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**STATEMENT**  
**OF**  
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**BEFORE THE**  
**HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**UNITED STATES SENATE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Good afternoon Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, and Members of the Committee. I am pleased to appear today before your Committee with my colleague, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator R. David Paulison, to discuss the Department's work in implementing FEMA reforms and supporting strong incident management capabilities for the nation at DHS.

Administrator Paulison has submitted for the record a statement focusing on the work of FEMA to implement the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, and to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season. My prepared remarks will not duplicate that more specific testimony. Rather, I'd like to offer, from the perspective of the Department's chief operating officer, a brief assessment of our efforts to strengthen all-hazards preparedness and incident management capabilities across DHS.

## **POST-KATRINA REFORM IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AT DHS**

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita obviously revealed serious deficiencies at FEMA and at DHS regarding emergency management capabilities. After considerable review, and with experience working for three Presidents, I have personally concluded that FEMA has for decades been inadequately staffed and not properly structured to respond to a truly catastrophic emergency. Our recent failures had, in short, a long incubation. Indeed it is a delusion to think that FEMA ever had a "Camelot Era" in which it was structured to succeed with regard to events of the magnitude of Katrina. So now we know our weaknesses, and DHS has been hard at work for over a year to introduce appropriate discipline and true reform.

This is a Herculean effort, but it would be folly not to understand that the same degree of rapid maturation is required simultaneously of our State, local and private sector partners. My saying this is not a ruse to deflect blame for past failure; there is a keen awareness at DHS of our shortcomings, as there is also a strong and growing conviction within the organization that we have begun to emerge on the right side of an enormous change for the better.

This change is being driven by a magnificent core of talented staff at FEMA and throughout

DHS. DHS is receiving strong support from other federal and state partners, about which I will say more below. FEMA employees in particular have been ridiculed and derided as oafs or worse. I can tell this Committee with utter conviction that the “new FEMA” you see before you today is made possible by countless people at all levels within the organization who refused to let themselves be hounded into abandoning a mission that they knew they could accomplish, if properly supported.

My job at DHS is to make sure we have clarity about our mission, solid management tools in place to do the work, the right leadership – and then to help clear a path for the team to succeed. Again, I want to provide you a scrupulously fair assessment of where we are: doing very much better, but still facing significant additional work. In fact, the culture of continuous improvement that we are trying to grow at DHS requires that we be forever constructively impatient to do better, faster. Such is needed not only to contend with Mother Nature, but especially to stay ahead of the terrorist threat to our nation. Perhaps I can frame just a bit of where we have been, and where we are headed.

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS DOCTRINE, STRATEGY AND PLANS**

Twenty-seven months ago, Secretary Chertoff arrived at DHS as our second Secretary. Secretary Ridge’s heroic start-up of this enormous new agency had laid plans for important tools that were not yet in place at Katrina’s landfall. But today we have significantly strengthened this still-new Department with a rapidly growing toolkit of these emergency preparedness resources, and battle-tested managers. We are beginning to realize returns on the early investments. We are strengthening the basic architecture of preparedness for which DHS was created.

To use the argot of our military colleagues, we have been bringing greater clarity to the *doctrine* of emergency management that animates our work. At its heart, our plans are based on an acknowledgement that state and local first responders will virtually always be first to the scene of a disaster. Our role is to support them effectively, to support their state colleagues who are the second line of defense and then, if state and local resources are stretched too thin, to be there in support of our state and local colleagues.

It is core doctrine that we must design a system that gives maximum flexibility to the on-scene leaders, while building capabilities that can surge to accommodate the most catastrophic events. It is a decisive lesson from Katrina that the federal government must be able much more aggressively to lean into a supporting role that allows us to pre-position assistance more comprehensively, arrive faster, partner more seamlessly with state and other federal partners, and overall operate more effectively. Recent FEMA deployments will show, however, that this doctrine of “leaning aggressively forward” is nonetheless taking root successfully and certainly lawfully within FEMA.

Today we have virtually completed and will soon release the final version of the *National Preparedness Goal*. The *Interim Goal*, which is very closely aligned with the final product, has already been widely distributed and embraced by emergency management planners nationwide. This document’s title is perhaps somewhat misleading, as the *Goal* subsumes not only a concise preparedness performance objective for the nation, but it also puts into place two key elements that support reaching that goal: planning scenarios and response capabilities. The *Goal* – and the supporting work to achieve it – covers the full range of all-hazards work: to prevent, protect, respond and recover.

The *Goal* identifies fifteen scenarios for catastrophic event planning by which our national exercise and training regime is being directed. The Secretary of Defense has issued an order embracing these fifteen scenarios as the basis for our joint exercise agenda. After considerable interagency work at both state and federal levels, the entire Executive Branch has recently adopted a consolidated, multi-year training and exercise schedule that will bring together core planning and exercise investments.

The DHS Operations Coordination directorate is managing an extensive interagency process to support operational planning for each of the fifteen scenarios. Core agencies have detailed planners to DHS’s Incident Management Planning Team for this purpose. The first two products of this effort are quite far along: operational plans for a hypothetical nuclear event and plans for a pandemic influenza outbreak in the United States.

Second, the *Goal* identifies 37 core capabilities that are needed at the state and local level to manage serious events effectively. DHS has aligned its extensive homeland security grant programs to help our state, local, tribal and private sector partners develop and strengthen these capabilities. The capabilities and the grant programs are, of course, aligned with the Department's risk-based, intelligence-driven investment principals to prioritize first the capabilities that are most crucial.

Shortly before Katrina's landfall the federal government issued the *National Response Plan*. It is probably fair to say that, at the time of landfall, not all of the various parties who must act in concert with this plan had managed adequately to internalize it. That is no longer the case. Last summer, DHS released an amended version of the *National Response Plan* to capture lessons learned from Katrina prior to the hurricane season. That plan is in place. It has been much better absorbed by all parties, and it would successfully structure the national response if an incident of national significance were to occur today. Nonetheless, we are currently completing a second revision that will further strengthen the *National Response Plan*. We aim to have that released by July. It will not offer a radical departure in content, though we hope to incorporate the many suggestions that the text be more readable and compact. I would be happy to answer questions about our preliminary approach to these additional changes, if the Committee so wishes.

*The National Response Plan* is supported by and supports the *National Incident Management System* (NIMS), which provides the core structural management discipline for incident management. FEMA is aggressively training federal, state and local emergency managers in this discipline at our Emmitsburg, Maryland facility and with numerous training tools. Again, progress is being realized in expanding NIMS training.

National response work *per se* is focused disproportionately on incident response and short-term recovery actions, but it must be linked seamlessly to a broader all-hazards strategic continuum of activity that leverages investments for the prevent/protect missions. Since Katrina, two other important elements of the DHS preparedness architecture have been delivered that are particularly focused on the prevent/protect missions.

The final *National Infrastructure Protection Plan* (NIPP) was released in June of 2006. It establishes a comprehensive risk management framework that clearly defines critical infrastructure protection roles and responsibilities for all levels of government, private industry, nongovernmental agencies and tribal partners. Just yesterday, DHS released the 17 Sector-Specific Plans that support the NIPP. Together, these 17 sector plans serve as a roadmap for how infrastructure sector stakeholders are implementing core security enhancements, communicating within their sectors and with governments to reduce risk, and iteratively strengthening security.

Strengthening infrastructure strengthens our response capabilities. We continue to invest in interoperable communications, and we have made significant progress in the last year. We have invested some \$2 billion in this area since standing up DHS. This year, the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration, in consultation with DHS, will also award almost \$1 billion in grants to public safety agencies to enhance interoperable communications. There is still much more to do to improve interoperability in communities across the nation.

Further, maturation of other programs at DHS continues to strengthen our preparedness capabilities. This includes support for state fusion centers, and buffer zone protection grants executed in conjunction with state and local authorities. A key post-Katrina advance has been a deepening of our interagency planning and more extensive cooperation at the federal level. This is particularly notable, in my opinion, in the Department's partnerships with the Department of Defense, a crucial support for catastrophic events. With the maturation of NORTHCOM, we have exchanged DHS and NORTHCOM staff to work within each other's command centers. NORTHCOM planners are now co-located with FEMA regional staff, and the FEMA regional officers and staff are undergoing a rapid and significant growth, and receiving needed professional development and operational support.

DHS's Nationwide Plan Review combined self-reported Emergency Operations Plan data with a more rigorous peer review process to evaluate local disaster preparedness in all 50 states, six territories and our 75 largest cities. This review, which we completed in 2006, provides an

important progress report from the states and a path ahead for the work DHS will need to support with our state and local colleagues. In conjunction with the 2007 hurricane season we have done more detailed, hurricane specific planning with the hurricane-prone states, and particularly with the Gulf Coast states, as is summarized in Administrator Paulison's testimony.

On the Saturday after Katrina landfall, I spent the afternoon with Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England and key military and FEMA leaders, urgently designing mission assignments to structure Defense Department support for the Katrina relief efforts. Today that just would not need to happen, as FEMA and Defense have some 180 pre-coordinated mission assignment agreements in place that cover virtually the entire range of potential needs. There is a strong framework for aggressive and effective partnership. Similar stories can be reported of enhanced interagency planning work with other federal departments – and deeper understanding of our respective assets, missions and interdependencies.

Finally, an important post-Katrina focus inside of DHS's seven operating components has been to strengthen the adaptive force packing capabilities of the Department in support of our overall emergency management mission. This has yielded notable gains at Coast Guard, the Transportation Security Administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Citizenship and Immigration Services, Customs and Border Protection, Secret Service as well as at FEMA. Hurricane Rita, the 2006 Lebanon evacuation, and, later, the August 10, 2006 UK aviation plot – each of these incidents exercised different elements of these interconnected and now more capable adaptive force assets within DHS.

### **ONE DHS**

Katrina unfortunately revealed weaknesses and outright fissures in the unified command of operations within DHS. That was a historical relic of DHS's legacy integration – or the lack thereof. It has now been eliminated. By statute and by Presidential directive Secretary Chertoff is the principal federal official to provide coordination and unity of effort within the federal government regarding national incident emergency management. DHS's mission is certainly not to interfere, for example, with the unified command of the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of Health and Human Services within their own organizations. Rather, DHS supplies an

integrated plan and a unifying force to coordinate an effective response. We execute many response tasks ourselves, yet other vital responsibilities are discharged in concert with other federal agencies.

This has reached a level of maturation that did not exist in August 2005. Our mission at DHS is particularly focused on eliminating or managing the seams between organizational responsibilities and capabilities, whether within the federal government or with regard to our state and local partners.

I would like to conclude by saying a bit about the integration and maturation of DHS as it pertains to emergency management. Today some look back at Katrina and are tempted to conclude that DHS is too large and our mission too complex to succeed.

The creation of DHS was a bold and gutsy move, shaped both by Congress and the President. It was absolutely the right thing to do; indeed I'd say in hindsight it was our only choice if we are to meet the threats facing the homeland now and ahead for our children's generation. I would argue that when an operational component is most needy, DHS has brought additional resources, management focus and helping hands. I'm not just talking about FEMA.

I can tell literally dozens of stories, however, about how we made it through the days, weeks and months after Katrina, by working together. The contributions of the Coast Guard in Katrina response are well documented. Less well understood, perhaps, was the way in which Secretary Chertoff was able immediately to tap virtually all DHS operating components in the days and months afterward. The Secret Service, for example, with virtually no notice, helped overnight assemble a successful security plan to protect those staying at several large congregate care shelters. As we prepared for last year's hurricane season, and for this one as well, FEMA enjoyed assistance from DHS procurement, contracting, information technology, management, legal, Congressional affairs and other headquarters staff.

I know that Administrator Paulison agrees that we have been able to move FEMA as far as we have come, precisely because we have become one team at DHS. The recent reorganization at

DHS and at FEMA has created a stronger DHS, and certainly a stronger FEMA. The degree of interconnection and interdependencies among DHS operating components is growing.

For example, FEMA is now the grant administrator for DHS homeland security grants. But they are not the subject matter experts for all DHS grants. That role is held by Coast Guard for port security grants, and by the Transportation Security Administration for other transportation infrastructure grants. The Department's intelligence organization and the new National Protection and Programs Directorate provide risk-based program information in support of DHS grants. I will tell you that the Secretary correctly understands that he is responsible for the ultimate decisions regarding the risk formula and strategic priorities that shape of the State Homeland Security Grant Program and the Urban Area Security Initiative Grant Program, as well as owning all criticism and any meager praise that has come the Department's way for these grants. In the grant work, as with other matters, FEMA is a partner and colleague within the Department, in support of our larger homeland security mission.

This sense of working together well is evident at a personal level among the Department's leaders. Weekly I met with the seven operating component heads at DHS to assess together our challenges and to counsel about the path ahead. This meeting is known at DHS simply as "the Gang of Seven," because its focus is on the operators and our interdependence. The Secretary routinely joins these meetings, and of course the senior management team is thrown together throughout the week around a host of policy and operational issues. I can assure you that what Congress voted to create is relentlessly taking shape and gathering strength.

The senior leadership team has its eye on five core objectives, which Secretary Chertoff described earlier this year to this Committee. If I had to sum all of our mid-term objectives into a single compass, it would be this: we are determined that by the end of President Bush's tenure we will leave DHS strong, successful and well managed to make an effective transition to a new President, a new DHS Secretary.

## **CONCLUSION**

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Collins, you have been and continue to be among the most

steadfast defenders of the importance of creating the Department and sustaining its mission. And, quite fairly, sometime our most insightful critics. But others in Congress recently have been tempted to abandon such support, or even have suggested pulling DHS apart piecemeal before we complete the task Congress set for us. We at DHS are not asking to escape any deserved criticism, when we are found wanting. But I urge Congress to stay with its vision. I am convinced that a failure by Congress to embrace DHS's integrated homeland security mission will impel far too many of my 208,000 colleagues across the Department to question their own commitment to this important enterprise. The faith of DHS employees in our mission is the solid foundation upon which our success is daily being built.