



HOMELAND  
DEFENSE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
2600 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2600

JAN 25 2006

The Honorable Tom Davis  
Chairman, Select Bipartisan Committee  
to Investigate the Preparation for and  
Response to Hurricane Katrina  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have now had an opportunity to review Representative Melancon's correspondence to you dated January 23, 2006. This correspondence generated a related news article in the *Washington Post*, a copy of which is enclosed. Representative Melancon's concern involves the processing and approval of a September 1, 2005, FEMA request for assistance (RFA) that the Department of Defense provide "full logistics support" throughout the entire region affected by Hurricane Katrina. While it must be noted that the sequence of events outlined in Representative Melancon's letter is substantially inaccurate, the clarifying documentary record is detailed and beyond dispute.

On Thursday, September 1, 2005, FEMA requested that DoD accept the responsibility to provide "full logistics support" throughout the entire disaster area. It was recognized that this was a substantial mission assignment, with enormous planning and resource requirements, reflecting the extraordinary damage and immediate need. On September 1-2, 2005, DoD reviewed this request, assessed the requirements, identified available military capabilities, and notified the Department of Homeland Security, in writing, that the RFA had been approved by the Secretary of Defense. I am enclosing a copy of my September 2, 2005, email to DHS Deputy Secretary Michael Jackson informing him of this decision, as well as a copy of the actual FEMA RFA. The documentary record corroborates that within approximately 24 hours, our Department processed and approved what may well be the single most complex civil support mission in the history of the U.S. military. Further, I wrote in my Friday email to Deputy Secretary Jackson that, "We may actually be able to do more than you have requested." Clearly, there was no resistance or delay on the part of our department in responding to FEMA's request for "full logistics support."

On Saturday morning, I met with Deputy Secretary Jackson and, during that time, we drafted a list of current or emerging FEMA requirements likely to generate additional DoD RFAs: search and rescue; security assessment; command

and control infrastructure; geo-spatial surveillance; firefighting; health and medical support; disease prevention; quarantine planning; debris removal; and restoration of basic utilities and key transportation routes. On Sunday, draft RFAs were reviewed and further refined by senior DHS and DoD officials working jointly and with a sense of urgency. On Monday, these RFAs were approved by the Secretary of Defense. Many of these RFAs were in active execution long before the associated paperwork was signed. Considering the magnitude of physical resources and the complexity of the transportation plan, as well as the number of DoD personnel involved in meeting this requirement, a more rapid or positive response is hard to envision. This joint DHS-DoD effort produced seven comprehensive RFAs on Monday, in addition to the “full logistics support” RFA approved the previous Friday.

DoD’s deployment of military resources in support of civil authorities after Hurricane Katrina, the deadliest storm to strike the United States since 1928, exceeded, in speed and size, any other domestic disaster relief mission in the history of the United States. Over 72,000 military personnel, 23 ships, 68 fixed-wing aircraft, 293 helicopters, amphibious landing craft, space-based imagery, night vision capabilities, port and waterway surveillance, mortuary teams, and large-scale construction capabilities provided through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Navy Seabees supported the response to Hurricane Katrina. Approximately 15,000 residents of the Gulf coast were rescued and more than 80,000 others evacuated by military personnel. DoD delivered critical emergency supplies – more than 30 million meals and some 10,000 truckloads of ice and water. Military personnel also provided significant medical assistance, including 10,000 medical evacuations by ground and air, medical treatment of more than 5,000 patients, as well as support for disease prevention and control. Further, DoD made available more than 3,000 beds in field hospitals, installations, and aboard U.S. Navy ships. DoD also supplied 13 mortuary teams to support local authorities in the systematic search, recovery, and disposition of the deceased.

DoD takes its role in support of civil authorities seriously and has continued its long tradition of supporting civil authorities while maintaining its primary mission of fighting and winning the nation’s wars. During Hurricane Katrina, DoD approved more than 93 hurricane-related requests for assistance from civil authorities requiring a broad range of military capabilities. DoD felt a sense of urgency and acted upon it, as provided in the National Response Plan. In addition to Hurricane Katrina, DoD acted on over 140 requests for assistance in 2005, including responses to hurricanes Dennis, Ophelia, and Rita, and unmanned aerial system support to the Department of Homeland Security’s border security activities.

The ability of our military forces -- Active Duty, Reserves, and the National Guard -- to respond quickly and effectively to an event of the magnitude of Hurricane Katrina and to simultaneously sustain the on-going War on Terror is a testament to their readiness, agility, and professionalism. It is also a reflection of the resources provided by Congress that enable them to organize, train, and equip to meet the full range of DoD's missions.

In support of investigations into the response to Hurricane Katrina, DoD has provided approximately 240,000 pages of documents, including electronic mail and other correspondence of senior DoD leaders. All of these documents validate the overall assessment that DoD acted quickly and effectively in its response to Hurricane Katrina. Aside from documents provided, 18 DoD personnel have testified before Congress and 57 DoD personnel have been made available for interviews by congressional staff on DoD's response to Hurricane Katrina. In our judgment, DoD has now produced the documents and provided access to the personnel necessary for a complete and comprehensive review by the Committee. We look forward to working with you as the Committee continues its work. If we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Paul McHale

Enclosures

cc: Representative Melancon

Enclosure 1

Washington Post  
January 24, 2006  
Pg. 6

**Pentagon's Records On Katrina Sought**

A Louisiana Democrat yesterday urged a House panel to enforce a Dec. 14 subpoena issued to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, citing new accounts that he delayed the Pentagon's reaction to Hurricane Katrina.

The Pentagon has ignored three requests for Rumsfeld's correspondence but has provided other records to the panel led by Government Reform Committee Chairman Thomas M. Davis III (R-Va.).

"Secretary Rumsfeld's failure to cooperate thwarts the legitimate work of the committee in examining the military's role in responding to Hurricane Katrina, and it shows contempt for Congress's oversight role," said Rep. Charlie Melancon (D-La.).

## Enclosure 2

-----Original Message-----

**From:** McHale, Paul, HON, OSD-POLICY  
**Sent:** Friday, September 02, 2005 7:41 PM  
**To:** 'Jackson, Michael'  
**Subject:** FW: D/ DHS to ASD HD concerns--NO Louis Armstrong IAP Security

Michael -

Thought you might be interested in reading this follow-up to our conversation. SecDef has agreed to support your RFA for broad logistics support, throughout the entire four state AOR. We're working on the specific language - and a planning staff to implement it. We may actually be able to do more than you have requested. Will get back to you with written confirmation tomorrow AM. Keep up the good work.

Paul

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Kuster, Thomas, CIV, OSD-POLICY  
**Sent:** Friday, September 02, 2005 5:22 AM  
**To:** McHale, Paul, HON, OSD-POLICY  
**Cc:** Verga, Pete, CIV, OSD-POLICY; Salesses, Robert, CIV, OSD-POLICY  
**Subject:** FW: D/ DHS to ASD HD concerns--NO Louis Armstrong IAP Security

Rich Rowe summary to ADM Keating of your discussion.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Rowe Rich MG USA USNORTHCOM J3 [mailto:Rich.Rowe@northcom.mil]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 01, 2005 11:33 PM  
**To:** TK Kuster (E-mail)  
**Subject:** FW: D/ DHS to ASD HD concerns--NO Louis Armstrong IAP Security

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working. rich

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Rowe Rich MG USA USNORTHCOM J3  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 01, 2005 8:19 PM  
**To:** Keating Timothy J ADM USN NORAD USNORTHCOM CC; Russel L. LTG CG Honore (russel.honore@us.army.mil)  
**Cc:** John A., MG, CMD GRP Yingling (john.yingling@us.army.mil); Hickey, James R., COL, CMDGRP; Sullivan Paul J Maj Gen USAF NORAD USNORTHCOM CS; Brooks Gene RDML USCG USNORTHCOM J3; 'Aylward, Peter M - NGB-J3 DO'; McConnell Bear SES-5 NORAD USNORTHCOM IC  
**Subject:** D/ DHS to ASD HD concerns--NO Louis Armstrong IAP Security

**Classification: FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

Sirs,

Good discussion with Mr Paul McHale.

1. Per his discussion earlier this evening with Mr Michael Jackson, the Deputy DHS, there is a significant concern with security at the New Orleans Louis Armstrong Airport. Concern is several hundred displaced people vic the airport to include a number of 'thugs' acting in gangs. TRANSCOM J3 folks have passed to me similar concern--using the number 600

plus--wandering gangs. I have passed this information to Col Pete Aylward at the NGB JOC and requested detail on action by LA National Guard to secure the airport. Pete is going to work to provide us with a 'troops to task' Military Police effort for the Airport tonight. Also, Pete will try to give us some greater granularity on the MP presence and other security associated with the Superdome, sports convention center, and other New Orleans assembly points for displaced persons.

=== I told Mr McHale that I would pass these concerns onto the JTF Commander and his staff who have been collaboratively working with the TAG and his team to assess and to operationalize security needs.

2. There is additionally a concern with criminal activities by gang types directed against critical infrastructure such as the NOLA area petro chemical facilities. Pete is going to work to lay out the CIP protection effort and identify current and future activities. Concurrently, I suggested that our NC J34 along with IC work with DHS to determine the DHS assessment of CIP for New Orleans, LA and MS.

Mr McHale conveyed to me his appreciation and admiration for the efforts of our DoD personnel--in the Joint Task Force, our National Guard, and NORTHCOM. He believes that the right strong efforts are underway with more capabilities flowing. He used the examples of the Naval deployments underway as well as the deployment of \*\*\*1400 Military Police per day over four days into New Orleans--by comparison the City of New Orleans Police Department is 1500 officers strong--we are deploying the equivalent each day for the next four days.\*\*\* Finally, Mr McHale emphasized the value of the public affairs effort to inform the citizens and to let them see Soldiers with MP armbands executing the necessary security missions.

When I spoke to Pete Aylward, he asked us to help press for a common operational map / picture to show the areas under water. We will work with our interagency folks to have NGA provide this product. Pete suggests that if we can 'provide the map by zip code' -- the product will be of value for operational planning and execution--but perhaps even more significantly to the effort to inform Soldiers who are deployed or committed to our Nation's efforts in OIF, OEF, or hurricane relief the status of their homes and family.

vr  
Rich