



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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 February 21, 2006

The Honorable Tom Davis
 Chairman
 Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation
 For and Response to Hurricane Katrina
 U.S. House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20515-4611

Mr. Chairman:

Upon review of testimony provided to your committee and subsequently entered into public record, I noted one area that I believe to be inaccurate and ask for your assistance to correct.

On page 121 of the final report titled, "A Failure of Initiative," the report states that according to Mr. Parr, the team in the Superdome devised a plan involving the use of helicopters to airlift "virtually all of the evacuees from the Superdome at that time in about 30 hours. The next day Parr learned that Commander of Joint Task Force Katrina, Lt. General Russel L. Honoré had stopped the plan as he came to Louisiana to lead Joint Task Force Katrina."

Mr. Parr's testimony is factually incorrect. At no time before or after my arrival was there ever a plan presented to me to evacuate the Superdome using air assets, nor did I suspend any planning efforts to evacuate the Superdome by air. On the morning of August 31, 2005, local, state and federal officials reviewed with me a collaborative plan to conduct a ground evacuation of the Superdome using FEMA supplied buses. During that meeting, local and state leaders did discuss the use of air assets, but they quickly discarded that option as not feasible. That day, I met with Governor Blanco and the Louisiana Adjutant General, Major General Landreneau, and requested that the Governor mobilize local and state school bus assets to assist in the evacuation which the Governor did. Additionally, I directed Brigadier General Graham to assist the Louisiana National Guard and State Staff in planning the evacuation of New Orleans.

Brigadier General Graham and his staff assisted in refining the ground evacuation plan for the Superdome (police security requirements, assembly points, routes, and way-points to support follow-on displacement sites) in support and coordination with local, state and National Guard leadership. The priority of effort on August 31st, as established by Mayor Nagin and Governor Blanco, was Search and Rescue; air evacuation of the sick and elderly; evacuation planning; and establishing communications. In accordance with that priority of work, aerial rescue and evacuation of stranded, sick and ambulatory citizens continued throughout the city, including the Superdome.

Local and state officials, National Guard leaders, on-site military rescue personnel and first responders used all available capabilities at their disposal to evacuate their fellow citizens from the Superdome. To suggest they did otherwise would be a disservice to the on-site leaders and the heroic men and women who saved lives and mitigated further suffering.

I respectfully request that this statement be submitted for the record in order to correct the inaccurate account of events portrayed in Mr. Parr's testimony.

Sincerely,

Russel L. Honoré
 Lieutenant General, U.S. Army
 Commanding