

FEMA Press Briefing on Gustav

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ABBREVIATIONS: [U/I] = Unintelligible
[PH] = Phonetic Spelling

Speaker

*R. David
Paulison[?]:*

Transcription

Well, good afternoon. And welcome. A couple of things have happened in the last, actually the last few minutes. I just talked to Bill Reed[PH] from the Hurricane Center and they have upgraded Hurricane Gustav to a Category 5 storm as it goes into Cuba. He did not expect that going across Cuba is going to have a major affect on the storm and came out the other side because it's going across a very narrow part of the island.

So we're dealing with a very, very serious storm. I was down in the Gulf Coast yesterday with the Secretary. I met with the Governor of Louisiana, Mayor Nagin, some of the Parish presidents. I went over to Mississippi. I met with the Mayor, with the Governor. There was also the State Emergency Manager. A couple of elected officials.

I've been very, very pleased with the preparation that I saw. Much, much different than we saw three years ago. The partnership we've developed, not only with the people who stand on this stage, but the partnership we developed with the states and the local communities. They've been invaluable getting ready for this particular type of storm.

We have changed the culture of this organization. We have gone from a reactive organization and how FEMA was designed to a proactive organization. We saw, very clearly, in Katrina that the reactive part of that does not work. Learning much, much far forward, the things that you're seeing now, that you saw happening prior to Gustav making landfall did not happen until after Katrina hit landfall. The buses for evacuations did not arrive till after Katrina made landfall. The ambulances that transport

people out of harms way were not activated until after Katrina made landfall. Urban support rescue teams and I can go on and on with all the things we're seeing now, including commodities that did not happen till after landfall.

So what you see now in proactive organization with hundreds of buses already there making transport out of the city. We've already moved over 1,000 people by train from New Orleans to Memphis. The first three busloads of people have just arrived at the airport to transport out. There's already aircraft on the ground, in fact, they arrived early. They've been transporting people out. So between the buses, the trains and the aircraft, there is no reason, no reason for anyone in the city of New Orleans to ride out this storm. It is simply too dangerous a storm. We are encouraging everyone to heed the Mayor's warning, to heed the Governor's warning and evacuate out of the city because we don't want to see anybody in harm's way.

We cannot stop the damage from happening. We can't control the path of the hurricane. But what we can do, what we can clearly do, is move people out of harm's way and make sure that they're going to be safe so when they can return home in a few

days they'll have their lives. So I want to thank you for being here and I'll let my colleagues move on. I guess, Joe, are you next? At the end of the day we'll answer any questions you might have.

Brian Montgomery: Good afternoon. I'm Brian Montgomery, the Federal Housing Commissioner at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Our number one priority at HUB is to make sure FEMA and states know that they have our full support. In New Orleans we are assisting HUD assisted families that are currently evacuating. We have HUD staff set up at the Disaster Housing Assistance Center in Houston, Texas and have the ability to relocate to the city the Memphis should the hurricane make a turn westward.

The Housing Authority of New Orleans, also known as HANO and HUD staff are currently going door-to-door reaching out to citizens, especially senior citizens and persons with disabilities to alert them about the bus and train evacuation schedule. And to encourage folks who need help evacuating to call the city's emergency 311 number.

I also want to remind the mortgage lending community that HUD

will establish a 90 day foreclosure moratorium on properties in presidentially declared disaster areas. Under the moratorium lenders may not initiate new foreclosure actions nor continue the processing of foreclosures already underway. The purpose of a moratorium is to give affected families an opportunity to assess their situations and to take appropriate actions to get their lives back on track. We recognize that families may need to deal with damage to their homes, or perhaps temporary breaks in employment or other types of disruptions. And we want to make sure that we support them in making arrangements and taking care of their homes, their families and their finances.

In closing those of us at HUD remain in close contact with FEMA and other federal partners, local emergency management agencies as well regarding housing solutions, mission assignments, program areas specific questions and are prepared to ship staff and resources accordingly. Thank you very much.

Joe Becker:

I'm Joe Becker and I lead the American Red Cross Disaster relief. I'm here to speak for what the Red Cross is doing today and will be doing in the next years, but I'm also here to speak on behalf of the non-profit sector that's working hard in this relief effort.

What you're seeing today is the opening of evacuation shelters. In the four states in the cone area or outside the Red Cross is prepared to open about 600 shelters that can handle 143,000 people. These are simply safe places to be during the storm. Evacuations are also happening much further north of those four states and we have tremendous capacity there that will come online as needed.

Once the storm passes and people come out to see if they're able to return home, that's when a subset of the evacuation shelters become citizen shelters. That becomes the place where people live for a number of days until we can find other accommodations for them. These are where you'll see the cots and the blankets and the nurses and the Red Cross volunteers and the community coming together to take care of these people.

We will operate as many of those shelters as are needed. And our partners will be there with us to do that. In the next days as roads open and communities become accessible, that's when you'll see hundreds of teams from the American Red Cross fan out into the affected area, into the neighborhoods. They're

driving through those communities with food, with supplies, with things people need to clean up their home. Mental health support. Things people need to start to move on.

They'll also see a set of fixed sites, community by community, where people can come to pick up those supplies and get a meal, and take what they need and then share with their neighbors. Because of where the storm is heading and because of who we're looking at being affected and in harm's way, we're focusing very hard on our mental health preparations and deploying large numbers of mental health professionals to help these people. They'll be in our shelters. They'll be in our service sites. We want to be there for people who have already seen what awful looks like.

And we continue to reach out to other organizations to join the response. And we want to support their efforts in doing so. A key issue we have continues to be in the state of Louisiana where we've been asked by the state and emergency management to open 107 shelters for 40,000 people. The Red Cross and its partners has the supplies and has the people to open more shelters. These are pre-identified buildings. The

limiting factor here is the availability of those buildings. These are typically schools, civic centers, community buildings that are used as shelters.

The Parishes are working very hard right now at freeing up every last building possible and the state is working feverishly with local government to do that. FEMA is hard at work at this and we appreciate your support. We've got to take care as many people as we can as close to what used to be home as possible.

Once the decisions are made to bring additional buildings online, we are ready to move in. Our people are there, our partners are ready and our supplies are in place. We need the permission to operate and when it's granted we'll move in quickly.

In the last days we've shared what we've done to move our people and move our supplies. And I won't go into those numbers again. In addition to our hundreds of local volunteers in harm's way, we've added a first wave of over 3,000 volunteers. Two-thirds of our fleet is either now in the Gulf or on it's way to the Gulf. And with our partners, particularly the Southern Baptists, we have in place what it takes to feed 600,000 meals a

day. We're ready on a scale for a major, major event. And we have the supplies and commodities and with FEMA's support we're ready to go bigger than that if we need to.

We've begun the sheltering today and our work is going to continue for the next weeks and months responding to this storm. And I do want to say thank you. Thank you to the many, many Americans who want to help these people. Who see how important it is to take care of people like this, at a time like this and make the Red Cross disaster work possible. Thank you very much.

Sandy K. Baruah:

Good afternoon. I'm Sandy Baruah with the Small Business Administration. The Small Business Administration is not a first responder agency, but given the critical role the SBA plays in economic recovery we are actively and closely engaged with FEMA, state and other Federal entities in response to this pending storm.

SBA, along with our sister Federal agencies have overhauled our processes and our response protocols to be much more forward leaning in the days ahead. We had learned important lessons from the 2005 hurricanes and were are prepared to effectively

execute our mission to support the post disaster economic recovery needs.

Since those days back in 2005 and Katrina, the Small Business Administration has improved and streamlined our disaster application and our approval processes. We've upgraded our disaster system technology infrastructure which will allow thousands of more concurrent users. We have added over 200,000 square feet of space in order to handle surge processing capabilities during a disaster situation.

We've implemented an online disaster application for victims wanting to access SBA loan programs after a disaster. We've expanded our disaster response workforce including 2,000 reserve employees ready to jump into action if needed. And we've established a new executive office of disaster strategic and planning operations led by Navy Retired Rear Admiral Steve Smith to improve not only our internal coordination's at SBA but also our coordination with our Federal partners and with state and local governance.

SBA is coordinated with FEMA and the states and we have

already prepositioned employees in the region and we are ready to work side-by-side with FEMA and others to conduct the preliminary damage assessments. That will be an important first step after the storm passes.

I was just in Louisiana and Florida as well as our SBA Operations Center in Atlanta just in the days past to ensure that our SBA team members have the tools that they need in order to be responsive to the people that they will serve.

As I said, the Small Business Administration is not a first responder agency, but we do play a critical role in economic recovery. I want to stress you do not have to be a small business to take advantage of SBA's disaster programs. We will have low interest loan programs for businesses of all sizes, for homeowners, for renters and for non-profit organizations and we have press packages available for all of you that detail these various programs.

Let me close by stressing the message of my Federal colleagues here today. Now is the time for preparation. For yourself. For your family. For your loved ones. For your pets. For your vital

records and so on. A hurricane or even a tropical storm can create tremendous damage and our first concern of all of us is the protection of human life and in helping those affected with their recovery ahead. Thank you.

*Rear Admiral W.
Craig
Vanderwagen:*

Good afternoon. I'm Craig Vanderwagen. I'm with Health and Human Services. We are active in response operations today with a number of general direction and guidance of FEMA. We have a significant commitment to the liaisons of Federal, state and local operation centers across the Gulf, from Florida to Texas, and we are in continual contact with our state public health and medical emergency counterparts at that level.

We have received requests from Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi and Alabama to assist with evacuations of patients with special medical needs. And to provide care for evacuated patients. And to that end we are work with DOD to provide air evacuation of about 500 critical care patients in Texas and an estimated 400 critical care patients by air from Louisiana.

These began today. Patient will be evacuated to health care facilities not only within Texas and Louisiana, far above the slosh, but to Arkansas, Oklahoma and other locations. Our goal

is to get appropriate definitive care to people that have been evacuated who have critical care needs.

In addition we're working with FEMA, DOD and the DA to assist the states in evacuation of people with special medical needs including those in nursing homes. There are over 103 nursing homes below I10, between Texas and Mississippi and Louisiana alone. A significant number of those will be effected by the slosh, the news that Chief Paulison reported to you will up the number of those facilities that will need evacuation assistance. However, we have 7,000 Para transit seats available. We have buses for the ambulatory and we have a significant number of ambulances to meet that need.

We have caches of medical supplies in place. We have 1,000 personnel, medical and public health personnel in the Gulf states today to augment local capability. Today we have opened a Federal medical station at LSU at the field house to provide low intensity hospital care. We are working in Alexandria for a similar capability. We will work to support the sheltering populations that are provided care through the Red Cross and with our FEMA and Human Services partners in our department.

We will pilot test a Human Services Case Management Program based on what we've learned in Katrina. This will allow us to coordinate with states and connect individuals with special needs to the social services and benefits package for which they're eligible following a disaster, including child care and other services. Additional public health teams from CDC are alerted and prepared to move to support potential vector borne[PH] disease prevention and other public health issues. And lastly teams from HHS Human Services Agencies working with our FEMA and Red Cross colleagues are moving to support the needs of special populations including our American Indian populations in this area.

We urge all in the Gulf zone to honor the guidance that is being provided to you to depart. We are seeing active movement in the general population and I'm pleased to say we're moving aggressively to assure that special needs medical populations are being moved to safe places where they can receive the care they need. Thank you.

R. David Paulison: Thank you. I think what you can see is a different type of response than we saw in Katrina. You're seeing a partnership,

not only at the Federal level but also at the state and local level. As I talk to all the governors from Texas to Florida, they're all talking with each other. Sharing information. They know they have to coordinate together. The contraflow that's going to start tomorrow morning from Louisiana will require cooperation with Mississippi and cooperation with Texas to make sure that those roads will accommodate contraflow. I know the governors are already talking back and forth and have been for several days.

They were as prepared as they possibly can be. And I'm very proud of what I've seen going on. I've seen the difference and change in attitude from three years ago. So what I'd like to do is answer any questions and ... yes?

Unidentified Reporter:

R. David Paulison:

Just one quick question.

You've got to really speak up because I can't hear over the [Inaudible]. (Laughs)

Unidentified Male:

And then identify the organization.

Kate Volden[PH]:

Of course. Kate Volden with CNN. Just one quick clarification before my question. The last we had heard was that it's still a Category 4. You said Category 5 hurricane. I wanted to make sure that was ... it was not a mis(sic).

R. David Paulison:

That's correct. As we're in the middle – right in the middle of our

Teleconference now, every afternoon we have a Teleconference with all of the states and the Hurricane Center and all of our players, the Red Cross and all the people you see up here. And Bill Reed got up in the middle, that interrupted it, and said they had just upped the category to a Category 5 storm. That puts a different light on our evacuations. And hopefully that will send a very clear message to the people in the Gulf Coast to really pay attention and if they're in the evacuation zone they really need to move out and move out very quickly.

Kate Volden: My question: For people, and you did talk about it in this press conference, people who know awful. People who have gone through a lot and feel in the Gulf Coast that they've been let down by the Federal government over and over again. Why, Mr. Paulison, should they believe, FEMA – should they believe you this time?

R. David Paulison: Well, I don't know if they should believe me or not, they should pay attention to what we're doing. The most important thing right now is to take care of themselves and their family. And the best thing they can do is evacuate out of harm's way. We are providing a different type of response. And if you talk to the people down there, if you talk to the governors and talk to the local emergency managers, they are truly seeing a different

Federal, state and local response than they've seen in the past.

This is the big culture change. There's no question about it. It's a big shift in how we respond to disasters. We are not going to be reactive anymore. We are going to be proactive. We have been down there and we're going to stay down there. We already had moved in everything in ahead of time. You didn't see buses on the ground prior to Katrina. You didn't see ambulances on the ground prior to Katrina. You didn't see this partnership that we have prior to Katrina. And took those lessons very seriously. A lot of people lost their lives. And we simply don't want that to happen again. So we changed what we're doing.

And I'm not asking for people to believe me. I'm asking them to watch and see what we're doing. Yes, Ma'am?

Ann Turner[PH]: Ann Turner, NBC. What method is being used to make sure that they're in the disaster area or being in harm's way. And also where are the people, particularly from New Orleans and other places being bused to once they get on a bus or a train. Where are they moved to?

R. David Paulison: First of all the word is going out through the media. The word is

going out ... the governor is making press conference announcements. The mayors, the parish presidents are. The local and community leaders are doing the same thing now over and over again. You know if you live in the city of New Orleans you have to evacuate because you're in a bowl. And despite the fact that the Corps of Engineers has done a yeoman's job of preparing those levees, there's still a lot weaknesses there. It's still not where they need to be. So we want everyone to evacuate out of there. There are several cities, dozens of cities that we're moving people to.

A lot of them are moving inside of New Orleans. We're moving some people to Memphis by train. Airplanes are going to Texas. Airplanes are going to other cities around the country to make sure that we have every opportunity for people to evacuate. Most people are evacuating themselves. I know you've seen them, I know you watched it already, I watched your show years ago showing the traffic going out of New Orleans. But a lot of people don't have that type of transportation. So what we've done is made sure that there are no excuses. There are buses on the ground. We have trains on the ground. We have airplanes to move people. The first three loads busloads of

people just arrived at the airport to move out and they'll be loading those planes in just a few minutes.

The first train has already left with 1,020 people on it and they're loading another train. So we moved about 3,000 people to Memphis. Texas has taken about 45,000 people by self evacuation and we're going to airlift another 10,000 in. So a lot of cities and a lot of state have stepped up to the plate to help us with this evacuation.

Now, also what's in place is the shelters have already been pre-identified. And when they arrive there, there's buses already there to take them to the shelters. So it's not the hodge podge of what we saw during Katrina. It's a very organization type of mission. Now there's going to be glitches. There's no question about it. You're moving that many people and it's something that you don't do every day, there's going to be bumps in the road. It's how quick we fix those and how we come across those glitches, we'll fix them very fast. Yes, Ma'am?

Lisa Chen[PH]:

Hi. Lisa Chen, ABC News. So I guess now we're inside of 72 hours before the storm may possibly hit. Have you discussed with the mayors and the governors a time when people will – any

time for the evacuation and the assistance that you'll be providing and in terms of buses, trains, airlifting – that type of thing?

R. David Paulison: The transportation stops when tropical storm force winds gets to that particular city you're evacuating. It's 39 miles an hour, anything above that buses aren't safe on the road, ambulances are not safe on the road. So that's how we start our countdown backwards. We predict when we're going to have tropical force winds and we go 72 hours back from there. That is 72 hours of when you start that evacuation process. And all of the states did that, all of the parishes did that, and they all did it at the same time.

This was a coordinated effort that I had not seen before. You know, you saw ... during Hurricane Katrina some parishes evacuated and some didn't. Now they've all gotten together. They've all agreed in what to do and they listened to the governor, they worked with the mayor and the parish president that came through the timeline and issued that evacuation notice at the same time.

Mississippi did the same thing. Texas is doing the same thing.

Now Alabama will be a little bit different because they're a little bit further behind. But they're ready. They've already have buses that are pre-positioned. And they'll be, based on the track of the storm, they'll be evacuating their people out of the southwestern of Alabama.

Unidentified Male: Operator, we're ready to take questions from the phone line at this time. Please identify the spokesperson.

Operator: Yes. At this time if you would like to ask a question press star, then one on your touch-tone phone. Our first question is from Spencer Shiu[PH] of The Washington Post. Go ahead, please.

Spencer Shiu: Hello. Thank you. One question for Mr. Becker. You talked about asked for 107 shelters with the capacity of 40,000 in Louisiana and having a capacity for more depending on when state and locals could ask for it. What is the capacity that you have for Louisiana? And the second question ... based on the latest forecasts and modeling, do you expect Gustav to have a greater or a lesser impact on New Orleans than Katrina did? And on terms of a wave surge or speed of wind or the measurement of a 100 year storm and in the latest judgment is the current forecast to exceed the capacity of the levees? Or below the capacity of the levees?

Joe Becker: This is Joe Becker from the Red Cross and I'll take the first of

these questions. (LAUGHTER) In the state of Louisiana if every building that has been pre-identified as an available shelter or available for our use, we can do 68,000 people in that state. To the extent that we are not able to use buildings there, there are a variety of reasons why that wouldn't be able to happen with the condition of the buildings or what's going on with the buildings or just local factors. What this will cause is people to need to go further north.

So, in essence, they'll be in their car a greater distance to find a safe shelter. And particularly for the city of New Orleans they have put together a great system where the citizens have a three digit phone number to call to tell them where the shelters are, what availability they have. So as the Administrator Paulison said, there's no reason not to be in a safe place tonight. And that safe place is not your home if you're in the city of New Orleans.

I will defer the questions about the levees and the strength of the storm and the storm surge to people who know a lot more about that than I do.

R. David Paulison(?):

Spencer, those are good questions. We are looking at the storm surge right now. And Bill Reed from the Hurricane Center is

working up those slosh models based on a Category 4 or 5 storm. Texas is doing the same thing. As far as the levees are concerned, I visited some of the levees yesterday, particularly the 17th Street Canal. I saw some remarkable work they've done there.

However there are weaknesses in the levee system. It is not at the 100 year protection level. So that's why we're telling everyone that we do not want you to stay in New Orleans during the storm. We want you to evacuate. And whether the levees hold, over top or fail, there is still a possibility of a tremendous amount of rain. And Bill Reed was telling us today that because this storm could slow down as it gets next to landfall, it could produce a tremendous amount of rain. The city is capable of handling an inch of rain the first hour and a half an inch of rain every hour after that. And if you have a big hurricane dumping a lot of rain, you're obviously going to get flooding regardless of whether the levees hold or not.

So we don't want anybody to stay in the city. We want them to evacuate. And we can come back in a couple of days and we'll see whether the levees held or did not hold. But at this point, I

don't to say it's irrelevant, but as far as people evacuating, I don't think that's what they should decide on. They need to move out.

Unidentified Male: All right. Good answer. Any more questions, Spencer?

Spencer Shiu: No, sir. Thank you.

Unidentified Male: Okay, thanks.

Operator: The next question is from Jeff Bliss[PH] of Bloomberg News.

Jeff Bliss: Yeah, hi. Director Paulison, I just wanted to double check this. You said that Gustav is *now* a Category 5 storm?

R. David Paulison: That's what Bill Reed, Director of the Hurricane Center reported.

Jeff Bliss: Okay. And then also I wanted to understand, there hasn't been much talk about Hannah. Has that been a complicating factor? Is that adding to your preparation?

R. David Paulison: Hannah is going to be very interesting. We are watching it very closely. It is still disorganized. It is showing a little bit of organization. But right now we're not sure exactly where it's going to go and we're watching it very closely. And yes, it could complicate factors. Remember three years ago we had Hurricane Rita follow right behind Katrina.

Jeff Bliss: Right.

R. David Paulison: Which created some big issues for us. And so we're watching this also. Not that that's going to do that, but it's obviously one other possibility. So we're going to make sure – I've got to

personally keep an eye on it because my home is in South Florida. (Laughs)

Jeff Bliss: (Laughs)

Unidentified Male: Next question?

Operator: Yes. Next is from Bill Holland[PH] of Platz[PH].

Bill Holland: Yeah. Good afternoon, gentleman. Bill Holland from Platz Oil Gram and Gas Daily. My question is in regard to the oil refineries in St. Charles and St. Bernard's Parish. Three of the four of them plan to stay open and continue operating. Do you think that that's a wise idea? Or do you plan to encourage them to move it along?

R. David Paulison: Well, you know, I'm not an expert in oil refinery, so I'm not sure whether it's wise or not. So I really couldn't answer that question to tell you the truth. I'm sure that there are engineers and experts who will make that decision, particularly now that it's a Category 5 storm.

Bill Holland: Thank you. That's all I have.

Unidentified Male: Operator, next question, please.

Operator: Yes, there are no further questions at this time. Please press star, then one if you do have an additional question.

Unidentified Male: We'll come back to the press briefly. We're open for any final questions.

Unidentified Reporter: After this over, are you ...

Unidentified Male: Can we get two questions? (LAUGHTER) I'm kidding.
(LAUGHTER)

Unidentified Reporter: Why not? (Laughs) What ...

Unidentified Male: Speak up, please.

Unidentified Reporter: Yes. After this is over, what means are being used to make sure that people can get home?

R. David Paulison: Unlike what happened in Katrina, we're tracking people and where they go so we know how to get them back. So we'll know that people are given specific shelters to go to. That 311 number that particularly New Orleans is using, to call that and they'll tell you based on where you live what shelter to go to. They actually did a phased evacuation. So everybody wasn't on the road at the same time. So they're keeping pretty good track of it. I'm sure there will be some, a little bit of confusion with that many people, but for the most part we should not have to end up like we did with Katrina where it took us weeks to track everybody down.

Unidentified Reporter: I'll follow up on that and maybe Mr. Montgomery can answer this question or you, Administrator. In terms of housing after the fact, people don't want to stay in shelters, what plan is in place?
There was a problem during Katrina getting people into hotels

and apartments. How has that been corrected this time around?

R. David Paulison: A couple of things. One, we have a much closer relationship with HUD than we had in the past. We have been working together. We have a system in place. We're working with the [I/U] with Katrina evacuees. So we'll do the same type of thing. They have a registry of houses, and I'll let him answer some of that too, where we know where available housing is. We're not going to use travel trailers unless there's something truly catastrophic, we're not going to use travel trailers.

But we will use mobile homes. We have Katrina cottages. We have Mississippi cottages. There's other alternative housing out there. First we're we'd like to really put people is in apartment buildings. That's the safest place to be. So we'll look at that first. They may have to be put in motels and hotels originally and then we'll move them into apartment buildings, hopefully we'll have them identified those houses that are available for us.

So there's just not one magic bullet. There's a whole series of things to make sure we get people some decent housing. We don't want to end up like we did with Katrina, putting people in those travel trailers. That was not a good place to live for that

period of time. At that time it's all FEMA had in it's pocketbook.

But now we've got other options.

Unidentified Male: And the Red Cross would like add something.

Joe Becker: Another improvement post Katrina was a close relationship between the American Red Cross and FEMA to have the people from FEMA come to our shelters to help the people register in the FEMA system. The quicker FEMA knows who they are and where they are what their needs are, the quicker they can move them out of shelters and into some sort of interim housing. And so we've worked real hard on making it easier for FEMA to have access to the people in those shelters should the people want to come forward and speak with FEMA at that point.

Rear Admiral W. Craig Vanderwagen(?): I just wanted to add also relative to the National Housing Locator Service. This is something we developed post-Katrina working with our partners up here. We currently have identified about 350,000 units of housing nationwide. Now the key thing is the service isn't available directly to the public. We have HUD staff that we would place in disaster recovery centers working with the Red Cross and FEMA staff. They would then work with evacuees to find some suitable housing beyond the shelter sites.

Unidentified Male: We have time for one more question. Operator, do you have any requests?

Operator: Yes. We have a few. We have from Anna Redelit[PH] of Gannett[PH].

Anna Redelit: Yes. I'm sorry. This is – I have two questions; one, I want to make sure who, was it the Army Corps that answered the question about the New Orleans levees? And if so who, please, answered that question? And the second question is ... I forgot the second question.

R. David Paulison(?): (Laughs) Well the first question was David Paulison, the Administrator of FEMA just saying that regardless of what the condition of the levees are, people need to evacuate anyway.

Anna Redelit: Oh, the second question. I'm sorry. I remembered my second question. Is anything being done to make sure everybody living in Katrina in the FEMA trailers is out?

R. David Paulison(?): Yes, we are ...
Anna Redelit: Is there any special outreach to them?

R. David Paulison(?): Yes, we are personally contacting every person in a FEMA trailer or mobile home and telling them they have to pay attention to evacuation orders. And if they're told to evacuate to please evacuate immediately. The Governor of Mississippi did a mandatory evacuation for anyone in a FEMA travel trailer, a FEMA mobile home or a Mississippi cottage. That's what he has control over.

The local emergency managers and mayors have issued a mandatory evacuation for anybody in any mobile home or any travel trailer or any type of manufactured housing. Those have already been issued for people. Those are not safe places to stay in a storm. And so that has been the mandatory evacuation order.

Unidentified Male: Operator, last question.

Operator: Yes, Spencer Shiu from The Washington Post.

R. David Paulison: That's four questions, Spencer.

Spencer Shiu: (Laughs) I try to bunch them. Just a quick follow-up. There's been some questions about the dirty side of the storm or is there a worse side of the storm to be on? And if the current track seems to take this storm west of New Orleans, is there any sense that this could be again, at least in terms of the surge of a greater impact than Katrina on the city? And secondly could you talk about your interaction with the White House or with the President and the National Response framework as the disaster response groups stood up and talk a little bit about the process in Washington in keeping the White House and other agencies involved.

R. David Paulison: Yeah, the Northeast quadrant of the storm is considered

generally the worse, Spencer. That's where the highest winds are and the most damage. Bill Reed from the Hurricane Center, they're sticking on the same track that they had, but he said that they would have a better idea of where landfall will be once it clears Cuba to see if it deflected at all one way or the other.

Obviously Mississippi and Alabama is worried it's going to go to the right. Texas is worried it's going to go to the left. And so we'll have to wait and see. Probably in the next day we'll have a better idea of where it's going to make landfall. I have talked to the President personally and briefed him on the storm and where we are with the recovery. Secretary Chertoff and I personally went down to Louisiana and Mississippi yesterday. The Secretary is going back down again tomorrow. And I may go down again on Monday depending on whether we can get down there or not with the weather. I mean, sorry, yeah, tomorrow. Yeah, or Monday. And so we've been very much involved in it. Yes, the National Response framework is in place. And everyone is following that guidance. And it's just been working very well right now. The partnership developed under that is exactly what we intended when we put it together, Spencer.

He got the three last questions in. (LAUGHTER)

Lisa Chen:

Honest. Honest. I think he means it. Lisa Chen, ABC. So, the very last question. During Katrina obviously one of the big problems that you saw during the coverage of it was security in terms of the New Orleans area. If you could speak to a little bit, I know a lot of National Guard has moved down there and has been put into place. What are the ways that you are trying to allow for that this time?

R. David Paulison(?):

First of all, it's a local and state issue, not a FEMA issue, but at the same time having conversation with the governor, the governor made a decision to move 1,500 National Guard troops into New Orleans now. They're already in there now. Also the New Orleans Police Department is under very excellent leadership and they've hired a lot of police officers and they plan to be there throughout the storm to make sure that their city is safe. To ensure people that if they leave that their homes are going to be protected.

And the governor, I know will watch this very carefully, that if there is any issue he'll put more troops in there. And we have a mission, some pre-scripted mission assignments we've put in place. And we have those in place to bring law enforcement

officers in if they're needed. So we're ready to move on those if something happens very quickly unlike prior to Katrina when there were no pre-scripted mission assignments in place. And we've already given out 131 mission assignments just for this one storm to make sure that things are in place that need to be in place and not have to try to run those down after the storm hits. That's a good question. Thanks, folks. Good question. Thank you.

Unidentified Male: Just a follow up. For those of you on the phone, if you have any follow up media queries, I urge you to call the news desk – 202 646 4600. Let me repeat that. If you have any follow up questions or requests for information, please feel to dial the media desk at 202 646 4600. Thank you very much. That concludes today's briefing
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