards, biological disasters, and large earthquakes--larger than we have seen in this century--are all threats that government officials must take seriously. Another earthquake near Memphis, similar to the ones that occurred in the winter of 1811-12, which exceeded 8 on the Richter scale, could kill thousands of people and disrupt 60 percent of the natural gas supply to the Northeast, causing major hardships and the closure of thousands of businesses. Therefore, the federal government needs to improve the national response system by (1) improving how the government decides its help is needed, (2) improving the federal response in providing mass care to catastrophic disaster victims and (3) making better

use of the resources available for responding to disasters. I would now like to discuss each of these three areas.

IMPROVING HOW THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DECIDES ITS HELP IS NEEDED

Several actions would significantly improve the nation's ability to respond to catastrophic disasters. These actions--which would be especially useful when there is some advance warning--include

- improving FEMA's assessments of damage and response needs.
- developing a disaster unit with the capability to predict the impact of a disaster, assess its damage, evaluate state and local preparedness, estimate the response needs, and, possibly, coordinate response activities.
- enacting legislation that would facilitate preparatory actions that FEMA and other federal agencies could take in anticipation of a disaster.

Improving Damage and Needs Assessments

Conducting damage and needs assessments as soon as a disaster occurs would enable local, state, and federal agencies to know what type and how much response is needed within 12 to 24 hours. The lack of both a comprehensive damage assessment and the ability to translate that assessment into an overall estimate of the services needed was one of the most glaring deficiencies in the response to Hurricane Andrew. The Federal Response Plan has no provision for FEMA to either oversee or conduct a comprehensive damage assessment that can be used to estimate the services needed by disaster victims. Instead, it assumes that state and local governments already have conducted such surveys and will then use that information to request specific federal assistance.³

Although FEMA headquarters officials realized that massive amounts of relief would be needed from the federal government--and that Florida was not asking for the aid it needed--FEMA's Director told us that FEMA is limited by the Stafford Act to responding only to state requests for assistance. Therefore, he said, FEMA could not help the state unless it asked for assistance and specified how much it needed.

³Currently, FEMA and officials from affected states conduct a preliminary damage assessment before the state requests a presidential disaster declaration. The information collected is used by the state as a basis for the Governor's request and by FEMA for the purpose of determining whether it will recommend to the President that the request be granted.

We believe that FEMA is authorized to take much more aggressive action than it took in Hurricane Andrew. For example, once the President has declared a disaster, FEMA has ample authority to conduct its own damage and needs assessment and then recommend to the state specific amounts of assistance that should be requested.

Establishing a Federal Disaster Unit

Other shortcomings that we observed in the response to Hurricane Andrew could have been eliminated if the federal government had an information-gathering disaster unit to guide the federal, state, and local response.

When responding to disasters like Hurricane Andrew, an expert unit could provide federal, state, and local officials with information to help them decide whether (1) a disaster declaration should be requested and granted, (2) the state and local governments are responding to the disaster adequately, (3) assistance requested by states is adequate to respond to the disaster, and (4) help from federal agencies is necessary. While the unit's primary focus would be gathering information to help guide the response to a disaster, the unit could also be involved in coordinating response activities.

Federal experts could even conceivably provide governors with a menu of disaster response options, each with cost considerations analyzed, to help expedite the appropriate amount of federal assistance. Resolving cost-sharing issues can eliminate a potential bottleneck in the disaster assistance process.

Cost-sharing is designed to ensure that states pay a commensurate "fair share" of the disaster costs. After states meet a per capita damage threshold, they are normally required to pay 25 percent of the costs of immediate emergency protective measures provided by the federal government, though the President has authority to increase the federal share up to 100 percent. Cost-sharing can have the unintended consequence of making states reluctant to accept needed federal assistance because that assistance comes with an unspecified--and potentially large--price tag, although we found no evidence of reluctance on the part of the state of Florida. A federal disaster unit could help expedite the cost-sharing agreement between the state and the federal government by providing both the President and the governor with better information to make rapid decisions on the need for federal assistance and the potential cost for that help.

By constantly planning and organizing federal catastrophic disaster responses, a federal disaster unit would develop far better experience and expertise than would state and local officials who infrequently face catastrophic disasters. In fact, the skilled personnel, intelligence-gathering equipment--

including sophisticated sensors--and other assets needed to build an expert disaster unit already exist in various agencies in the federal government. For example, FEMA already possesses the capability to model the impact and associated life-sustaining needs resulting from varying levels of disasters occurring in different locations. However, this capability was not used for Hurricane Andrew because FEMA's disaster response strategy calls for it to rely on state-identified needs rather than to develop this information itself.

Improving Other Agencies' Preparation

To respond more quickly, federal agencies also need to mobilize resources and deploy personnel in anticipation of a catastrophe. Federal response time could be reduced by encouraging agencies to do as much advance preparation as possible prior to a disaster declaration--and even earlier for disasters, such as hurricanes, where some warning exists. However, current law does not explicitly authorize such activities. Therefore, federal agencies may fail to undertake advance preparations because of uncertainty over whether costs incurred before a disaster declaration will ultimately be reimbursed by FEMA. For example, DOD officials told us that they take some actions to prepare for a disaster when there is warning--such as identifying quantities, locations, and transportation requirements for mass care supplies--but they run the risk of having to pay for the expenses themselves if their assistance is not needed.

IMPROVING THE FEDERAL RESPONSE IN PROVIDING MASS CARE TO CATASTROPHIC DISASTER VICTIMS

The key to successfully responding to a catastrophic disaster is rendering sufficient life-sustaining assistance, such as food, water, shelter, and medical care, and dealing with mass psychological trauma within a short period of time. With the current disaster response system's reliance on state and locally identified needs, FEMA cannot ensure a timely or adequate response. Furthermore, FEMA lacks procedures that specifically guide how the federal government will offer mass care when state, local, and volunteer efforts fall short. Only DOD has the resources and transportation to provide mass care quickly and in sufficient quantities for catastrophic disasters.

Currently, the American Red Cross has responsibility for providing and coordinating mass care, with support from DOD, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other agencies. In less severe disasters, such a reliance on a relief agency with a large network of volunteers may be sufficient. However, the American Red Cross was quickly overwhelmed following Hurricane Andrew and was unable to fulfill all of its mass care responsibilities. Because of this, in the event of a catastrophic disaster, primary

reliance on the American Red Cross may need to shift and be placed with a federal agency.

DOD is the only federal agency with the capability to provide, transport, and distribute sufficient quantities of the items that disaster victims immediately need. In fact, Hurricane Andrew demonstrated the effectiveness of the military in bringing to bear a variety of supplies and services and establishing the infrastructure necessary to restore order and meet immediate needs of victims. For example:

- DOD has trained medical and engineering personnel, mobile medical units, storehouses of food and temporary shelters, contingency planning skills, command capability, and other requirements for mass care, as well as the transportation to deploy them. Building up response capability in other organizations--such as FEMA--would be redundant.
- Catastrophic relief activities mirror some of DOD's wartime support missions. Soldiers are trained for similar missions and catastrophic disaster relief provides soldiers with additional training.
- Catastrophic disaster responses, such as for Hurricane Andrew, are smaller than many military operations and do not significantly affect DOD's military readiness in the short term.

The fact that DOD possesses the capability to respond to mass care needs does not mean that it should be given responsibility for planning, directing, or managing this response function. Military officials told us that DOD is willing to respond to whatever requests it receives from disaster relief authorities. The military officials further stated that the requests should always come from authorities outside DOD so that the public does not perceive that the military is trying to inject itself into domestic policy decisions.

The DOD officials also cautioned that, while responding to a catastrophic disaster will not adversely affect short-term military readiness, the extent to which DOD can respond will depend on other world events at the time of the disaster. For example, if Hurricane Andrew had occurred during Operation Desert Storm, DOD would not have been able to provide as much airlift to transport personnel, equipment, and relief supplies to the disaster area. It also is questionable whether it could have provided the same number of personnel to assist in disaster relief efforts.

Another factor that could affect DOD's response capability is that DOD's force structure is being reduced. To some extent, this limitation could be overcome through greater use of the

Reserves, which possess many of the skills and services that are needed for effective disaster relief operations. Under current law, however, the Reserves may be called upon to perform disaster relief operations only in limited circumstances.

MAKING BETTER USE OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO RESPOND TO CATASTROPHIC DISASTERS

FEMA can make better use of the resources it currently has available to improve its own catastrophic response capability as well as that of state and local governments. Given changing world circumstances, the time is right to reassess the level of resources FEMA devotes to national security issues--with an eye toward shifting some of those resources into natural disaster response.

The primary mission of FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate entails a rapid deployment capability. As such, numerous National Preparedness resources could be, and to a limited extent have been, used for catastrophic disaster response. FEMA can also enhance state and local catastrophic disaster preparedness by making better use of the civil defense funds that it grants to states. Traditionally, such grants also have had a national security focus. In addition, FEMA needs to improve its training for and oversight of state and local disaster preparedness.

Increasing Use of National Preparedness Resources

FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate is assigned the mission of "maintaining the federal government's capability to deliver effective emergency management during all phases of any national security emergency." The Directorate includes about 900 employees and has an annual appropriation of about \$100 million--significant assets that could be used more effectively to help guide the federal government's response to catastrophic natural disasters, especially in light of changing nature of national security emergencies. However, just as most of the National Preparedness Directorate's budget is submitted separately, we too will have to provide you with more complete information in an alternative forum.

In general, however, the Directorate has many of the people and resources that could help form the nucleus of the disaster unit I referred to earlier. Its current rapid response mission places a premium on people with such skills as strategic and tactical planning, logistics, command and control, and communications. Its resources include communications, transportation, life support, and sophisticated computer modeling equipment. Through constant planning and exercising, the Directorate maintains a high level of readiness and is, therefore, able to instantly deploy people and resources from a number of locations to anywhere in the United States.

Although the Directorate's assets could have been instrumental in such tasks as planning, assessing damage, and establishing communication links between local, state, and federal officials at the disaster site, they were not fully used to respond to Hurricane Andrew and other recent disasters. This occurred, in part, because the Federal Response Plan lacks procedures for using the Directorate's assets to respond to natural disasters.

Improving Use of Civil Defense Funds

Approximately another \$100 million is provided annually under civil defense authorities to develop state and local emergency response capabilities. Civil defense activities, which include the construction of emergency operating centers and training for key personnel, are carried out under the authority of the Civil Defense Act of 1950, as amended. Here, too, the time is right to reassess the continuing need for this activity at this funding level given changing world circumstances. The 1950 act originally had the purpose of developing a civil defense capability in the event of nuclear attack. However, a 1981 amendment to the act permits states to spend these funds according to an all-hazards approach. That is, states may use civil defense funds to prepare for natural disasters to the extent that such use is consistent with, contributes to, and does not detract from attack-related civil defense preparedness.

Many state and local officials have told us that FEMA very closely controls what types of activities qualify for civil defense funding. According to these officials, nuclear defense concerns still predominate. The state and local officials stated that civil defense funding did not correspond to their areas' disaster response priorities. These state and local officials said that they would like additional flexibility to use civil defense funds to meet their perceived priorities.

FEMA officials are aware of the benefits increased flexibility would provide state and local entities and are considering merging the various programs into broader categories to enable a more diversified use of the funds. Some civil defense programs have been suspended for the current year while awaiting the results of FEMA's study of civil defense requirements, which is nearing completion. This study is intended to identify needs at the state and local level and establish ideal funding levels for civil defense activities.

Better Training for State and Local Governments

The amount of federal resources needed to respond to a catastrophic disaster are lessened if state and local government response capabilities are increased. We believe that FEMA could do more to ensure that state and local governments prepare for

catastrophic disaster response. Our review uncovered shortcomings both in the way FEMA helps state and local governments train and conduct exercises in anticipation of catastrophic disasters and in the way it monitors state and local preparedness.

FEMA's own evaluation and our report on Hurricane Hugo recognized a number of training deficiencies.⁴ These included the need to provide state and local governments with training specifically geared towards developing such necessary catastrophic disaster response skills as assessing damage and estimating the amount of mass care needs. However, state and local officials have not received such training. For example, Dade County's Emergency Management Director told us that instead of training her in such skills as conducting damage and needs assessments, FEMA typically offered generic management training designed to enhance skills such as keeping program budgets. You will recall that one of the biggest problems with the response to Hurricane Andrew was the inability of state and local officials to determine how bad the disaster was and specify how much assistance was needed.

FEMA officials told us that its Emergency Management Institute (EMI) is in the process of developing courses to enhance state and local officials' ability to respond to catastrophic disasters. However, because such courses usually require about 2 years to develop, most were not available in time for Hurricane Andrew. Also, EMI officials told us that they further delayed development of many disaster response courses until completion of the Federal Response Plan, which was not finished until April 1992.

Most state officials believe that their state disaster exercises do not adequately prepare them to respond to catastrophic disasters. These officials cite such problems as too few exercises, low federal participation, and failure to act on weaknesses identified. To illustrate, Dade County conducted only one hurricane preparedness exercise in each of the past 2 years. There were 144 participants for the 1991 exercise--and none were from the federal government. No participation records were kept for the 1992 exercise.

In 1991, FEMA staged two major earthquake exercises, involving one along the "New Madrid" fault (near Memphis, Tennessee) and one near Puget Sound, Washington, to test the draft Federal Response Plan. Those exercises identified problems such as (1) inadequate state requests for assistance, (2) hesitation by federal personnel that could have resulted in numerous delays in procuring essential supporting services, and (3) the American Red

⁴Disaster Assistance: Federal, State, and Local Responses to Natural Disasters Need Improvement (GAO/RCED-91-43, Mar. 6, 1991).

Cross's inability to meet the mass care needs of catastrophic disaster victims. Another FEMA-sponsored exercise for a catastrophic disaster generally pointed out similar response deficiencies, including problems with resources, communications, and training. However, as shown by the events of Hurricane Andrew, these shortcomings have not yet been corrected.

Improving Oversight of State and Local Readiness

Greater preparedness and accountability for state and local governments is needed to ensure that they, as well as participating federal agencies, make maximum efforts to effectively respond to disasters. However, FEMA is neither organized for, nor carries out, the type of oversight needed to ensure that deficiencies are identified and corrected.

FEMA headquarters sets policies and establishes training programs but does not monitor state performance. Regional offices implement headquarters' initiatives and interact directly with the states. However, regional offices report directly to the FEMA Director, not to the policy-setting headquarters program offices. Headquarters officials told us that, as a result, they do not have comprehensive knowledge of state readiness.

Regional officials told us that headquarters has neither established performance standards nor developed a program for evaluating state and local preparedness for catastrophic disaster response. Therefore, the regions have no uniform national standards that can be used to judge state and local readiness. By creating performance standards and then evaluating how well state and local governments perform, FEMA can increase the accountability for all participating agencies.

CONCLUSIONS

The fundamental principles that guided the creation of FEMA--such as securing top-level commitment and ensuring the most efficient use of available resources--are sound and still provide the basis for an effective, rapid federal response to catastrophic disasters. However, because the implementation of these principles has left much to be desired, our nation is not prepared for catastrophic disasters and does not respond rapidly and effectively when such disasters occur.

In responding to disasters, state, local, and volunteer agencies should do as much as possible before turning to the federal government for help. However, it is essential to recognize that the magnitude of certain disasters, such as Hurricane Andrew, will quickly outstrip the capacity of all but the federal government to respond. For catastrophic disasters affecting large numbers of people, the military possesses a unique capacity to bring substantial resources and expertise to bear. And, we

run the risk that if such help does not come quickly, lives may be lost.

FEMA currently lacks an effective strategy for rapid federal response. First, the federal strategy does not include provisions for such aggressive actions as independently assessing damage and estimating needs to help determine whether federal assistance is called for, and if so, how much. Second, FEMA has not developed operating procedures to specifically guide how the federal government will provide mass care and other relief services when the state, local, and volunteer effort falls short. Finally, the federal government needs to do more to ensure that state and local governments are better prepared for catastrophic disasters, thereby lowering the federal government's expenditures for assistance.

Hurricane Hugo in 1989 provided the nation with a warning, but adequate corrective actions were not taken. Hurricane Andrew offers us another warning that the nation needs to develop a strategy for rapidly responding to catastrophic disasters. Fortunately, relatively few lives were lost in either Hugo or Andrew, but as we noted earlier, we could easily face much worse disasters.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FEMA

The federal government needs to develop a catastrophic disaster response capability. We believe that the following recommendations represent important steps in providing such a capability. Accordingly, in the case of catastrophic disasters, FEMA should do the following:

- Conduct independent and comprehensive damage and needs assessments and compile the information so that it can be effectively translated into specific requests for federal assistance. In doing so, attention should be given to identifying and using the resources and expertise that currently exists in the National Preparedness Directorate.
- Use the authority that exists under the Stafford Act to aggressively respond to catastrophic disasters. This response should include actively advising state and local officials of identified needs and the federal resources available to address them.
- Recognize that, in the case of catastrophic disasters, only DOD has the resources and capability required to meet victims' mass care needs. In this regard, FEMA, rather than the American Red Cross, should determine what assistance is required from federal agencies--such as DOD--to provide mass care.

- Enhance state and local governments' capacity to respond to catastrophic disasters by taking the following actions:
 - continue to give state and local governments increasing flexibility to match grant funding with their individual response needs;
 - upgrade training and exercises specifically geared towards catastrophic disaster response; and
 - assess each state's preparedness for catastrophic disaster response.

MATTERS FOR CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION

We believe that the Congress should consider

- Providing explicit legislative authority for FEMA and other federal agencies to take actions to prepare for catastrophic disasters when there is warning, and
- Removing statutory restrictions on DOD's authority to activate reserve units for catastrophic relief.

OPTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE FEDERAL RESPONSE

In addition to the specific solutions we recommend today, we have explored options for reforming and improving the federal response to catastrophic disasters. At your request, we expanded our work to include not just a review of specific activities in the response to Andrew but also a broader look at overall federal policy and organizational structure. In doing so, we have focused our analysis on four options and believe the choice among them comes down to one critical dimension: The person or organization directing the federal response to catastrophic disasters must explicitly and demonstrably carry the authority of presidential attention to the disaster. The presence of presidential leadership creates a powerful, meaningful perception that the federal government recognizes this event is catastrophic and that the federal government is in control and is going to use every means necessary to meet the immediate mass care needs of disaster victims.

The four organizational options we analyzed for placing responsibility for managing a catastrophic disaster involve designating a person who could represent the President and ensure that needed resources are brought to bear. These options include (1) a key official in the Executive Office of the President (EOP); (2) a cabinet secretary, such as the Secretary of Transportation; (3) a key DOD official, possibly the Secretary of the Army; and (4) the head of FEMA.

In considering these options, it is important to understand that FEMA deals with many disasters that are not catastrophic in nature and has important responsibilities not only for response but also for preparedness and recovery. Whatever organizational arrangements may be made for the extraordinary circumstances of a catastrophic disaster, these other FEMA responsibilities would have to be carried out by FEMA or some successor organization.

Given this context, our analysis of the four options focuses on how each could be the focal point needed to marshal the resources of various federal agencies into an effective and rapid federal response to a catastrophic disaster. On the basis of our analysis and discussions with experts, we would favor, in order of preference, either placing responsibility with a designated official in the Executive Office of the President or a designated cabinet secretary. While either could be clearly seen as the President's representative, there was much more support among the experts that we consulted for designating an official in the Executive Office of the President. Because of the military's unique capabilities for responding to catastrophic disasters, the Secretary of the Army is also a viable option. However, while Defense officials showed a willingness to take on a mission to respond as necessary to disasters in our discussions with them, they also showed reluctance to be placed in charge. Given FEMA's recent performance, the head of FEMA clearly would not have credibility at this juncture. Any of these options can be put in place quickly by executive order. However, for the long-term, legislative action may be preferable. Our analysis of the four options follows.

Making the EOP in Charge of Catastrophic Disaster Response

The primary advantage of placing catastrophic disaster response leadership and coordination in the EOP is the perception of presidential leadership. From our review of the federal response to Hurricane Andrew as well as our discussions with experts in this area, the perception of presidential control is absolutely critical to effectively managing the crucial first few days of a major disaster. Further, this option would institutionalize the direct presidential involvement that has happened on an ad hoc basis in two recent disasters. Creating a visible presidential presence mirrors the advice of the National Governors Association, which emphasizes that a governor should not just manage a disaster response from the state capital; he or she must be seen as actively in charge at the disaster site.

A variant on this option would be placing within the EOP, not only leadership for catastrophic disaster response, but for all disaster response activities with the supporting staff and resources to carry out those activities. However, this raises two concerns. State emergency management directors expressed concern about having an additional federal coordinating point

with whom they would have to work in disaster response, particularly during the transition from initial response to recovery. Additionally, there were concerns expressed both in creating FEMA and in previous reorganizations of federal disaster roles that placing these responsibilities in the EOP would greatly increase its size.

Placing Another Department, Such as Transportation, in Charge of Catastrophic Disaster Assistance

Arguments for this option center on institutionalizing the perception of presidential leadership in catastrophic disasters. In two recent catastrophic disasters--the Loma Prieta earthquake and Hurricane Andrew--the President designated the Secretary of Transportation to oversee the federal role. If this is a precedent that is likely to continue, then that role should be established in advance and made clear to the responsible Secretary well ahead of an actual disaster. If the goal is to enhance the perception of presidential leadership, then the EOP is a better choice than the head of an unrelated federal agency for whom disaster response would be an ancillary duty.

A variant on this option would entail assigning all of FEMA's functions, such as disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, to a cabinet agency such as Transportation. However, a 1978 Office of Management and Budget evaluation conducted before the creation of FEMA noted that assigning coordinating responsibilities to subdepartmental units had not worked for years. These units did not have the clout of an independent

agency and had to compete in the budget process with the regular missions of their departments.

Placing the Secretary of the Army in Charge of Catastrophic Disaster Response

Placing the Secretary of the Army in charge of catastrophic disaster response would increase the appearance of presidential leadership. However, this option's chief value lies in giving responsibility to the official with direct control over significant resources essential to responding to such disasters.

Existing units that report directly to the Secretary of the Army clearly can be effective rapid responders capable of meeting the mass care needs that result from a catastrophic disaster. Not only does the Army have the trained staff, supplies, and other related assets in sufficient quantity, it has the transportation capabilities necessary to get those things to a disaster area within 12 to 24 hours.

However, this option raises the question of whether there is a need to retain control outside DOD over any domestic mission it

undertakes. There was significant sentiment at FEMA's creation--sentiment that remains today--that assigning catastrophic disaster response to the Secretary of the Army would extend the military influence too far into civilian matters. This concern was particularly acute within the Army itself. Nearly all its officials with whom we spoke expressed strong reservations about military personnel assuming any domestic duties in the absence of a predetermined mission from civilian authorities outside DOD.

Keeping FEMA in Charge of Catastrophic Disaster Assistance

FEMA's effectiveness in responding to past catastrophic disasters raises questions as to the agency's ability to adequately project the needed presidential leadership essential to managing such extraordinary disasters. Recent experience clearly indicates that leadership external to FEMA is necessary at least in the short run to ensure that the appropriate federal resources are brought to bear on the disaster. Sometime in the future, perhaps, FEMA can regain its credibility and take on greater leadership responsibilities. We believe the recommendations we make to FEMA in this testimony are necessary first steps and need to be acted upon to improve the federal response to disasters.

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Madam Chair, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you or Members of the Subcommittee may have.



CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA

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April 19, 1993

STATEMENT BY ALEX MUXO, JR.

CITY MANAGER, CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA

On behalf of the City of Homestead, I would like to welcome you to our community and thank you for the opportunity to address the disaster response policy of the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA").

The City of Homestead suffered the worst natural disaster in the history of the United States when Hurricane Andrew struck on August 24. In its wake, 90% of the residents of Homestead were left without adequate housing and in most cases, experienced losses in their business as well. The City of Homestead also experienced severe damage to its infrastructure including total loss of its municipal electrical distribution system.

Fortunately, during the emergency phase and into the recovery phase, the military, neighboring municipalities and several social service organizations were

able to provide life's most basic necessities - food, shelter and a helping hand. Without the help of these organizations, the wrath of Andrew would have been far worse for many more Homestead residents. Unfortunately, I cannot be as complimentary of the relief assistance provided by FEMA. FEMA was slow to respond. Its relief mission was confusing. There was no communication.

As children, we all were told the story of the boy who cried "wolf." Homestead City officials and county officials were not crying "wolf." The emergency was real. Our community needed assistance and we needed it immediately. Over the past several months, I have viewed some of the footage shot in the early hours after Andrew. Although disturbing, the pictures did not capture the mental and physical anguish of our community. FEMA should have responded before the first photos were ever shown to the nation.

Since the hurricane, the City of Homestead has experienced many hardships. In spite of these challenges, the residents of Homestead are committed to rebuilding. With the passage of the Hurricane Andrew Recovery and Rebuilding Trust Fund, the City of Homestead has been able to demonstrate its infrastructure is viable and can withstand the financial requirements it will be confronted with over the next few years.

Hurricane Andrew's devastation presents an opportunity for Homestead to become a model community for the 21st century. It also offers the unique

opportunity for the federal government to revise the Federal Emergency Management Agency's disaster response policies, which, prior to Hurricane Andrew, were ineffective and did not meet the needs of disaster victims. The federal government's immediate response to catastrophic disaster is vital to the recovery efforts of any community. Based on the City's experience these past eight months, I can only conclude that the federal disaster system was not equipped to handle a disaster of this magnitude.

In previous testimony before Senator Mikulski, the City of Homestead recommended that a cabinet level post needed to be created in which the appointee has direct access to the President and the authority to delegate disaster relief missions of FEMA. Since that time, FEMA and the State of Florida have chosen new directors with extensive experience in disaster management. Also, the White House has appointed Otis Pitts to coordinate South Dade's recovery. These are encouraging signs.

Congress needs to reassess the original purpose of FEMA if the federal government intends to take a greater role in responding to catastrophic disaster in our country. Any agency responsible for providing supplemental appropriations for disaster assistance must be able to demonstrate that its infrastructure is viable and can withstand the demands in which it will be confronted.

As previously stated, the City of Homestead recommends that the military be required to respond within 24 hours after major disasters to the impacted area and provide damage assessment reports to State and Federal officials. The military has the infrastructure, training and equipment to survey a disaster site, but more importantly, has the capabilities to quickly determine the type of aid needed in the affected area. FEMA's inability to conduct early damage assessments severely delayed the supply of food, water and medical supplies to those areas hardest hit by Hurricane Andrew. Thousands of hurricane victims were forced to wait in unsafe structures and torn up neighborhoods for as long as four days before they saw any organized relief operations. It was not until the military arrived did the plight of our community receive the assistance that it desperately needed.

Once organized, FEMA assisted the City by preparing damage survey reports for all city departments, coordinating the demolition program with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the acquisition of funds necessary for the City to maintain health, safety and welfare services. However, FEMA's role has since diminished as the City advances with its rebuilding efforts.

The recent reforms to the State of Florida's Emergency Management Act is another encouraging sign. These reforms will enhance the disaster relief services available to our community. The City of Homestead encourages FEMA to develop

a comprehensive emergency response plan that incorporates the resources of local governments and social service organizations. This would increase FEMA's ability to reach a larger number of those affected. All municipalities are required to have an emergency preparedness plan. All social service agencies, such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and the United Way, have designed emergency response plans. Why should FEMA be the exception?

In a time when communication is essential, there is no time for the duplication of efforts. It was evident that the Federal Response Plan, which allows FEMA to draw from the resources of 26 federal agencies, was seriously impeded by poor planning and a lack of organization. Fortunately for Homestead, we were able to rely on mutual aid agreements between neighboring municipalities. These municipalities provided utility and public works crews who assisted our staff in restoring the City's electrical distribution system and the removal of storm debris. The residents of Homestead could not afford to wait until FEMA fretted over who was responsible for what and who would pay for it all. Help was needed.

Finally, the City of Homestead recommends that a short- and long-term housing program be developed by FEMA to assist local municipalities in the wake of a natural disaster. The Tent Life Support Centers established by the military

provided immediate housing for many of our citizens. However, it took FEMA eight weeks to provide alternative housing before the Tent Life Support Centers could be closed. According to the results of a recent survey, approximately 96.5% of Homestead residents indicated that their homes received damage caused by Hurricane Andrew. Today, as you tour our community, take notice of the FEMA trailers that still remain. In my opinion, there are far too many. These trailers represent members of our community who still are without a home. Alternatives need to be found.

We commend Senator Graham and members of this committee for recognizing the importance of addressing the disaster response policies of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. We hope that the recommendations outlined today as well as the tour of the area will reinforce your commitment to amending existing policies.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the concerns of the City of Homestead and we invite you to return to Homestead as we progress with our rebuilding efforts.

**CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SERVICES
CENTRAL OFFICE**

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United States Senate
Committee on Environment and Public Works
Subcommittee on Toxic Substances, Research and Development

Field Hearing: April 19, 1993
Homestead, FL
Senator Bob Graham, Chairman

Statement by: Bruce Netter, Relief Coordinator/Naranja &
Site Director, Life & Family Support Center
Catholic Community Services
Archdiocese of Miami

When Hurricane Andrew hit South Florida 8 months ago, I was assigned to coordinate emergency relief operations for the Archdiocese of Miami to the migrant community and Naranja from St. Ann Mission. In January, I was assigned to work full time on the Life & Family Support Center (Tent City) project. A detailed program outline and current operations report is attached.

The Center is a federally funded, FEMA backed, State endorsed, Metro-Dade administered project, operated through the cooperation of Metro-Dade, the Archdiocese of Miami and HRS on property belonging to the Archdiocese of Miami.

FEMA contributes to the Center in two direct ways: 1) all tents, shower trailers washers and dryers on site are FEMA equipment, 2) FEMA maintains a constant presence on site with the assignment of Robert Munoz to review and handle FEMA case files on all residents of the Center. Further, without the support that FEMA officials such as Phil May and Ty Harrington we could not have gotten operational by March 1st, nor reopened quickly after the mid-March Winter Storm that caused considerable damage to the site.

Without the help of FEMA now to place our clients in more permanent housing we may not succeed in our prime objective, to get people out of tents and into suitable housing.

Last week, Mr. James Lee Witt, newly confirmed Director of FEMA, visited the Center. My own Director, Peter Coats, and I, raised several specific issues during that visit. Resolution of these issues would go a long way to help clear the ground for suitable housing for our clients.

1.

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The first issue deals with the decision out of Washington immediately after the March Winter Storm that forced evacuation from the site and damaged all tents, i.e., that clients would not be offered trailers or relocation monies. FEMA lawyers, we are told, felt that since all residents were returned to new tents at the Center that this was considered suitable - as equivalent to what residents had before - thus fulfilling FEMA legal obligation to provide for housing for those in a disaster zone.

This decision which we hope to see reversed does nothing to help all of us find a solution to the central problem of getting people out of tents before the onset of the next hurricane season, only a few months off.

The second issue deals with relocation allowances provided those eligible for FEMA housing assistance following Andrew. The rate for such payments was based on pre-Andrew rental rates in the area. The problem is simple. Those rates do not provide enough money to rent anything at current market rates in South Dade, assuming of course that an affordable rental unit can be found.

Nor does FEMA provide for 1st/last and security deposits in this assistance packet, items required by landlords. Such payments are hard in normal circumstances for poor working families such as we have in Tent City. Now, after the losses of Andrew that cost many their jobs in businesses not reopened, forcing families to spend hard earned savings just to survive, coming up with such bulk sums is almost impossible. And other sources, such as the Red Cross, have just not been coming forward for the many we see.

The bottom line is that FEMA relocation assistance has not worked. Instead, many families not able to use it to secure housing have held on to the cash as a last reserve of savings. Others, some less prudent, have spent the money on non-housing related items, often to cover losses not covered by private renters insurance (if they had any) or by FEMA Individual Grants or by the Red Cross.

This raises the FEMA regulation requiring the return of this assistance if now any families in Tent City are offered FEMA trailers, as we hope. We urge some sort of administrative amnesty here. How can we morally ask for these people, who we have taken into our care because they have no where else to go and very little income, to return money to FEMA that was in the first place insufficient to its purpose, and was distributed without adequate guidelines or controls.



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LIFE AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER - OPERATIONS REPORT

March 19, 1993

Prepared by: Peter Coats

Relief Coordinator

Summary:

The Life and Family Center is to open in two phases.

Phase I of the Center opened on March 2, 1993 with the admission of 21 families for a total of 98 people including:

- 36 adults and,
- 52 children all under the age of 15,
- 37 of the children were under 10 years and,
- 21 under 5 years old with 3 infants.

The Winter Storm of Friday, March 12, 1993 forced the evacuation of all residents to emergency shelter according to pre-determined plans. The Center was hit by a small tornado cutting a path that downed 27 tents. High winds over the next few days further damaged the remaining tents. By Wednesday, March 16, 1993, with the help of volunteers and the National Guard replacement FEMA tents were erected allowing the first group of residents (above) to return and for continued admissions to Phase I.

Phase I total capacity: 35 family tents.

Phase II: Work continues to complete site preparation for the second phase with a capacity of 42 family tents.

Admission to this phase may begin during the week of March 22-26, 1993.

Total Center capacity will be 78 family tents (GP Medium: size 6"/32"). Additional tents are used for the mess hall, a day care (until day care trailer can be brought on-site), a community/meeting tent, washer/dryer tent, 3 Office and living trailers for staff are also on-site along with storage trailers and 2 shower trailers.

Given average family size of 4-6 persons, maximum center capacity, is 468 people (6X78) at any one time.



Member: Catholic Charities USA
Child Welfare League of America



PROGRAM OUTLINE
LIFE AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER
ST. ANN MISSION
13890 S. W. 264 STREET
NARANJA, FL.

BACKGROUND: A survey conducted jointly in mid-December by the Archdiocese of Miami and Metro-Dade with the cooperation of HRS and FEMA revealed a growing number of families living along canals, around lakes, in abandoned buildings and in low cost rental units faced with evictions by landlords about to rehabilitate properties.

The total survey report of 5,000 people may be broken down into the following approximate groups:

- * 2,000 migrants newly arrived,
- * 2,000 construction/contractors
(1/4 of which are families),
- * 1,000 residents of South Dade at the time of Hurricane Andrew.

Almost all of the South Dade residents found are families. Due to the limitations on the survey, we believe the numbers of residents at the time of the storm facing evictions is far larger. Moreover, the logic of this process means that this category of people can only grow in the months ahead.

PURPOSE: The Life and Family Support Center is intended to provide healthy and safe transitional housing for families in South Dade at the time of Andrew made homeless by the storm or which are on the verge of eviction.

LOCATION: The Center will be located on property belonging to the Archdiocese of Miami at the site of St. Ann Mission. The Archdiocese will provide the land at no cost for six (6) months to Metro-Dade County.

CENTER CAPACITY: The Center will have the capacity to house up to 125 families (est. 500 persons) at a time.

POPULATION TO BE SERVED: The target populations are those families resident in South Dade at the time of Hurricane Andrew which are living:

- * in tents and makeshift encampments,
- * in abandoned buildings or,
- * which are on the verge of eviction by landlords seeking to rehabilitate low cost rental units damaged by the storm.

A family is defined by Federal regulations as two or more people living together related by birth, marriage or adoption. Total income must not exceed 125% of the federal poverty guidelines. THESE RESTRICTIONS ARE MANDATED BY THE FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCE - COMMUNITY SERVICE BLOCK GRANTS (CSBG) available to operate the Center.

SCREENING: All residents will be screened for admission prior to arrival at the Center by HRS Community Outreach Teams. Screening will take place initially in areas identified as "most at risk" as determined by the survey.

Anyone seeking admission to the Center can call the HRS hotline 1-800-404-4343 or contact any HRS outreach team.

A screening committee consisting of 5 persons, 1 each from: Metro-Dade, Catholic Community Services, HRS, UM School of Public Health, UM Medical School, will make decisions on admissions based on a system of priorities. These priorities are weighted to favor families with larger and younger numbers of children, families with handicapped members and those seen to be living in the most critical conditions when screened by HRS teams.

MANAGEMENT: Metro-Dade is responsible for overall management and provides sovereign immunity for insurance liability. Through a management agreement, key staff positions (Site Director, Assistant Director and Director of Social Services) are reserved to Catholic Community Services, Hurricane Relief Staff.

The Archdiocese of Miami through its designated representative will retain final authority on all site decisions affecting policies as set by the County Manager and the Archbishop of Miami.

MATERIALS: FEMA will provide at no program cost all tents, pallets, fencing, shower/washing trailers, etc.

TRANSPORTATION: Metro-Dade Transport Authority will provide transportation as needed for client residents and professional staff under a contract with FEMA.

SECURITY: Metro-Dade Police from the Cutler Ridge Station will provide 24 hour on duty security for the site. The site is secured by fence.

Residents will be issued identity badges. The Site Director is responsible for admitting visitors, including the media.

HEALTH CARE: Health care will be provided on a 24 hour basis by HRS operating from the Clinic at St. Ann Mission. State Public Health authorities will regularly inspect the site for safety and health hazards and for waste and sewage disposal management.

Pets will not be allowed for health reasons. Exceptions for seeing-eye dogs and/or small harmless animals may be made on a case by case basis at the time of screening.

67-640

SOCIAL SERVICES: Each family will be assigned a social worker/case manager. On site staff also include Housing and Jobs placement specialists. A full range of social services will be offered at no program cost by a host of private non-profit and public agencies (see below). Services will include: family and post-traumatic counseling, screening and referrals for all available benefits (AFDC, SS, Food Stamps, etc.) training, job services and day care.

PLACEMENT: FEMA will operate screening for eligibility and case re-evaluations. Once eligibility is determined for FEMA and or other housing options through County, State or other means; families will be relocated to alternate housing on a first in, first out basis as space becomes available.

The timing of new admissions to the Center will be made as space becomes available to coincide with the rate of outplacement. New admissions will be phased down over time to permit Center closure at the end of six (6) months.

BUDGET: A budget (attached) has been adopted as developed jointly by Metro-Dade's Office of Homeless Programs and Catholic Community Services of the Archdiocese of Miami in consultation with the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

FUNDS FOR OPERATIONS ARE FEDERAL DISASTER RELIEF COMMUNITY SERVICE BLOCK GRANTS (CSBG) made available through the State of Florida DCA and Metro-Dade Community Action Agency (CAA).

(rev. P. Coats 3-19-93)

INTER-AGENCY PARTICIPATION

| Agency | Services |
|------------------------------------|---|
| FEDERAL: | |
| FEMA | Materials, Planning and Placement. |
| US Army Reserve/UM | Site planning & Logistics support. |
| DOL/Job Corps | Voc.-Ed, referrals ages 16-22. |
| STATE: | |
| DCA | Planning, Budget. |
| HRS | Survey, Screening and Health Care. |
| Public Health | Planning, Site inspection. |
| National Guard | Site preparation. |
| METRO-DADE: | |
| Office of Homeless Programs | Planning, Budget, Survey, Management. |
| Public Safety | Planning, Survey, Site security. |
| Fire Rescue | Site planning. |
| MDTA | Survey transport, Site transport. |
| DHR/OCA | Survey, Planning, Emergency Jobs Prog. |
| DDFM | Site planning and preparation. |
| CAA | Survey, Data Entry, Budget. |
| ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI: | |
| Catholic Community Services | |
| Office of Disaster Relief | Planning, budget, survey, Site Management, Family Counseling, Placements. Site location. |
| St. Ann Mission | |
| DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS | |
| South Dade Skills Center | Voc. Ed, Job Training, ABE-GED-ESOL After school tutoring. |
| Project Up-Start | |
| UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI | |
| School of Public Health | Planning, Survey. |
| Medical School | Pediatric MediVan |
| PRIVATE NON-PROFIT AGENCIES | |
| Christian Community Service Agency | JTPA/PIC Job Services, Referral, Placement, Social Work/Creole. |
| A Women's Place | Placement, Family counseling. |
| Miami City Mission | Referrals/teenage males, Adult ed. |
| Concept House | Substance abuse counseling/referral |
| Van Academy | Day care on site/HRS grant. |
| Florida Rural Legal Svc. | Legal counsel to residents. |

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

BY

DENNIS H. KWIATKOWSKI

ASSISTANT ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

UNITED STATES SENATE

HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA

APRIL 19, 1993

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as you consider FEMA's role in responding to Hurricane Andrew and seek suggestions for improvement.

Before I address the committee's specific questions contained in your letter of invitation, I would first like to make some brief introductory remarks.

The past four years have brought some of the costliest disasters of this century. Hurricanes Hugo, Andrew and Iniki. Typhoon Omar in the western Pacific. The Loma Prieta earthquake. Damages have been in the billions of dollars -- the stricken areas have looked like war zones. Worst of all, the victims of these catastrophes will live with the aftermath of these disasters for the rest of their lives -- lost loved ones, lost homes, lost livelihoods.

During this session, we will be concentrating on the three separate phases of the storm, *i.e.*, pre-storm preparations, the crisis immediately following the storm, and the rebuilding process. At the same time, we will be examining where FEMA has been successful, what internal changes could improve efficiency, and where legislative changes are required to maximize Federal preparedness. This has been a primary focus of our work at FEMA during the months since Andrew -- building on our successes and learning from our experiences in the Federal response effort to see how we can improve it for the next time. And there **will** be a next time -- we saw that only recently with the devastating loss of life and paralyzing impact of the huge, almost hurricane-like storm that struck the East Coast from Mississippi to Maine.

Threat assessments indicate that the probability of hazards with potentially catastrophic effects is on the rise. At the same time, population density and property development continue

to grow in areas at risk. These trends present compelling evidence for increases in catastrophic emergencies impacting joint Federal, State and local operations. Within the context of our overall mission, we at FEMA work with State and local governments to save lives and protect property. To that end, our programs such as the all-hazard civil defense program, hurricane preparedness program, and Disaster Preparedness Improvement Grants, have contributed to building the nationwide emergency management infrastructure, both in South Florida and nationwide. The infrastructure of trained personnel, plans, facilities, and equipment, when coupled with regularly conducted exercises, provides a backdrop of emergency preparedness capability at the State and local levels.

Historically, State and local governments have agreed they have the primary role in responding to disasters -- the Federal Government steps in only when the response exceeds State and local capabilities. That process works well for the majority of disasters -- as demonstrated by the average 40 disasters a year that FEMA successfully manages. But our experience in responding to Hurricane Andrew, as well as to Hurricanes Hugo and Iniki and the Loma Prieta earthquake, has also demonstrated that the process is not effective for large-scale or catastrophic events. Unless we are prepared to respond to events of this magnitude, we will inevitably come up short. Local and State governments simply do not have the resources to respond to the needs of its citizens and recover from such large-scale disasters.

Congress and the Federal Government, in partnership with State and local officials, are working to create an effective response capability within current budgetary constraints, and the circumstances under which the Federal Government can move into a State for response operations. At FEMA, we are committed to providing all disaster victims with the assistance

they deserve, regardless of the size of the disaster. Pending resolution of these issues, I will discuss the actions we took last year; how we are applying last year's lessons learned; and what needs to be done to improve our capabilities, within our current authority and resources.

I would like to turn now to FEMA's role and pre-storm preparations. In lieu of a detailed chronology of events, I will summarize some of our initial regional and headquarters activities in preparation for the storm.

Together with the headquarters staff, FEMA's regional personnel in the Thomasville, Georgia, and Denton, Texas, offices tracked the progress of Hurricane Andrew from its earliest stages. Based on early predictions of Andrew's severity, preliminary contact with lead Federal agencies under the Federal Response Plan was made as early as August 20 -- 4 full days before the storm's landfall. At the same time, emergency staff from our Denver, Colorado, and Bothell, Washington, regions were put on standby to assist in response efforts. Because it was impossible to pinpoint Andrew's first landfall and subsequent path this early, we were in continual contact with all States potentially threatened from Texas to North Carolina. Particular attention, however, was focused on Florida.

By Sunday, August 23, it was clear that Andrew was a Category 4 hurricane with winds of 150 miles per hour and that it posed a serious threat to South Florida. The self-sustaining Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) Detachment, located in Thomasville, Georgia, and the Mobile Air Transportable Telecommunications System (MATTS) at FEMA's Special Facility, Berryville, Virginia, were on 24-hour alert and ready for immediate deployment to provide Federal responders with immediate self-contained, self-sustaining communications, information systems, and logistics support.

Emergency Support Function personnel were ordered to report to the Thomasville Regional Operations Center by 5:00 p.m., Sunday. All Federal agency staff of the Advance Element of the Emergency Response Team, which performs the preliminary response functions after a catastrophic disaster, were notified to report to the Florida Emergency Operations Center by 8:00 a.m., Monday morning, the 24th. FEMA regional personnel were also dispatched to the Naval Reserve Training Center in Orlando to be pre-positioned to move into the Dade County area.

Regional personnel started work with State officials at the Florida Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at 6:00 a.m. on Monday the 24th -- and the first full meeting of the lead Advance Element of the Emergency Response Team was held 2 hours later. FEMA regional personnel continued to operate out of the Florida EOC until Thursday the 27th when we relocated to Miami. Also on August 24, the Thomasville Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) detachment was pre-positioned in Orlando to be ready to move into the most critically hit areas. The next day, on the 25th, the Thomasville MERS detachment was sent to Tamiami Park in Miami where it was joined by Mobile Air Transportable Telecommunications System personnel and equipment deployed from the FEMA Special Facility in Berryville, Virginia. These two teams worked together in helping set up the communications and automated data processing systems in the Disaster Field Office in the Eastern Airlines hangar in Miami.

On August 26, an additional MERS detachment was airlifted from Maynard, Massachusetts, to Florida, together with additional logistical supplies. Groups from the various mobile teams immediately began providing communications and logistical support to the Disaster Medical Assistance Teams, Homestead City, and the Florida City Disaster Application Center.

The next week we brought in additional teams from FEMA regional offices in Denton, Texas, and Denver, Colorado.

Similar preparations were underway in Washington as we rostered personnel from other FEMA regions to support our Region IV staff and activated Federal-level agency representatives to implement the Federal Response Plan. An intense level of activity therefore had begun well in advance of Andrew's landfall, and laid the groundwork for many of the initial critical response actions that were later taken.

How successful was the Federal response effort coordinated by FEMA? The answer will vary widely -- from those who criticized the effort as a failure, to the Governors and citizens of the affected locations who praised the response activities. I think it is important to underscore that Federal response to almost all previous disasters in the United States paled in comparison to Hurricane Andrew. More tents, meals, clothing, food stamps, portable toilets, trailers, plastic sheeting, generators, communications equipment, other supplies and money were supplied to individuals and public entities than in any other disaster in U.S. history. The figures for Florida alone are staggering:

- Temporary housing or shelter for over 200,000 people made homeless;
- 6.5 million pounds of ice distributed;
- Almost 1 million gallons of bottled water distributed;
- More than 5.0 million meals and 120,000 Meals Ready to Eat served;
- Nearly 75 million dollars in food stamps provided;
- 17,000 patients treated;
- Nearly 56 million square feet of plastic sheeting distributed;

- 296 generators provided; and
- Nearly 176,000 disaster assistance registrations taken.

The figures are impressive -- but they represent only the goods and services that were provided, not the degree to which we needed to bring assistance and programs to the people and not just wait for them to come to us at the Disaster Application Centers.

Victims of catastrophic disasters have to cope not only with their losses, but with an initial period when there is no information for them. Downed media or communications systems, or simply the fact that they no longer have radios or televisions, suddenly places them in an information vacuum. But as communications are restored, disaster victims then go from the information vacuum to a near overload of information on assistance that is available.

To overcome some of these problems, we aggressively instituted many innovative approaches to bring information and response systems directly to the people:

- We conducted community meetings in the worst-hit areas of South Florida to hear first-hand what the needs of disaster victims and elected officials really were. These were open meetings where people were free to ask questions, clarify issues, or simply vent their frustrations. Media coverage expanded the audiences so that broad segments of the population could genuinely participate in the meetings.
- FEMA personnel participated in live television panel shows where disaster victims could hear more detailed information regarding Federal programs as opposed to the mere *soundbites* of the daily news programs. Disaster victims were encouraged to call in with questions or issues for discussion.

- Despite our dependence on the print and commercial media to transmit information, we also published our own bilingual "newspaper," the *Disaster Recovery Times*, so that we could provide information directly to disaster victims and elected officials without the media filters.
- We went directly to elected officials and community leaders to find out where the best locations would be for establishing military feeding kitchens or other services -- the people who knew the community the best were directly involved in determining where the services would be the most helpful.
- FEMA and other Federal agency representatives attended breakfast meetings with Chamber of Commerce and other community groups to obtain their input and better coordinate not only the types of assistance needed but how best to provide it.
- We placed disaster relief workers in communities so that they could work with disaster victims and elected officials on a daily basis. As our relief workers learned about the community, its people, and its needs, they were better able to identify critical problems and solve them. For example, the extensive *oureach* that we used in the Everglades Migrant Park helped speed the delivery of assistance and ensure that it was directed to specific needs identified by residents.

Some fundamental questions were raised by the response operations that must be answered if we are going to achieve improved response capabilities in the future.

Perhaps one of the major criticisms of the Federal response in Florida was the Federal Government's failure to move in immediately with critical supplies and equipment. However, the guiding principle of disaster relief has always been that Federal assistance is provided only

when response is beyond State and local capabilities and the State and local governments identify their needs for Federal aid. In the case of Hurricane Andrew, State and local governments were clearly overwhelmed. However, at the same time, FEMA did not have clearcut authority to **unilaterally** begin moving supplies, equipment, personnel, temporary facilities, or other items into the disaster area without a prior State request.

In retrospect, this proved to be the major stumbling block in the early hours and days after Andrew struck. There was no clear picture of what was really needed; nor was there clear authority to allow unilateral Federal intervention.

This was a particular problem in Florida. The public perception was that the Federal Government would **automatically** be on the scene, yet the system was not -- and is not -- in place to do that. Although the expectation on the part of many is that the Federal Government should be the major source of first-responder assistance, currently there is no clear legal provision or authority for the Federal Government to carry out that role prior to a request for a major disaster declaration by the Governor. As was noted in the recent National Academy of Public Administration's review of FEMA, simply rearranging the lines and boxes on FEMA's organization charts is **not** the panacea to the problem of how the Federal Government can effectively respond to catastrophic disasters.

Calling in the military met immediate needs, but both FEMA and the Department of Defense (DOD) agree that long-term reliance on the military is not advisable. Although the primary mission of the military is to defend the nation, DOD is committed to supporting planning and response to domestic emergencies only as a **secondary** mission.

DOD is the primary or lead agency for two of the emergency support functions under the Federal Response Plan -- Public Works and Engineering and Urban Search and Rescue. DOD is also tasked with supporting all of the other 10 emergency support functions, primarily in the area of logistics support, to carry out specific functions as identified by other departments and agencies. Military assets can provide mass feeding, housing (tent cities), ground and air transportation, commodities, technical support and equipment, labor, and specialized skills.

When disaster strikes a local community, the Federal Government supports and augments the efforts of the State and local jurisdictions; however, civilian government personnel are not generally familiar with the military's structure or operations. This can cause substantial confusion at a disaster site. To alleviate such problems, the Emergency Response Team under the Federal Response Plan was designed to bridge the gap between the military and the local government. Both the military and civilian sectors agree that this is an effective approach.

I earlier mentioned that Congress and the Executive Branch, in conjunction with State and local officials, are working to solve the problems for pre-disaster deployment of Federal resources and the Federal Government's role as a first responder. Resolution of these issues will not only clarify FEMA's role, but also give States and local governments a clear understanding of what the Federal Government can and cannot be expected to do to help them if a major disaster strikes.

Clearly stated Federal pre-disaster authority would allow for the advance deployment of teams, equipment, and supplies in or near the affected area to supplement State and local resources. It would also permit the immediate identification and mobilization on a national basis

of Federal resources needed to meet response requirements. And it would provide early coordination with the State on a strategy for conducting joint response and recovery operations.

FEMA's disaster authority, the Stafford Act, specifies that emergency response costs are to be shared with State and local governments. As a result, FEMA has had to be sensitive to incurring costs for Federal emergency response actions without a specific State request. To address that, cost-sharing provisions for emergency measures need to be designed in such a way that they will not be an obstacle to State and local governments carrying out their emergency life-saving measures in catastrophic disasters.

Some of the problems FEMA encountered in its response to Hurricane Andrew can be fixed by internal administrative action by FEMA or in coordination with other Federal agencies. Let me offer a few examples.

Damage assessment was a critical problem in Florida. An effective damage assessment reveals the amount and types of assistance that are most urgently needed in a stricken area. In essence, it becomes the triggering mechanism for requesting any kind of assistance. Clearly damage assessment capabilities in Florida proved inadequate. To correct this serious problem for future operations, we have already established a task force of both regional and headquarters experts to examine our ability to react rapidly, report accurately the damage that has occurred, and identify the correct response actions needed. We recognize that damage assessment is the engine that drives not only those critical first response actions but also the long-term recovery work associated with other Federal agencies. The recommendations of our task force will be acted on to improve this vital part of Federal response and recovery operations.

Following quick and accurate damage assessment, one of the next critical requirements in almost any major disaster situation is **debris removal**.

Debris removal is not just a matter of logistics and bulk contracting -- it is a vital public health and safety concern. Andrew alerted us to the need to consider adding a triggering device in our initial FEMA-State agreements following a declaration that would accelerate debris removal in disaster situations. We will be exploring this issue with State and local government representatives as well as with the contractors who actually did the work in the Andrew disaster.

Damage assessment and debris removal are primarily aimed at helping State and local governments. We also recognize, however, that we have to do a better job in delivering immediate assistance to individual victims of disaster. FEMA is therefore considering a number of improvements in this area. We are examining ways in which we can combine disaster programs to better serve the needs of disaster victims. Our goal is to simplify the process for the disaster victim, while retaining accountability to the taxpayer.

It is appropriate here to make mention of recent recovery operations in Florida. Since Andrew hit, FEMA has provided over \$100 million in disaster housing assistance grants to over 47,000 households. In addition, the Agency has expended an additional \$27 million in housing assistance to nearly 3,400 applicants for mobile homes and travel trailers. In fact, in the aftermath of Andrew FEMA provided quicker assistance for displaced people than in any other comparable disaster. Consider that within 2 weeks after Andrew hit, FEMA had provided nearly 1,500 families with more than \$3.1 million in disaster housing; and, in less than 2 months after the storm, nearly 40,000 families had been given more than \$82 million in disaster housing assistance. FEMA is proud of these achievements, but is also determined to better them. For

example, it is important that disaster assistance is available to anyone who qualifies. To that end, we consider it critical that such assistance is easy to understand, easily accessible, and disbursed quickly.

Another area that should be noted is **training**. There were many complaints that Federal, State, and local emergency managers had not received enough training in response operations to work effectively in Andrew. To correct this problem, we are revamping training for both FEMA employees and Federal, State, and local personnel. The previous focus of emergency management courses on preparedness is being revised to include more functionally oriented training with emphasis on response and recovery operations. FEMA is now field testing new response and recovery courses which have been developed since Hurricane Hugo. Hand-in-hand with training will be an additional emphasis on realistic Federal, State, and local exercises.

FEMA is also working hard to improve the **donations** process. We have seen first-hand what a few acres of unwanted used clothing looks like -- and what effect such a sight has on the media and the public. While FEMA is committed to helping States and local governments channel the best impulses of the public into something positive and productive for communities hit by disaster, we also recognize the need to formulate a coherent policy on donations. To that end we have met with charitable groups, State officials, and local government representatives. This is a delicate area requiring a collegial effort to ensure that the public's desire to help is matched by our ability to manage and distribute donations that are useful and needed by the disaster victims.

All of the foregoing should be placed in the context of the success of FEMA's long-term emergency management efforts. FEMA and its predecessor agencies have spent more than 40

years working with State and local governments on a building a nationwide disaster preparedness capability. Through our various programs like all-hazard civil defense, hurricane preparedness, and many others, we have provided -- and continue to provide -- matching funds to State and local governments for personnel, training, plans, emergency operations centers and other facilities, equipment, communications systems, and a host of other emergency-related capabilities.

Has this 40-year investment proven worthwhile? Indeed it has, as even the grim testimony of a killer storm like Hurricane Andrew corroborates. While the loss of any life in a disaster is a tragedy, the fact that no more than 26 people in Florida perished during the storm and its immediate aftermath is concrete evidence that our Nation's long-term investment in emergency management -- by whatever name we have called it over the years--is a wise investment. Specifically, with regard to FEMA's Hurricane Preparedness Program, 750,000 people were evacuated from Dade County and the Florida Keys and *not one death* was attributable to the storm surge.

Building on this solid base of preparedness, we are also working to better FEMA's response capability by working with other Federal agencies to improve the way we operate under the Federal Response Plan. Andrew gave us our first opportunity to fully implement the plan. With other lead and support agencies we are developing needed guidance on operations, financial management, and logistics procedures, as well as a corrective actions program. We are giving special emphasis to revising the Emergency Response Team structure for directing field activities, reconfiguring it according to an Incident Command System. This will give the Emergency Response team a common frame of reference and terminology with the State and

local governments. Improving the Federal Response Plan is on a fast-track, targeted to be completed at the end of next month.

While long-term recovery is not part of FEMA's mission, we are nonetheless working very closely with Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry Cisneros in developing and implementing strategies to restore the health and vitality of South Florida. We are confident that with the joint actions we are taking with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and the Congress we are moving in the right direction to correct identified problems and improve Federal response to catastrophic disasters.

Testimony
of
Richard D. Hammond, Sr.
Executive Director, Homestead Children's Fund
Norridgewock, Maine

Before

The Senate Environment and Public Works
Subcommittee on Toxic Substances, Research and Development

April 19, 1993

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, my name is Dick Hammond and I am director of the Homestead Children's Fund in Norridgewock, Maine. I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) disaster relief efforts in Homestead, Florida and surrounding communities after Hurricane Andrew.

One might ask how a farmer from Maine became involved with disaster relief efforts in Florida. In December, my 12 year old granddaughter, Jamie, came home from school one day with information about the extensive damage that was caused by the Hurricane in Southern Florida. She insisted that we send all of her Christmas presents to needy children in Homestead. The more I thought about it, the better I liked her idea. I contacted the American Legion Post and several churches in the Homestead area to assess the need, loaded a van with toys and headed for Florida. My family and I were completely unprepared for what we encountered in the communities hit by Hurricane Andrew. It was at this point I felt compelled to do whatever I could to assist these victims.

I am before you today to relate to you the deplorable conditions I witnessed in Dade County, discuss the federal response to this disaster, and offer you my suggestions about how this problem can be better addressed.

My family and I first arrived in Southern Florida on December 22 to deliver presents to the American Legion in Homestead for the children of Homestead and the surrounding communities. What we discovered were people living in near-third world conditions -- Tent cities, hungry children with little or no food, gangs roaming the streets, reports of looting, and neighborhoods with no running water or electricity. I have witnessed children eating from dumpsters, a mother unable to cash her month-old government check for necessary supplies for fear of leaving her home and kids unprotected, elderly people who have fallen victim to unscrupulous contractors who start but do not finish the job they were paid to do. I was appalled to see that such things could occur in America.

After the hurricane, I was pleased to see that the National Guard, state and local authorities acted quickly to alleviate some of these problems, and that federal troops were sent to the disaster areas to help maintain order, set up kitchens and build tent cities to house and feed victims who lost their homes. But Hurricane Andrew hit Florida on August 24, almost eight months ago. Many of the problems still persist today.

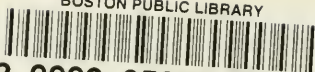
As you know, after the initial storm, there was a great deal of criticism from local and state officials about the slow response of FEMA to disaster victims. I am aware that after the disaster, Congress provided \$6.3 billion in grants for disaster victims and \$4.8 billion in loans and loan guarantees. However, the disaster response process is still not meeting the needs of the people in Dade County. If it were, I would no longer have to bring truckloads of donated supplies from Maine down to Florida.

The disaster response process needs to be streamlined to ensure effectiveness and guard against waste. It would be very helpful if FEMA did more outreach to the areas in and around Homestead. For instance, disaster victims are currently expected to file for assistance at the FEMA office in Miami. Many of the victims have no transportation or money to get them to Miami. If FEMA representatives went neighborhood to neighborhood, as I have, they could find out who needs, and qualifies for assistance. It would also be very helpful if food could be made available through the federal surplus food program. I know from my recent trips that food is not getting to the people who need it. I am also concerned about the price gouging that still occurs, and the sanitary conditions around some of the existing tent cities.

I have made four trips to Florida since that first trip I described in December. Thanks to the generosity of the people in Maine, and a number of committed individuals who have helped me, I have been able to deliver truckloads of donated food, medical supplies, diapers and blankets to victims of the Hurricane. I will continue to do anything I can to help victims of Hurricane Andrew and I ask that the federal government, and in particular, FEMA, re-double their efforts to assist people in the affected communities. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.



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