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TRACKING THE STORM AT THE NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER

JOINT HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

JULY 19, 2007

Serial No. 110–47

Printed for the use of the Committee on Science and Technology

Available via the World Wide Web: http://www.science.house.gov

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

36–736PS WASHINGTON : 2008

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
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TRACKING THE STORM AT THE NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2008

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT, AND
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittees met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 2318 of the Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Nick Lampson [Chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy and Environment] presiding.

BART GORDON, TENNESSEE
CHAIRMAN

RALPH M. HALL, TEXAS
RANKING MEMBER

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THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT &
THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT

JOINT HEARING ON

TRACKING THE STORM AT THE NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER

July 19, 2007
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
2318 Rayburn House Office Building

WITNESS LIST

PANEL I
Mr. Bill Proenza
Director, National Hurricane Center

PANEL II
Dr. Robert M. Atlas
Director, Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory

Mr. Don McKinnon
Director, Jones County Emergency Management Agency

Mr. Robie Robinson
Director, Dallas County Office of Security and Emergency Management

PANEL III
Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher
Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
NOAA Administrator

Dr. James Turner
Deputy Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology

HEARING CHARTER

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
AND
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tracking the Storm at the National Hurricane Center

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2007
10:00 A.M.—12:00 P.M.
2318 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

Purpose

The Subcommittee on Energy and Environment and the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight will meet on July 19, 2007, to evaluate recent events at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Tropical Prediction Center (TPC/NHC).

Upon the orders of NOAA's Administrator, Conrad Lautenbacher, an assessment team was formed to review the operations of the tropical prediction center. In response to the Assessment Team's preliminary reports, the Vice Admiral placed Center Director X. William (Bill) Proenza on administrative leave. NOAA Administrator Lautenbacher stated that ". . .current conditions at the TPC pose an obstacle to the Team's completion of its work, as well as the Team's concern that, as expressed by many of you, there currently exists a level of anxiety and disruption that threatens the TPC's ability to fulfill its mission to protect the American people. . .." This hearing will explore the process that culminated in Mr. Proenza's removal.

Witnesses

Panel I

1. **Mr. X. William Proenza,** Director, Tropical Prediction Center, National Hurricane Center, National Centers for Environmental Prediction, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, has been invited to discuss his service as Director of the Tropical Prediction Center/National Hurricane Center and his experiences during the recent events that led the NOAA Administrator to place him on leave.

Panel II

2. **Dr. Robert Atlas,** Director of the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Dr. Atlas's laboratory is part of the Hurricane Research Division, which works with the Tropical Prediction Center to improve tools and techniques in hurricane forecasting. He has been asked to focus on the use of QuikSCAT data in the forecasting process.
3. **Mr. Don McKinnon,** Director, Jones County (MS) Emergency Management Agency, will testify regarding services the National Weather Service (NWS) provides to emergency management offices. Mr. McKinnon dealt extensively with Mr. Proenza during his service as Director of the Weather Service Southern Region Office.
4. **Mr. Robie Robinson,** Director, Dallas County Office of Security and Emergency Management, is testifying on behalf of the Emergency Management Association of Texas regarding the service provided to the emergency management community in Texas by the National Weather Service (NWS) through the Southern Region Office during the period of Mr. Proenza's tenure as its Director.

Panel III

5. **Hon. Conrad Lautenbacher,** Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.), Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, has been asked to describe how he decided to dispatch an assessment team to the Tropical Prediction Center and, as a result of a preliminary report from that team, to place Mr. Proenza on leave. The team was directed to submit a report on the situation at the Center on Friday, July 20, 2007.
6. **Dr. James Turner,** Deputy Director of National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), led the Assessment Team at the request of Admiral Lautenbacher and will testify on the assessment and the findings of the Assessment Team's report.

Background

The National Hurricane Center (NHC) is publicly known as the unit of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration responsible for tracking and forecasting of tropical storms and hurricanes. Organizationally, the Center is a branch of the Tropical Prediction Center (TPC) of the National Center for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) and Mr. Proenza's actual title is Director of the Tropical Prediction Center. The Center assists emergency management agencies in the coastal states by providing information on the development of storms, their likely track across the ocean and their probable point of landfall on the U.S. coast. With this information, State and local officials make decisions about whether to evacuate threatened areas.

Mr. Proenza became Director of the Tropical Prediction Center in January 2007, succeeding Max Mayfield. In his previous post as Director of the NWS Southern Regional Office, he managed some 1,000 employees from New Mexico to the Virgin Islands between 1998 and 2006. An employee of the Service for 35 years, he began at the National Hurricane Center as a flight meteorologist aboard the "hurricane hunter" aircraft that support Center operations. Among his awards during his service was recognition as Manager of the Year from the National Weather Service Employees' Organization.

On March 16, Mr. Proenza gave an interview to the Associated Press. That article described him seeking "hundreds of millions of dollars for expanded research and predictions." It then described his "immediate concern" to be the QuikSCAT satellite, specifically the age of the satellite, the lack of any replacement if it failed, and the potential cost and time needed to for replacement. He stated that QuikSCAT's failure would reduce the accuracy of their two-day predictions by 10 percent and 16 percent for three-day forecasts.

In a telephone interview with Committee staff, Mr. Proenza was asked how QuikSCAT had come to his attention. He responded that while he was visiting the Center to discuss transition issues in December 2006, he had been approached by Senior Hurricane Specialist Richard Knabb and Michael Brennan, who was affiliated with both the Center and the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research. Both had participated in a June 2006 Center workshop on requirements for ocean surface vector winds (which QuikSCAT measures). Mr. Proenza told staff he had read the report, and noted the statements there by both Mr. Knabb and Hugh Cobb, lead forecaster in the Center's Tropical Forecast and Analysis Branch about QuikSCAT's value. Proenza told Committee staff that he had discussed the workshop report with his managers in the Weather Service two days after assuming his job. Proenza also said that, while on the way to the AP interview, he had called Center Deputy Director (now Acting Director) Dr. Edward Rappaport and received the figures quoted in the interview.

In his presentation at the National Hurricane Conference in April, Mr. Proenza again expressed concern over QuikSCAT. His presentation chart called for "a next-generation QuikSCAT on an accelerated timetable (consistent with recommendation by the NRC Decadal Survey). Estimated cost: $375–400 million." He said that issues like this demonstrated that more funding needed to be devoted to improving hurricane research and forecasting. An article in the South Florida *Sun-Sentinel* quoted Senior Specialist Knabb at the same conference saying that the satellite had ". . .helped the National Hurricane Center [achieve] record accuracy in predicting the path of 10 systems."

On June 11, NOAA's Assistant Administrator for Program Planning and Integration, Mary Glackin, became acting Director of the National Weather Service after D.L. Johnson's retirement. On June 14, she visited with Mr. Proenza at his office in Miami and delivered a memorandum entitled "Operating Procedures/Instruc-

tions." The memorandum listed cases when "you [Mr. Proenza] may have disregarded the direct instructions of your supervisor. . . or have made decisions on your own which you had no authority to make." The memorandum also discussed Mr. Proenza's interactions with the news media. He was instructed to conform to the procedures in the new Department Order on "Public Communications" (which had only become effective in May), and was told that "your recent statements. . . may have caused some unnecessary confusion about NOAA's ability to accurately predict tropical storms," and commented about "unnecessary detrimental effects on our organization, for example: requiring me to spend a disproportionate amount of time to correct any confusion; causing undue concern and misunderstanding among your staff, and; taking valuable time away from your public role as the NOAA official responsible for instilling confidence in our tropical storm predictions. . .."

Staffs of the Science and Technology Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee met with Ms. Glackin and with Louis Uccellini, Director of the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (and Mr. Proenza's immediate supervisor) on July 12. Ms. Glackin stated that the memorandum was not intended as a reprimand. She stated it was prepared after she talked to Mr. Uccellini and came to believe Mr. Proenza was not following procedures. The items cited in the memorandum were drawn from incidents recorded by Mr. Uccellini: one case where Mr. Proenza signed a promotion form for an employee (Mr. Uccelini's responsibility, a second case was stopped before it completed processing) and a case where Mr. Proenza approved change-of-station expenses outside the procedure approved by the NOAA Corporate Board. Mr. Uccellini said that he had only learned about the incident where Mr. Proenza's change of name to "National Hurricane Center" set off warning alarms after the fact, and that the change occurred without necessary notification to Congress and a 60-day waiting period. At this meeting, Mr. Uccellini also characterized Mr. Proenza—whom he had worked with in the past—as a dedicated employee, with a reputation for going around channels and being disruptive. Ms. Glackin described Proenza as receptive and cooperative, but she notes that the memo was in the press by the next day and she believes that Mr. Proenza must have leaked his own "repremand" memo to the press—though there is no convincing proof of that.

"A couple of days" after delivering this memorandum to Mr. Proenza, Ms. Glackin says she received a call (at another point, she said she received an e-mail) from Ahsha Tribble, the Executive Officer (who came to the position just last September after serving as Technical Chief of Staff to James Mahoney—now retired, but she is seen also as being close to Admiral Lautenbacher and/or his staff) at the Center. Ms. Tribble apparently indicated there were a number of employees who wanted to bring their concerns to the attention of management. In a call with multiple employees arranged by Ms. Tribble, Ms. Glackin says the employees expressed discomfort with the work environment at the Center, felt that their opinions were being misrepresented, and that the Center would not be "cohesive" in a hurricane situation. Ms. Glackin said she raised these concerns "vigorously" with her superiors. It was sometime after this point that the "Operational Assessment Team" was formed at the direction of Admiral Lautenbacher. The team was headed by the Deputy Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, James Turner, and including John Guenther, an attorney from the Employment and Labor Law Division of the Department of Commerce Office of General Counsel. The charge to this group was issued on July 29, 2007—approximately 10 days after Ms. Glackin had received allegations from NHC staff.

On July 2, Mr. Proenza told Committee staff he received a call from Admiral Lautenbacher that the Team had been dispatched; they arrived at his office while the call was still in progress. It seemed apparent to him that others in the Center were already aware that the Team was coming. Mr. Proenza met with Turner, and an "all-hands" meeting with the Center staff followed.

On July 4, the Miami *Herald* reported that Senior Specialists Richard Knabb and James Franklin—along with a third, Richard Pasch—believed that Mr. Proenza had damaged public confidence in the Center and should be removed. Mr. Franklin was quoted as saying ". . .the hurricane specialists, by and large, do not agree with much of what he has done;" the article also stated that "shouting matches" had occurred between staffers supporting and opposing Mr. Proenza. On July 5, an e-mail was distributed to the Center staff inviting them to a meeting "to openly discuss recent events." At that meeting, attendees were invited to go to a second room in a campus building owned by Florida International University to view and sign the statement that was released to the media. It is also at this point that concerns are raised about the possibility that funds supporting aircraft flights would be reprogrammed to build a replacement QuikSCAT. As far as staff can determine, that pro-

posal had never been made by any Member and would be unlikely given the vast difference in the financial scope of the two programs.

Ms. Glackin told staff that a call was received on July 6 indicating that the Assessment Team felt Mr. Proenza's actions were inhibiting the ability of the Team to conduct their review. Admiral Lautenbacher discussed the situation with the Team. On July 7, Admiral Lautenbacher sent a memorandum to the Center staff indicating Mr. Proenza was placed on leave and named Mr. Rappaport as acting Director. Mr. Proenza received the letter informing him he was on leave until August 9 as he arrived at Miami airport July 9. He was also told that he should not go to the Center offices without permission from Mr. Uccellini and that he should not contact members of the Center staff.

A document request was sent to NOAA July 12 from Chairman Gordon, Chairman Lampson, and Chairman Miller of this committeee, and Chairman Dingell and Chairman Stupak of the Energy and Commerce Committeee, asking for records covering Ms. Glackin's June 14 memorandum and communications between various NOAA officials concerning Mr. Proenza.

At this point, a number of important questions remain:

- Why was Proenza chosen to be Director of the highest profiled Center at NOAA?
- Beyond the items listed in the Glackin memorandum—which NOAA stresses was not a reprimand document and was not placed in Mr. Proenza's personnel file—are there any other actions that better justify the action to place Proenza on leave?
- Why was there such a depth of dissatisfaction over Proenza's focus on a particular satellite?
- What is needed to properly equip the Tropical Prediction Center, and are those resources available at this time?
- Was the Tropical Prediction Center incapable of carrying out its core task of identifying, tracking and predicting hurricanes before the evaluation team was dispatched by Admiral Lautenbacher?

Chairman LAMPSON. The hearing will come to order. I wish you all a good morning. Welcome to today's hearing which we have entitled *"Tracking the Storm at the National Hurricane Center."*

We are here today to examine the situation that has developed over the past few weeks at the National Hurricane Center. Things may be relatively calm over the Atlantic but it has been somewhat stormy at the Center, and this is a situation that must be resolved so this organization can do its important work for the public, forecasting hurricanes and issuing warnings to the emergency management community and to the public. They have been an extremely important part of my life for many, many years that I have lived on the Gulf Coast of this country where we have had some fairly serious storms, as you all know.

Today we will hear from Mr. Bill Proenza, who was asked by Admiral Lautenbacher to become the Director of the Hurricane Center in December of last year. Mr. Proenza did not apply for this job or ask to be considered for the opening created by the retirement of Mr. Max Mayfield. Mr. Proenza was well known to the Southern Region and by his superiors at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) headquarters. He led the Southern Region Office of the National Weather Service for the past seven years, and due to that position served on the NOAA corporate board. By all accounts, he has a reputation for speaking his mind and occasionally ruffling feathers in an effort to change the way things are done inside the National Weather Service when he believed that it was in the public interest to do so. So NOAA leadership selected an experienced and dedicated NWS—National Weather Service—manager to be the new Director of the Hurricane Center. Now, before he had been in the position for even a single hurricane season, NOAA dispatched an assessment team to the Center. A number of employees at the Center have become upset enough to call for Mr. Proenza to step down and Admiral Lautenbacher has placed Mr. Proenza on temporary leave from the position he asked him to accept just seven months ago.

In the background, we have some other controversies. Shortly after his appointment to the Hurricane Center, Mr. Proenza drew attention to the fact that a satellite, QuikSCAT, that provides data used in forecasting, was beyond its design life and if it failed, forecasts could be degraded, and as I understand it, he wanted NOAA to prepare for this possibility and have a plan to replace it. His statements to the press about this issue clearly made NOAA headquarters uncomfortable, uncomfortable enough that Acting Director of the Weather Service, Mary Glackin, issued Mr. Proenza a memo on June 14 stating the belief that Mr. Proenza's statements were undermining confidence in the Center's forecasting abilities.

What is going on? That is all we would like to know. This is a hurricane season. The only storms the Center should be dealing with are those that form out in the ocean. I still don't fully understand why Admiral Lautenbacher believed that dispatching an assessment team with little experience or knowledge of the National Weather Service or forecasting to the Center was the appropriate way to deal with staff complaints about Mr. Proenza. It seems the arrival of the Assessment Team exacerbated problems with the staff and has left the National Hurricane Center without a director.

Is this the case of a disruptive renegade manager that has mistreated and alienated the staff at the National Hurricane Center and has put its forecasts and warning mission in jeopardy or has NOAA leadership helped to foster staff resentment of Mr. Proenza and used this resentment to justify removing a career employee who embarrassed NOAA's leadership by pointing out the shortcomings in the agency budgets and their failure to plan for future replacement of essential forecasting equipment? I don't know but we are going to try to figure it out and to figure out what has happened.

At a minimum, NOAA leadership has made at least two bad decisions. First, either Mr. Proenza was the wrong choice to lead the Hurricane Center in December or it was premature to send in an assessment team and remove him in July. The second bad decision was the Admiral's failure to inform me and two other Members of this committee that he met with on June 27 of the potential problems at the Hurricane Center or his plan to send an assessment team there on July 2. It is clear from the documents we received last night that Admiral Lautenbacher not only was aware of the problems but had already set the plans in motion to dispatch the Assessment Team to Miami.

We cannot afford any more bad decisions. It is hurricane season, and if we want to make it personal, I can. I live there, where we have been displaced multiple times from our homes, damage to our homes, fright to our children. The people at the Center need to work together to perform the essential task this nation needs: providing forecasts and warnings of hurricanes. The Center needs strong, competent leadership to serve the public. This is serious business and we need to straighten this out before we are in the midst of a real storm.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Lampson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN NICK LAMPSON

Good morning. We are here today to examine the situation that has developed over the past few weeks at the National Hurricane Center.

Things may be relatively calm over the Atlantic, but it has been stormy at the Center and this is a situation that must be resolved so this organization can do its important work for the public—forecasting hurricanes and issuing warnings to the emergency management community and the public.

Today, we will hear from Mr. Bill Proenza, who was asked by Admiral Lautenbacher to become the Director of the Hurricane Center in December of last year. Mr. Proenza did not apply for this job or ask to be considered for the opening created by the retirement of Mr. Max Mayfield.

Mr. Proenza was well-known to the Southern Region and by his superiors at NOAA Headquarters. He led the Southern Region Office of the National Weather Service (NWS) for the past seven years and, due to that position, served on the NOAA Corporate Board.

By all accounts he has a reputation for speaking his mind and, occasionally ruffling feathers in an effort to change the way things are done inside the NWS when he believed it was in the public interest to do so.

So, NOAA leadership selected an experienced and dedicated NWS manager to be the new Director of the Hurricane Center.

Now, before he has been in the position for a single hurricane season, NOAA has dispatched an assessment team to the Center, a number of employees at the Center have become upset enough to call for Mr. Proenza to step down, and Admiral Lautenbacher has placed Mr. Proenza on temporary leave from the position he asked him to accept just seven months ago.

In the background, we have some other controversies. Shortly after his appointment to the hurricane center, Mr. Proenza drew attention to the fact that a sat-

ellite—QuikSCAT—that provides data used in forecasting was beyond its design-life and, if it failed forecasts could be degraded.

As I understand it, he wanted NOAA to prepare for this possibility and have a plan to replace it. His statements to the press about this issue, clearly made NOAA Headquarters uncomfortable—uncomfortable enough that Acting Director of the Weather Service, Mary Glackin issued Mr. Proenza a memo on June 14 stating the belief that Mr. Proenza's statements were undermining confidence in Center's forecasting abilities.

What is going on? That's what we'd all like to know. This is hurricane season. The only storms the Center should be dealing with are those that form out in the ocean. I still do not fully understand why Admiral Lautenbacher believed that dispatching an assessment team with little experience or knowledge of NWS or forecasting to the Center was the appropriate way to deal with staff complaints about Mr. Proenza. It seems the arrival of the Assessment Team exacerbated problems with the staff, and has left the NHC without a Director.

Is this the case of a disruptive, renegade Manager that mistreated and alienated the staff of the National Hurricane Center and has put its forecast and warning mission in jeopardy? Or has NOAA leadership helped to foster staff resentment of Mr. Proenza and used this resentment to justify removing a career employee who embarrassed NOAA leadership by pointing out shortcomings in the Agency budgets and their failure to plan for future replacement of essential forecasting equipment?

I don't know, but we are going to try to figure out was has happened. At a minimum, NOAA leadership has made at least two bad decisions. First, either Mr. Proenza was the wrong choice to lead the Hurricane Center in December or, it was premature to send in an assessment team and remove him in July. The second bad decision was the Admiral's failure to inform me and two other Members of this committee he met with on June 27 of potential problems at the Hurricane Center or his plan to send an assessment team there on July 2.

It is clear from the documents we received last night, Admiral Lautenbacher not only was aware of the problems, but had already set the plans in motion to dispatch the Assessment Team to Miami.

We cannot afford any more bad decisions. It's hurricane season. The people at the Center need to work together to perform the essential task this nation needs—providing forecasts and warnings of hurricanes. The Center needs strong, competent leadership to serve the public. This is serious business and we need to straighten this out before we are in the midst of a real storm.

Chairman LAMPSON. I will call on the Chairman of our Oversight Subcommittee, the distinguished Mr. Miller.

Chairman MILLER. I thank Chairman Lampson. I also don't know what is going on here but I would like to know and I think it merits a closer look by these two subcommittees and by Congress, and I agree with Mr. Lampson that the work of TPC, the Tropical Prediction Center, is important to a lot of Americans, important to Mr. Lampson in his district. It is important to me in North Carolina. In the last 11 years, North Carolina has been badly damaged by a number of storms, particularly Floyd and Fran have done a great deal of damage, and it is important that we have the best forecasting of those storms that we possibly can so that we can be prepared to minimize the damage.

On first impression of what has happened at the Tropical Prediction Center, the TPC, sounds like office politics, particularly bad office politics, particularly vicious office politics, but office politics, something that happens every day all across America. There are disgruntled employees who are having trouble adjusting to a new manager, not getting along with the new manager. There is a new manager or new director who is trying to adjust to a new set of employees, to a new chain of command, but on closer look there are certainly parts of this that don't appear to add up, facts that don't quite add up, something doesn't seem quite right and it certainly merits a closer look by Congress to see if it is just particularly toxic office politics or something that should concern us more than that.

We know that Mr. Proenza, Bill Proenza, before being named Director of the Tropical Prediction Center, the TPC, in Miami had been a strong, well-regarded leader through seven years as head of the National Weather Service in the Southern Region. By all reports, Mr. Proenza had a strong relationship with the Weather Service union. He was seen by line employees as one of their staunchest advocates, staunchest supporters. The contrast to the apparently toxic relationship to the employees at TPC could not be stronger, could not be more striking. We would assume that if Admiral Lautenbacher was convinced that Mr. Proenza would be the right replacement for Max Mayfield, he must have thought that Mr. Proenza was a competent leader and manager. He would not have called Mr. Proenza to ask him to take that position if he did not think that. It doesn't make sense. That is why we are here today trying to understand why an apparently proven leader with a known track record has come to find himself in such grave trouble with his own employees and his own managers.

But once you look past the apparently spontaneous rebellion by employees at the lab at the TPC and look at what has happened at the management level above Mr. Proenza in the chain of command, not below him, there are further questions about what the real reason is for what has gone wrong. The question becomes whether Mr. Proenza was pushed out or is being pushed out because he was a critic within NOAA, not because of his difficulties in dealing with his employees. Is it because he is a whistleblower, because he was willing to stand up to the people who are higher than him in the hierarchy, not because of his relationship with the people below him in the hierarchy?

Mr. Proenza called attention to the failure of NOAA to take aggressive steps to find a replacement for QuikSCAT. I don't claim to know all the technical details of QuikSCAT and that is something that Mr. Proenza has talked about again and again. Some have criticized his criticisms, his comments and the science for the basis for some of his observations, but Mr. Proenza, like all of us, has had to rely on staff for information, so if he is wrong about that, there is certainly blame to go around. It is not all his fault and it certainly is not his fault for raising those questions, questions that many within NOAA and the Weather Service are raising. And it is hard to argue that the degradation of QuikSCAT or one model matters more than another, well, all that misses the point that virtually everyone in the meteorological community, all the people who really do know what they are talking about when it comes to this agree that they do need QuikSCAT, so the loss of QuikSCAT is a real problem. The source for Mr. Proenza's information shows up in NOAA presentations to the National Research Council in April, in February's interagency strategic research plan for tropical cyclones produced by the Office of Federal Coordinator of Meteorology. To argue about the projected degradation or whether one model matters more than another just misses the point. He has called attention to the amount of money that NOAA has spent on celebrating its 200th anniversary, an amount that appears to be more than $4 million over fiscal year 2006–2007, this fiscal year, if you include the cost of employees working on the issue. He is opposed to Weather Service downsizing, which had been one of the

hallmarks of Mr. Johnson's tenure at the Weather Service, but for that he has earned the gratitude of Congress and of the employees' union. Not every manager welcomes a critic within the agency but Congress certainly does. It is certainly easier for us to do our job in oversight if we did not face a smooth wall of unanimity, of one opinion without variation, and Mr. Proenza has certainly been willing to be a critic and to raise questions that has helped us do our job.

So Chairman Lampson, I look forward to the questions. I look forward to finding out more about whether this is simply a case of office politics or it is the case of an agency not welcoming criticisms of Mr. Proenza.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Miller follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BRAD MILLER

On first impression, what's been unfolding at the Tropical Prediction Center (TPC), it sounds like office politics, something that happens every day at workplaces all across America. Certainly, there are disgruntled employees having difficulty adjusting to a new manager and a new Director trying to adjust to a new chain of command. But on a closer look, something just doesn't seem quite right, the facts don't quite add up.

We know that Bill Proenza, before being named Director of the Tropical Prediction Center (TPC) in Miami, had demonstrated that he was a strong, well-regarded leader throughout his seven years as head of the National Weather service Southern Region. We know that by all reports, Mr. Proenza had a strong relationship with the Weather Service union, and was seen by line-employees as one of their staunchest supporters.

We would assume, that if Admiral Lautenbacher was convinced that Mr. Proenza would be a superb replacement for the retiring Max Mayfield, he must have also thought that Mr. Proenza was a competent leader and manager.

What doesn't make sense is why we are here today, trying to understand why a proven leader with a known track-record has come to find himself in grave difficulties with his own employees and managers.

If you look past the apparently spontaneous rebellion by employees in the lab, and look past what has unfolded at the managerial level of NOAA, the question arises whether Mr. Proenza was pushed out because he was a whistle blower, a truth teller.

Mr. Proenza called attention to the failure of NOAA to take aggressive steps to find a replacement for QuikSCAT. That has come to be a major talking point for Mr. Proenza in recent months. Some have criticized his comments and the science underlying his observations. To these critics I would note that Mr. Proenza had been relying on staff for this information and so the blame, if there is any, should be spread widely. In addition, to argue about the projected degradation or whether one model matters more than another misses the point that virtually everyone in the meteorological community agrees they need QuikSCAT. Finally, the source for Mr. Proenza's information shows up in NOAA presentations to the National Research Council in April and in February's "Interagency Strategic Research Plan for Tropical Cyclones" produced by the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorology. To argue about the projected degradation or whether one model matters more than another misses the point.

He also called attention to the amount of money being spent by NOAA to celebrate its 200th Anniversary—an amount that appears to exceed $4 million over FY 2006–2007 if one includes the costs of employees working on the issue.

Finally, Mr. Proenza opposed the weather service "down-sizing" efforts that had been the hallmark of Mr. Johnson's tenure at the National Weather Service. For that he earned the gratitude of many in Congress and in the Union.

Not every manager would welcome Mr. Proenza's willingness to speak out. Some would see him as an annoyance. In addition to the possible motive of silencing an internal critic, the actions of the NOAA management suggest that something isn't right here, that this isn't about Mr. Proenza's deficiencies as a manager. The chronology of events just doesn't fit.

- By the spring of 2007, Louis Uccellini, Proenza's immediate supervisor and head of the NECP, began keeping a file on Mr. Proenza containing apparently

minor administrative violations by Proenza. It should be noted that while Mr. Uccellini was Mr. Proenza's superior, he was Mr. Proenza's junior in the weather service and he and Mr. Proenza had been essentially of equal rank when Proenza was head of the Southern Region of NWS.

- In April of 2007, senior staff at NOAA met at the Admiral Lautenbacher's direction to work on something labeled in an e-mail as the "Proenza plan." This plan was to have five steps and be run by legal for review. . . It was shared with D.L. Johnson, then head of the National Weather Service and Jack Kelly, Deputy Under Secretary at NOAA.
- On June 14, three days after being named as Acting Director of the Weather Service, Ms. Mary Glacken approved a memo that listed Mr. Proenza's minor administrative violations that Mr. Uccellini had collected and urged Mr. Proenza to work through the chain of command and adhere more strenuously to new NOAA media policy.
- On June 21 or 22, TPC senior forecasters—going against the chain of command—complained to Ms. Glacken about Bill Proenza's leadership. The call was organized by the Executive Officer in the Center, Dr. Ahsha Tribble, who was seen by many at the TPC to be a "headquarters person." Dr. Tribble had arrived at the Hurricane Center just last September after working as Technical Chief of Staff to the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.
- By June 26, Admiral Lautenbacher assembled a team to be dispatched from Commerce to the Center to evaluate its operations. The team did not include any management or weather experts. Rather than turn to outside parties with expertise in the relevant areas—administration (National Association of Public Administration) or meteorology (National Academy of Science)—the Admiral selected people from within Commerce who had no background in weather service forecast office issues and little expertise in the science. The team's preparation included meeting with the senior management figures who had played a role in preparing Mr. Proenza's June memo and in launching the "Proenza plan."
- On July 2, the Team arrived on site. Mr. Proenza learned that this team was being sent by a telephone call from the Admiral that was designed to be timed with their arrival. While Mr. Proenza was unaware that a team was being dispatched to the Center of which he was Director, other people at the center knew of their pending arrival. Ahsha Tribble, apparently was assigned to greet the Team and take them to Proenza's office.

I hope that our witnesses today can explain some of this. I look forward to hearing Mr. Proenza's side of the story. I look forward to hearing from Admiral Lautenbacher on his management of NOAA and of the TPC.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you, Chairman Miller.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Inglis, Ranking Member of the Energy and Environment Subcommittee, for an opening statement.

Mr. INGLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Great nations have governments that ask questions of themselves so we are here to ask some questions. The loyal opposition to the Administration, that would be my colleagues to my left, naturally smell rats from time to time and it could be that there is a rat. The two Chairmen have just spoken about how perhaps this is a critic who is being silenced. I think the evidence may show here today that it is equally plausible that what we have here is a mismatched manager and a personnel matter and nothing more. So we have a hearing. Great nations have governments that ask questions of themselves and we are here to ask questions, and we have heard some speculation about some real rats out there. It may be a fairly straightforward personnel matter. It appears that the Administration put a highly recommended and well-qualified director into the office of the hurricane director and thereafter about half of the staff at that Center signed a letter asking that Mr. Proenza to be removed. Perhaps they are acting on some personal

vendetta, that may be shown here today, or perhaps they just didn't like his management style. In any event, the administrator clearly did the right thing by appointing an independent panel to investigate the situation. That panel was chaired by Dr. Jim Turner, who will testify here today.

Chairman Lampson mentioned that this fellow may not have expertise in hurricane forecasting, and I would ask, if you think it is a management matter, why would you care if the fellow had expertise in hurricanes? The question is management if it is a personnel matter in which case you could hire a consulting firm to go and ask questions. It happens all the time. Consultants don't necessarily know how to make a chemical product in a chemical factory. They don't have to. They are asking management questions and so if that is what it was, it is pretty clear that it is appropriate to form a panel and go ask management-related questions.

We can agree that Mr. Proenza has a distinguished resume and a history of positive performance reviews. Because of his success as Southern Regional Director of the National Weather Service he appeared qualified for the NHC Director position. In his new role, he became concerned about the potential loss of the QuikSCAT satellite. Some, as I understand it, would agree with Mr. Proenza that QuikSCAT helps forecasters better understand the behavior of tropical storms. Others would assert that Mr. Proenza exaggerated the impacts of the potential loss of the QuikSCAT.

Mr. Proenza's management style will be discussed here today. Surely we need a steady and reliable hand at the wheel of the National Hurricane Center. With the peak of hurricane season fast approaching, Admiral Lautenbacher was told that Mr. Proenza had become so disruptive that forecasters were saying they could no longer do their jobs. We will hear today that Mr. Proenza's management style became such an issue that his immediate supervisors lost confidence, his employees lost confidence and the independent operational Assessment Team lost confidence in his ability to manage the Center. We will hear that Admiral Lautenbacher decided that Mr. Proenza, as qualified as he had been at the outset, was perhaps miscast as a director of the Center. I hope my colleagues in the press will stay around to hear the testimony of Admiral Lautenbacher and Dr. Turner to hear, as Paul Harvey says, the rest of the story. Although it seems odd not to accord a senior Administration official the courtesy of testifying at the outset of this hearing today, and the Chairman and I have had discussions about that, I trust that we will all wait to form conclusions until all the witnesses have testified.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Inglis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE BOB INGLIS

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

For my home State of South Carolina and many others in coastal areas, the National Hurricane Center (NHC) is a critical national resource. The lives of individuals and families depend on the information the Center provides. Given the NHC's importance for protecting our citizens, we should carefully protect the integrity of the National Hurricane Center.

We may find that we are here today discussing a fairly straightforward personnel matter. It appears that the Administration put a highly recommended and well qualified director into the office of Hurricane Director. Thereafter, about half of the

staff at the Hurricane Center signed a letter asking that Mr. Proenza be removed. Perhaps they were acting on some personal vendetta. Perhaps they just didn't like his management style.

In any event, the Administrator did the right thing by appointing an independent panel to investigate the situation. That panel was chaired by Dr. Jim Turner, who will testify here today.

We can agree that the Mr. Proenza has a distinguished resume and a history of positive performance reviews. Because of his success as Southern Regional Director of the National Weather Service, he appeared qualified for the NHC Director position. In his new role, he became concerned about the potential loss of the QuikSCAT satellite. Some would agree with Mr. Proenza that QuikSCAT helps forecasters better understand the behavior of tropical storms; others would assert that Mr. Proenza exaggerated the impacts of a potential loss of QuikSCAT.

Mr. Proenza's management style will be discussed here today. We need a steady and reliable hand at the wheel at the National Hurricane Center. With the peak of hurricane season fast approaching, Admiral Lautenbacher was told that Mr. Proenza had become so disruptive that forecasters were saying they could no longer do their jobs.

We will hear today that Mr. Proenza's management style became such an issue that:

- his immediate supervisors lost confidence,
- his employees lost confidence,
- and the independent operational Assessment Team lost confidence in his ability to manage the Center.

We will hear that Admiral Lautenbacher decided that Mr. Proenza, as qualified as he had been at the outset, was miscast as the Director of the Center.

I hope that my colleagues and the press stay around to hear the testimony of Admiral Lautenbacher and Dr. Turner. Although it seems odd to not accord a senior Administration official the courtesy of testifying at the outset of this hearing today, I trust that we will all wait to form conclusions until all of the witnesses have testified. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you, Mr. Inglis, and the Chair will now recognize Mr. Sensenbrenner, the Ranking Member on the Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee, for an opening statement.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In December of 2006, Mr. Bill Proenza was announced as the Director of the Tropical Prediction Center. In July of 2007, after his superiors, employees and an independent assessment team questioned his management of the TPC, the administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration placed Mr. Proenza on temporary leave pending the final recommendation of an assessment team. The independent Assessment Team unequivocally found that the TPC could not operate effectively under Mr. Proenza's leadership. Our country is in the middle of a hurricane season. After Hurricane Katrina, everyone is aware of how dangerous this season can be.

The Tropical Prediction Center compiles data about ocean temperature, wind speed and direction, barometric pressure and other factors and uses this data to forecast hurricanes. When a storm is within three days of a potential landfall, the TPC issues official forecasts and warnings every six hours. As the storm gets closer to land, the forecasts are updated even more frequently. Lives depend on the work at the TPC.

Last month in the midst of an investigation of NASA's Inspector General, I warned that we risk creating a culture of overzealous oversight. I reiterate that point today. There is a fine line between good oversight and harmful interference. Playing politics with hurricane forecasters endangers the lives of people the TPC works to

protect. Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, replaced Mr. Proenza because he was an ineffective director. In the spring of this year, Mr. Proenza made several exaggerated and inaccurate public statements complaining about a lack of resources and funding at the TPC, the potential failure of one of the TPC satellites and NOAA's use of funds for the 200th anniversary celebration of the Coastal Survey. In an independent assessment of the TPC performed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, reviewers observed that Mr. Proenza made statements about the limited lifetime of the QuikSCAT satellite and the resulting impact on forecasts "without context or caveat." The reviewers further reported that many staff believe that Mr. Proenza intentionally misrepresented their views and repeated certain false claims even after he was corrected. On June 18, Mary Glackin, the Acting Director of the National Weather Service, received phone calls from 11 employees of the TPC including seven out of the nine hurricane forecasters raising concerns about Mr. Proenza's leadership. The employees complained that Mr. Proenza interfered with their ability to do their jobs. On June 19, Ms. Glackin communicated her fears to Admiral Lautenbacher. The Admiral then sent an independent assessment team to report on the situation. Meanwhile, staff discontent was increasing. Three senior forecasters called for Mr. Proenza's removal and nearly half of the 46 staff members at the TPC signed a petition demanding his removal because according to the Center staff, the effective functioning of the Center was at stake with Mr. Proenza as its director. On July 6, the Assessment Team requested that Mr. Proenza be placed on leave because he was jeopardizing the Center's ability to do its job. Three days later, Admiral Lautenbacher informed Mr. Proenza that he was being placed on leave.

Upon completion of its report, the independent team's recommendation was unequivocal: "The current TPC director should be reassigned and not allowed to return to his position at the Center. This should be done due to his failure to demonstrate leadership within the TPC." Such substantial questions were raised about Mr. Proenza that a failure to replace him would have been irresponsible. During this subcommittee's investigation of NASA's Inspector General, the Majority continuously objected to having an inspector general in place who did not have the confidence of his staff. In the present situation, employees have made similar complaints and raised the same concerns about Mr. Proenza's leadership. I have no doubt that if Mr. Proenza was still serving as the Director of the TPC, this subcommittee would be waving the employee petition in front of Admiral Lautenbacher demanding that he take action. Mr. Proenza's name would have been added to the growing list of personnel decisions demanded of the Administration by Congress.

Instead, the Majority is questioning the veracity of the employee's complaints. In a July 12 letter to Admiral Lautenbacher, five Democratic Congressmen wrote that "It is alleged that staff was pressured to sign onto what became a well-publicized letter of complaint against Mr. Proenza." I have no idea who made this allegation. According to the *Orlando Sentinel,* staffers at the TPC angrily

objected to suggestions that some were pressured into signing the letter. The Center's Administrative Officer said "no one was pressured to sign that letter but they aren't calling the people who signed it to find it. Why not? I smell politics at work here." Conspicuously, none of the employees who worked under Mr. Proenza at the TPC are here to testify today. Instead, the Majority invited two Emergency Management officials who worked with him when he served in his former position as Southern Regional Director for the Weather Service. No one has raised any issues about Mr. Proenza's effectiveness in that role. The complaints here have all been about his ability to lead the TPC. It appears that the Majority has held today's hearing and questioned the independence of the Center's staff without even talking to the staff that made the complaints.

Dr. James Turner is here to testify about the findings of the independent Assessment Team but he is here because he was invited by the Republicans. The Majority was prepared to hold a hearing investigating the replacement of Mr. Proenza without inviting the independent assessors who reported on the management of the TPC or the TPC employees whose recommendations and complaint lead to Dr. Proenza's replacement. No wonder the Center's administrative officers smelled politics.

None of us are strangers to politics but to disregard our country's readiness to obtain a political advantage extends beyond recklessness. I am disappointed that I have to state what should be the obvious, that unwarranted interference with the operation of the small hurricane center at its most critical time can only cause more harm than good. The Tropical Prediction Center should be allowed to focus on the hurricane season instead of being forced to weather this Congressional storm.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sensenbrenner follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.

In December, 2006, Mr. Bill Proenza was announced as the Director of the Tropical Prediction Center (TPC). In July 2007, after his superiors, employees, and an independent assessment team questioned his management of the TPC, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) placed Mr. Proenza on temporary leave pending the final recommendation of the Assessment Team. The independent Assessment Team unequivocally found that the TPC could not operate effectively under Mr. Proenza's leadership.

The United States is in the middle of hurricane season. After Hurricane Katrina, everyone is aware how dangerous this season can be. The Tropical Prediction Center (TPC) compiles data about ocean temperature, wind speed and direction, barometric pressure, and other factors, and uses this data to forecast hurricanes. When a storm is within three days of potential landfall, the TPC issues official forecasts and warnings every six hours. As a storm gets closer to land, the forecasts are updated even more frequently. Lives depend on the work at the TPC.

Last month, in the midst of an investigation of NASA's Inspector General, I warned that we risked creating a culture of overzealous oversight. I reiterate that point today: There is a fine line between good oversight and harmful interference. Playing politics with hurricane forecasters endangers the lives of the people the TPC works to protect.

Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, replaced Mr. Proenza because he was an ineffective director. In the spring of this year, Mr. Proenza made several exaggerated and inaccurate public statements complaining about a lack of resources and funding at the TPC, the potential failure of one of the TPC's satellites, and NOAA's use of funds for the 200th Anniversary celebration of the coastal survey. In an independent assessment of the

TPC performed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), reviewers observed that Mr. Proenza made statements about the limited lifetime of the QuikSCAT satellite and the resulting impact on forecasts "without context or caveat." The reviewers further reported that many staff believed that Mr. Proenza intentionally misrepresented their views and repeated certain false claims even after he was corrected.

On June 18, Mary Glackin, the Acting Director of the National Weather Service, received phone calls from 11 employees of the TPC, including seven out of the nine hurricane forecasters, raising concerns about Mr. Proenza's leadership. The employees complained that Mr. Proenza interfered with their ability to do their jobs. On June 19, Ms. Glackin communicated her fears to Admiral Lautenbacher. Admiral Lautenbacher then sent the independent Assessment Team from NIST to report on the situation.

Meanwhile, staff discontent was increasing. Three senior forecasters called for Mr. Proenza's removal and nearly half of the 46 staff members at the TPC signed a petition demanding his removal because, according to Center staff, the "effective functioning" of the Center was at stake with Mr. Proenza as its director. On July 6, the NIST Assessment Team requested that Mr. Proenza be placed on leave because he was jeopardizing the Center's ability to do its job. Three days later, Mr. Lautenbacher informed Mr. Proenza that he was being placed on leave.

Upon completion of its report, the independent team's recommendation was unequivocal:

> The current TPC director should be reassigned and not be allowed to return to his position at the center. This should be done due to his failure to demonstrate leadership within the TPC. . .

Such substantial questions were raised about Mr. Proenza, that a failure to replace him would have been irresponsible. During this subcommittee's investigation of NASA's Inspector General, the Majority continuously objected to leaving an inspector general in place who did not have the confidence of his staff. In the present situation, employees have made similar complaints and raised the same concerns about Mr. Proenza's leadership. I have no doubt that, if Mr. Proenza were still serving as the Director of the TPC, this subcommittee would be waiving the employee petition in front of Admiral Lautenbacher demanding that he take action. Mr. Proenza's name would have been added to the growing list of personnel decisions demanded of the Administration by Congress.

Instead, the Majority is questioning the veracity of the employees' complaints. In a July 12 letter to Admiral Lautenbacher, five Democratic Congressman wrote that "it is alleged that staff was pressured to sign on to what became a well-publicized letter of complaint" against Mr. Proenza. I have no idea who made this allegation. According to the *Orlando Sentinel,* staffers at the TPC "angrily objected to suggestions that some were 'pressured' into signing the letter."

The Center's Administrative Officer said, "No one was pressured to sign that letter, but they aren't calling the people who signed it to find it. Why not? I smell politics at work here."

Conspicuously, none of the employers who worked under Mr. Proenza at the TPC are here to testify today. Instead, the Majority invited two emergency management officials who worked with Mr. Proenza when he served in his former position as the Southern Region Director for the National Weather Service. No one has raised any issues with Mr. Proenza's effectiveness in that role. The complaints have all been about his ability to lead the TPC. It appears that the Majority has held today's hearing and questioned the independence of the Center's staff without even talking to the staff that made those complaints.

Dr. James Turner is here to testify about the findings of the independent Assessment Team, but he is here because he was invited by the Minority. The Majority was prepared to hold a hearing "investigating" the replacement of Dr. Proenza without inviting the independent assessors who reported on management of the TPC or the TPC employees whose recommendations and complaints lead to Dr. Proenza's replacements. No wonder the Center's Administrative Officer smelled politics.

None of us are strangers to politics, but to disregard our country's readiness to obtain a political advantage extends beyond recklessness. I am disappointed that I have to state what should be obvious, that unwarranted interference with the operation of a small hurricane center at its most critical time can only cause more harm than good. The Tropical Prediction Center should be allowed to focus on the hurricane season instead of being forced to weather this Congressional storm.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you, Mr. Sensenbrenner. Just for the record, staff has talked both to signers and non-signers of the petition.

If there are Members who wish to submit additional opening statements for the record, your statements will be added to the record at this point.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Klein follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE RON KLEIN

I want to thank my good friend, the distinguished Chairman of this subcommittee, along with the Ranking Member for holding this hearing and allowing me to participate. I can think of only a handful of issues as important as keeping the American public safe from hurricanes and other deadly storms. It's a fundamental duty of the Federal Government that I and all Americans take very seriously. That's why I have taken a high level of interest in the health of our weather satellites, and in particular, the Quick Scatterometer, otherwise known as QuikSCAT.

On June 5, 2006, NOAA convened a workshop with other federal agencies to assess, among other things, the impact of satellite surface wind speed and direction measurements. QuikSCAT, one of two weather satellites at the heart of the workshop's assessment, received several eye-catching quotes in support of its usefulness. Rick Knabb, senior hurricane specialist at the National Hurricane Center, said, "When QuikSCAT is gone, it will be like going back seven years in tropical cyclone analysis." He also added, "Losing QuikSCAT would be like losing a limb, especially for Tropical Analysis and Forecasting Branch."

I've heard similar comments during my many meetings with NOAA officials, including from General David Johnson, former Director of the National Weather Service. And during my recent visit to the National Hurricane Center, several forecasters independently verified to me the value of QuikSCAT's data when detecting and analyzing hurricanes and tropical storms. They showed me how the cone used to predict the path of a storm may be altered when QuikSCAT's data is incorporated, making the cone narrower and the timing of landfall more precise.

Now, in the midst of the controversy surrounding Mr. Proenza's dismissal as director of the Center, I'm hearing comments that essentially retreat from the earlier support of QuikSCAT. There are accusations that Mr. Proenza misrepresented or overstated the science when saying two-day and three-day forecasts would be adversely affected by the loss of QuikSCAT, and one senior forecaster at the Hurricane Center even compared the loss of QuikSCAT to "driving a BMW with cloth rather than leather seats."

This sudden retreat concerns me. While I recognize that there may be disputes over Mr. Proenza's management or administrative style, I am not in a position to evaluate his employment status. However, while I recognize that disagreements over scientific studies can occur among reasonable and reputable scientists, my fear is that this retreat may be born out in part by political motivations.

Such actions may have distracted us from legitimate inquiries into QuikSCAT along with NOAA's other weather satellites. Fortunately, this committee has taken its oversight responsibilities seriously and convened this hearing, inviting me to participate. I'm very grateful because from the very beginning of my interest in QuikSCAT, I've been asking two very simple questions to NOAA. How did we get to this point where a useful weather satellite is on its last legs with no replacement set to launch, and what are NOAA's short-term and long-term contingency plans to replace the loss of its data. I should add that we also now need to inquire whether the QuikSCAT retreat is legitimate and if this once-praised satellite has value. But if it does, I feel it is imperative that we find out what are the backup plans, when it fails, to replace the data and other information it provides in the evaluation of hurricanes and tropical storms.

I sincerely hope at the end of this hearing that I can leave and say that we have logical, supportable answers. But if I'm not satisfied, I intend to keep pressing to ensure that our forecasters have the best resources and technology available to help them keep the American public safe from hurricanes and other deadly storms. I look forward to the outcome and the responses of the distinguished panelists and Subcommittee Members, and thank the esteemed Chairman and Ranking Member for their leadership on this issue.

Chairman LAMPSON. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record selected materials that have been provided to the Sub-

committees by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Is there any objection? So ordered.

[The information follows:]

NOAA Proenza plan

Subject: NOAA Proenza plan
From: Dl.Johnson@noaa.gov
Date: Sat, 21 Apr 2007 05:50:00 -0600
To: Conrad.C.Lautenbacher@noaa.gov, John.Jones@noaa.gov, Scott.Rayder@noaa.gov, davenlizj@gmail.com

Admiral, met on Thursday afternoon with Scott Rayder, Eric Webster, Anson Franklin, and Eddie Kibas. We discussed your desire for 5 step process and also discussed Eddie's scenarios. I've taken that guidance a created a draft -- per Scott's guidence for weekend review. That draft was provided Friday to the meeting members. Eddie said he wanted to get legal to look it over. I'll be able to give you an update in Colorado. VR' DL

NOAA-A-000095

1 of 1

7/13/2007 11:40 AM

Subject: Re: Fwd: NOAA Proenza plan
From: Jack.Kelly@noaa.gov
Date: Sun, 22 Apr 2007 18:04:53 -0400
To: Dl.Johnson@noaa.gov
CC: Conrad.C.Lautenbacher@noaa.gov

DL,
Thanks and appreciate you are working memo to Bill. Message I passed to you last week contained the need to do more than the memo. To wit: ensure performance agreement in line with NOAA and DOC objectives (understand that a performance agreement has yet to be completed), complete Mid year review (believe start date in NHC job will impact date that can be done), have Bill take "ethics' refresher retraining, the memo and a plan in case none of the above result in changes. I suggest you advise the Boss when all steps are planned to be accomplished.

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Jack

----- Original Message -----
From: Dl.Johnson@noaa.gov
Date: Sunday, April 22, 2007 9:24 am
Subject: Fwd: NOAA Proenza plan

> -----Original Message-----
>
> From: dl.johnson@noaa.gov
> Subj: NOAA Proenza plan
> Date: Sat Apr 21, 2007 5:49 am
> Size: 436 bytes
> To:
> Conrad.C.Lautenbacher@noaa.gov;John.Jones@noaa.gov;Scott.Rayder@noaa.gov;davenlizj@gmail.com
>
> Admiral, met on Thursday afternoon with Scott Rayder, Eric Webster, Anson Franklin, and Eddie Ribas. We discussed your desire for 5 step process and also discussed Eddie's scenarios. I've taken that guidance a created a draft -- per Scott's guidence for weekend review. That draft was provided Friday to the meeting members. Eddie said he wanted to get legal to look it over. I'll be able to give you an update in Colorado. VR' DL

NOAA-A-000096

Subject: Re: Fwd: NOAA Proenza plan
From: Conrad C Lautenbacher <Conrad.C.Lautenbacher@noaa.gov>
Date: Mon, 23 Apr 2007 08:00:15 -0400
To: Dl.Johnson@noaa.gov
CC: Jack.Kelly@noaa.gov

DL,
We are behind in these actions; please step up the pace!
Many thanks!
Conrad

Jack.Kelly@noaa.gov wrote:

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NOAA-A-000097

Re: Fwd: NOAA Proenza plan

VADM Conrad Lautenbacher, Jr. <conrad.c.lautenbacher@noaa.gov>
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans & Atmosphere
US Department of Commerce/NOAA

NOAA-A-000098

2 of 2

7/13/2007 11:41 AM

Chairman LAMPSON. At this point to mention, and I will talk with Admiral Lautenbacher in just a few minutes regarding this, but we did ask two members of the NOAA management chain to be here this morning. We expected them to be. We were notified at around 9:00 that they would not be here.

At this point, I would ask unanimous consent to allow Representative Ron Klein to join us here on the dais and to be allowed to participate in this committee hearing. Is there objection?

Mr. INGLIS. Reserving the right to objection—hold on a second.

Chairman LAMPSON. Without objection, so ordered. Representative Klein, you are welcome to join us.

At this point I would like to introduce our first panel. Mr. William Proenza is the Director of the Tropical Prediction Center, the National Hurricane Center, National Centers for Environmental Prediction, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He will discuss his service as director of the Tropical Prediction Center, the National Hurricane Center, and his experiences during the recent events that led the NOAA administrator to place him on leave.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry. Is it not the practice of this committee to require witnesses to file their written testimony 24 hours in advance so that the Members and the staff of the Committee can review that testimony and draft appropriate questions?

Chairman LAMPSON. We did not ask for testimony, which I understand is common practice. With circumstances like this, we did ask for his biography and it was submitted.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. A further parliamentary inquiry. Has written testimony been submitted in a timely manner by all of the other witnesses on the other two panels?

Chairman LAMPSON. Yes. Written testimony of everyone has been submitted.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Further parliamentary inquiry. I am referring to the Committee rules governing procedure of the Committee on Science and Technology that says insofar as is practical, each witness who is to appear before the Committee shall file no later than 24 hours in advance of his or her appearance both a statement of the proposed testimony and a CV in printed copy and electronic form. Why was it not practical for Mr. Proenza to file his statement pursuant to the rules when it was practical for all of the other witnesses to do so?

Chairman LAMPSON. He submitted his bio, which is what we asked him for.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Further parliamentary inquiry. Then why did not the Chair ask for the proposed testimony, which is also required under the rules, since apparently all of the other witnesses were able to submit proposed testimony?

Chairman LAMPSON. I think there is a difference between the two types of information that was coming. I think that it is traditional when persons who could be considered whistleblowers are coming before a panel that they not be asked to submit written testimony.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Well, a further parliamentary inquiry. It is also traditional that Administration witnesses appear first on the first panel rather than being forced to wait around, and that was my practice when I was the Chair of the Committee and the Clinton Administration was in office. Why was not Admiral Lautenbacher given the same courtesy that tradition has allowed Administration witnesses for as long as I have been on this committee?

Chairman LAMPSON. I made the determination as the Chairman to the order that we would have our witnesses come. That is at the discretion of the Chair and that was the decision that I made.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. I would then ask unanimous consent pursuant to the tradition of this committee that Admiral Lautenbacher be allowed to testify first as an Administration witness.

Chairman LAMPSON. I object.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. I would further ask unanimous consent that Mr. Proenza be excused because he has not filed his testimony 24 hours in advance as all the other witnesses have.

Chairman LAMPSON. He is not required to be, and I might add also that even your own actions for the Committee that you chaired are different than what you are asking right now, Ranking Member. And at this point our witnesses should know.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. I would ask unanimous consent that Mr. Proenza be excused until he files the written testimony as all of the other witnesses have.

Chairman LAMPSON. We have heard enough and we will go forward with this witness, and as you know, the witnesses.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. I object.

Chairman LAMPSON. And we will go forward with this plan with our committee as planned.

And as our witnesses should know, spoken testimony is limited to five minutes each. It is also the practice of the Subcommittee to take testimony under oath. Do you have objections to being sworn in? You also have a right to be represented by counsel. Is anyone represented by counsel? Are you represented by counsel at this hearing? Please stand and raise your right hand.

[Witness sworn]

Panel I

STATEMENT OF MR. WILLIAM PROENZA, DIRECTOR, TROPICAL PREDICTION CENTER

Mr. PROENZA. Chairman Lampson, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Inglis, Ranking Member Sensenbrenner, Committee Members, thank you for inviting me here this morning.

Although for the position of National Hurricane Center I was not a candidate as was mentioned, I was really happy to accept as a lateral career movement in my senior executive service that reassignment. I fully felt the weight of this position and I dedicated myself to its mission, the mission which boils down to the highest calling in government, the protection of life. I took over on January 3 as my predecessor retired on the same day.

A quick background on me. I am a meteorologist. I started my National Weather Service career in the mid 1990s with two hurricane seasons at the National Hurricane Center and then another three seasons flying into the hurricanes with the Hurricane Hunters. However, a lot of my leadership experience was gained heading the Weather Services for one of the world's most severe weather active areas, the Southern Region, since actually January of 1998, an area that extends from New Mexico, includes Oklahoma and Texas eastward to include all of the Gulf states, Georgia, Florida, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and hydrologic services include South Carolina, North Carolina and into Virginia as well. This region has nearly 90 percent of the U.S. landfalling hurricanes. Our nation in an average year has an active enough hurricane threat in the Atlantic basin, no question about it, but since 1995 we have been in what we call a more active, multi-decadal in length, period in which hurricanes are especially major. During this active cycle, our nation's average annual losses jump from $4 billion per year to nearly $19 billion per year. Furthermore, our culture has our people liking to live near the coast. In fact, our census shows us that about 53 percent of the Nation's total population lives within the first 50 miles of the coastline, an important consideration as we face the challenges of the future for the Hurricane Center so we can easily see why building the preparedness of our nation, of our people, building our partnership with emergency management, local government officials and Homeland Security, local and State government and the media is so important to the National Weather Service and a major activity for me, especially before the normal season begins in June.

Another major concern during this preseason time for me that I have spent in this position was assessing our readiness to maintain our mission delivery to the American public, and while the National Hurricane Center has never been, has never been more ready for a season, we still had some potential problems. But already we have dealt with four tropical storms and dealt with them without any problem. One was what we called—one of the problems that we had and one of the potential problems, what we call the ocean sector surface vector winds which really is the wind field above the ocean that is so important for hurricane analysis. It is vital data that we get from the NASA satellite that was launched in 1999, QuikSCAT, with an estimated lifespan of three, sometimes

people will say five years, three to five years, but it is now in its eighth year, and it is on its backup transmitter. Two days after I entered the National Hurricane Center on January 5, my staff briefed NOAA Administrator Lautenbacher, NWS Director Johnson and my then new immediate supervisor, Director Uccellini, on this problem. A critical satellite on borrowed time and no plans, no plans to replace it. That presentation from January 5 stated how important this ocean surface wind field is from the everyday users of this particular service, and I have quotes such as, from the senior hurricane specialists that are on my staff now, "When QuikSCAT is gone," and I quote exactly, "It will be like going back seven years in tropical cyclone analysis." "Losing QuikSCAT will be like losing a limb, especially for tropical analysis and forecasting." The Navy says QuikSCAT plays a critical role in our analysis of short-term warnings and forecasts. That is the Joint Typhoon Warning Center in Pearl Harbor.

NHC has many facts that we look at, many sources of data but one thing is apparent to us all the time is that over the ocean we have a tremendous sparsity of data. We have some buoys, we have some satellites that look over the cloud features across the ocean, we have some ship reports, but when it comes to the sparsity of data, no single source of data adds more information to us for the analysis than QuikSCAT. The fact that this is a little known recent NOAA publication that came out officially stated very clearly seven years of QuikSCAT dependence and we don't have plans in our government to replace it with a new generation version. It will take five years to develop and send up a new generation of satellite but it will have great new benefits. But don't take my word for it. Dr. Robert Atlas is here this morning, an expert on QuikSCAT from his days at NASA and now one of our leading NOAA ocean and atmospheric research scientists. This is not about having a satellite version that we could call a Chevy or a Cadillac. It is about having one reliable latest science, what we call ocean surface vector wind satellite that will help us protect life in the oceans and on land.

Despite what I thought was a reasonable approach to QuikSCAT's advocacy, I have asked myself why all this resistance. The fact is, NOAA is one of the U.S. departments struggling right now with huge overruns, billions of dollars in its polar orbiting environmental satellite system and still nowhere in there, nowhere in their design is there a new generation listed QuikSCAT replacement until the year 2016. An oversight? We are all concerned about the protection of life of our people. Perhaps it was a way to cut costs, whatever. I dared to call attention to it. I dared to call attention to it, and by golly, I am going to pay the price for bringing this to the attention of the American people.

On another matter.

Chairman LAMPSON. Can you wrap up because your time?

Mr. PROENZA. Sure. Another matter, the $200,000 that was diverted for the Joint Hurricane Test Bed. It was used for one- to two-year projects translating science into operations. That was removed this year, and I simply pushed to have it restored when my deputy, my deputy in January said it would hurt the success of improving our hurricane monitoring and forecasting. In addition, I called attention to the fact that it was over $4 million in NOAA re-

sources for celebration of an alleged 200-year anniversary of NOAA when it was a bit of a stretch, since NOAA was formed in 1970. Most important, I didn't feel in my opinion that self-promotion was an acceptable way to use funds, especially when funds are tight. So I shared all of this early on with my chain of command, with my partners and later brought it to the attention of the country and I have been chastised, threatened, investigated, recommended for reassignment, discredited after more than 40 years of dedicated service to my country. The investigation was extraordinarily disruptive that came in to us that Monday and a surprise from Washington which triggered a frenzy of concern for mission delivery and employee careers. I am still the Center's Director. I need to go back to work. I am ready to repair bruised relationships wherever they may be with whatever mediators and things that we feel may be the best way to move forward. That is what we have to do in this year's hurricane season.

Mr. Chairman, thank you so much for these five minutes. I am at your Committee's disposal.

BIOGRAPHY FOR WILLIAM PROENZA

Bill Proenza is the Director of the National Hurricane Center (NHC) in Miami, part of the National Weather Service (NWS), an agency of the Department of Commerce bureau, NOAA.

A 1967 meteorology graduate of The Florida State University, Proenza served two hurricane seasons in '63 & '64 at NHC and then three hurricane seasons as an assistant flight meteorologist ('65–'67) on the "hurricane hunter" aircraft. He continued his career within the National Weather Service for more than 40 years receiving numerous performance commendations and awards, including recognition from the NWS Employees' Organization as the NWS Manager of the Year for 1998 for his collaborative leadership.

Proenza has held a diverse array of field and leadership positions and his meteorological experience ranges from leadership in the modernization of weather services as well as managing weather forecasting and severe weather warning services as well as climate services. He rose through the ranks of the NWS and held the position of Director of the most severe weather-active area of our nation, the Southern Region, encompassing one-fourth of the Nation from New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma eastward all the way to Florida and on across the Caribbean to include Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands from 1998 through the end of 2006 (acting in '98). Through his experience in the southern, north-central and eastern portions of the Nation, Bill has gained a unique familiarity with many types of weather from tropical to intense winter weather and severe local storms.

Proenza is a long standing member of the American Meteorological Society, the National Weather Association, the International Association of Emergency Managers and the National Emergency Management Association. In 2001, the American Meteorological Society (AMS) recognized him with its prestigious "Francis W. Reichelderfer Award" for outstanding environmental services to the Nation and in 2003, he was conferred the prestigious status of "Fellow of the AMS." Just recently in 2006, he was elected by his peers to the leadership board of the American Meteorological Society as a Counselor.

Proenza is an internationally recognized meteorologist and has represented the U.S. Government across the Caribbean Basin. In 2006 and 2007, he headed the United States Delegations to United Nations (UNESCO) meetings on tsunamis and the oceans. Proenza is also the chairman of the United Nation's World Meteorological Organization's Hurricane Committee, which supports 26 member nations in the hurricane threatened nations of the Americas.

DISCUSSION

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you, Mr. Proenza.

It is time now for our first round of questioning, and the Chair will recognize himself for five minutes.

NOAA ASSESSMENT TEAM

Mr. Proenza, when were you notified that NOAA was sending an assessment team to the Hurricane Center?

Mr. PROENZA. I received a call from Conrad Lautenbacher, an Administrator at NOAA, at 9:00 that Monday morning, then they showed up knocking at my door. I did not know before then.

Chairman LAMPSON. Was anyone else on your staff aware that the Team was arriving?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, sir. I talked to my deputy and I asked him if he knew anything about it. He said yes, he was instructed from Washington by Louis Uccellini that this team was coming down to the Hurricane Center but he was told not to tell me.

Chairman LAMPSON. Did anyone from NOAA come with the Team to the Center?

Mr. PROENZA. Two people from NOAA came. One was a senior executive service person from the satellite service of NOAA, another one was an administrative support person from NOAA, and then three people from the Department of Commerce.

MEDIA EXPOSURE

Chairman LAMPSON. We have the review team's report, and I want to ask you a few things about it that are in it. Page 3 of the report indicates that you asserted to the review team that you didn't want anyone going to the media about the assessment. Is that true?

Mr. PROENZA. That is correct. We were in the midst of the hurricane season. I wanted to have a minimal exposure to what was going on in the Hurricane Center.

Chairman LAMPSON. The report goes on to say, "Nevertheless, the next day he held media interviews on the forecast operations floor about the assessment while the hurricane specialists were performing their duties analyzing tropical activity." Is this true?

Mr. PROENZA. That is correct again. Essentially those interviews were set up by NOAA public affairs. A NOAA public affairs person came down with the Team in addition to our NOAA public affairs. They coordinated on all of my interviews for the day and I just simply conducted the interviews I was instructed to conduct.

Chairman LAMPSON. And you just answered my next question, did you arrange those interviews. And who arranged them? Would you tell me again?

Mr. PROENZA. The NOAA public affairs people there. There were two of them, a Dennis Feltgen, who is normally the NOAA public affairs person for the Hurricane Center, and the person that came down with the Team, Greg Romano, who is also a NOAA public affairs person.

Chairman LAMPSON. The way the report is written, it implies that you were being disingenuous with the assessment team, that although you told them you didn't want media attention on the assessment, you actually did want media present and that you arranged for the media to be at the Center. So you didn't want the media there and you did not arrange those interviews, correct?

Mr. PROENZA. That is correct, sir.

Chairman LAMPSON. I will turn to another example in the report. Again on page 3, it states, "One specialist reported that the Director disrupted his ability to track tropical storms. We had Barbara and Barry. He kept bringing the media over onto the operations floor to show QuikSCAT while I am trying to put out a forecast. It was hard to get the job done." Do you remember that incident?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, I do.

Chairman LAMPSON. Do you want to tell me a little more——

Mr. PROENZA. Certainly. It was a case where we had Barbara and we had Barry. I was on duty for both of those storms with the two hurricane specialists and we had examples where we could show that the sparsity of data that we were experiencing over the ocean where these storms were located, and what we could show was the QuikSCAT coming over and giving us the data that we needed. It was certainly momentary and it was always with the full knowledge of knowing what was going on at the time.

Chairman LAMPSON. You asked if the media could be brought over to——

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, sir.

Chairman LAMPSON.—see that and he agreed?

Mr. PROENZA. I asked if we could show them what was going on and how we were using analysis of QuikSCAT.

Chairman LAMPSON. And——

Mr. PROENZA. And they even demonstrated it themselves.

Chairman LAMPSON. And the response from him was?

Mr. PROENZA. "Yes, and I will demonstrate it," and it let them do the demonstration.

Chairman LAMPSON. Is it unusual for the media to be present on the operations floor of the Hurricane Center? I was of the impression that it is set up for media presence during storms. Am I wrong?

Mr. PROENZA. Off and on for special circumstances, I see it happening. I don't think it is that unusual but I don't have enough time there to say.

STAFF DISSATISFACTION

Chairman LAMPSON. You were the director for the Southern Region Office of the National Weather Service for seven years. During that time, did NOAA ever send an assessment team to the regional office?

Mr. PROENZA. No, sir.

Chairman LAMPSON. Prior to the arrival of this team, were you aware that members of the staff were dissatisfied with your management and leadership of the Center?

Mr. PROENZA. No, sir.

Chairman LAMPSON. Was there any resistance to change and concern about any public statements?

Mr. PROENZA. There was resistance to change as far as what we were trying to do. One of the objectives that we had as we entered the season and looked at the fact that we had growing challenges on the horizon for the Nation's hurricane warning program, I simply wanted to get the research community more attuned to the needs of what the operational community needed, and so we were working together with the NOAA side of the research group that

is there in Miami in the South Florida area and we had a great cooperation working and they objected to that.

Chairman LAMPSON. My time has expired. I will now recognize Chairman Miller. I am going to relinquish the chair to Mr. Miller for five minutes.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Proenza, how are you this morning?

Mr. PROENZA. Good. Thank you, sir.

Chairman MILLER. The last questions from Chairman Lampson that there was some resistance to change by various employees of the Center, did you think that there were any problems or differences between you and the staff that could not be worked out, that were so serious that they were beyond a solution?

Mr. PROENZA. No, not at all. It's just the normal course of events and how we implement change and we are doing it all the time in the scientific environment.

QUIKSCAT

Chairman MILLER. You talked a good deal about QuikSCAT. I would like to talk about that a little more. Did you ever advocate for cutting the funding for the hurricane aircraft to fund QuikSCAT?

Mr. PROENZA. Not at all.

Chairman MILLER. How are those two projects comparable?

Mr. PROENZA. First of all, the QuikSCAT project itself when it was asked what we wanted to do there, I said that indeed the NOAA requirements report asked for something to be started immediately or the replacement with a new generation of satellite. I said I concurred with that. I said also though I wanted to make sure that we had support for the aircraft and for the later model developments we were seeking for the Doppler radar we wanted for the Air Force, a whole slew of items that we feel are important for the future our capability protecting the people. But in addition to that, when they said well, which one do we have to start on, well, I said we need to start on the QuikSCAT because that is going to take five to six years to get it going to the point that we can have a possible launch and so I said that we needed to start immediately on that and so I emphasized that.

Chairman MILLER. Also, the funding level required for the hurricane planes versus the QuikSCAT satellite.

Mr. PROENZA. For the plane, it is about $50 million. For the satellite, it is $500 million.

Chairman MILLER. Some of the senior forecasters at the Center apparently believe that your comments about QuikSCAT were undermining public confidence in the Center's forecast ability. Why did you continue to talk about QuikSCAT and the failure to have a satellite ready replacement?

Mr. PROENZA. Because I had the scientific community, I had my own hurricane specialists telling me in their quotes how important QuikSCAT was to them and I certainly wanted to make sure that I advocated their positions operationally.

HURRICANE SEASON: 2007

Chairman MILLER. How well prepared are we for the current hurricane season?

Mr. PROENZA. We are absolutely as prepared as we have ever been. We have a new model on board. We are excited about that. We have had some graphic changes that we put into the web site. We have an option where the cone of uncertainty has been redefined by one of the hurricane specialists. We feel that that would be more accurate and we are also having a toggle where the user, whoever that may be, can actually take a little black line that Max used to say don't focus in on. They can take it off and put it back on. We are doing that and we have an experimental tropical weather outlook graphic that is going out that will show the user, the public, a better concept of where the active areas of disturbed weather are right now.

Chairman MILLER. Did you ever think that advocating for better equipment for future forecasting in any way undermined the forecasting or the confidence of the forecasts now?

Mr. PROENZA. No, absolutely not.

MORE ON QUIKSCAT

Chairman MILLER. Did anyone superior to you at NOAA, the Department of Commerce ever tell you to stop talking about QuikSCAT?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, sir.

Chairman MILLER. Who were they? And what did they say?

Mr. PROENZA. I had a call on Friday, April 13, and it was from my immediate supervisor, and the statements were, "You better stop these QuikSCAT NHC funding associated with the Joint Hurricane Test Bed complaints. I am warning you. You have NOAA, DOC, OMB, the White House"—excuse me—"pissed off."

Chairman MILLER. I am sorry. Was that an oral statement or an e-mail?

Mr. PROENZA. That was an oral statement and I just put it contemporaneously in my calendar.

Chairman MILLER. And you said your immediate superior. Was that Mr. Uccellini?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, sir.

Chairman MILLER. How about Mary Glackin? Did you ever hear from her?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes. She came on board in June, June 11, I believe. She came to visit us at the end of that week and she said in her time that she has been on board as the Acting Director of the National Weather Service, that she felt she was spending an inordinate amount of time handling QuikSCAT questions and wanted me to cease and desist.

INTEGRATING RESEARCH AT THE HURRICANE RESEARCH CENTER AND THE NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER

Chairman MILLER. I understand you advocate for more closely integrated research done at the Hurricane Research Division with the operational forecasting done at the Center, the National Hurricane Center. Have those organizations worked together histori-

cally? Why did you want them more closely linked? And was there any resistance to having a closer relationship between——

Mr. PROENZA. The resistance I was told about and advised about by my senior staff was that there had been a barrier, so to speak, between the two operations in the past and I said I understand but I felt that it was compelling upon all of us based on the challenges that those barriers were no longer to exist and we needed to bring together all of the resources that we had in NOAA into one operation that would challenge the researchers to meet the needs of the operational forecasters.

Chairman MILLER. And my time is also expired, Mr. Proenza. I think we would now turn to Mr. Inglis for five minutes.

Mr. INGLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

DIRECTOR PROENZA'S TENURE AT THE NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER

Mr. Proenza, this Administration was bitten badly by Katrina. The theory of the case for you brought forward by the majority is that you are being punished for being a critic. If this Administration, having been bitten by Katrina, were interested in not developing the best technology, it would be surprising to me. Is it surprising to you that the Administration, having been bitten by Katrina, would not want the very best technology and would see it as a crucial priority of this Administration?

Mr. PROENZA. Congressman, even if—if I can point to a publication from NOAA that looked at our requirements and said that we needed to do this, I can assure you, at the time that I brought the need for the QuikSCAT replacement with the new technology to my superiors, there was no plans to replace this particular satellite and only later this year did they mention that they would have something for us possibly by 2016.

Mr. INGLIS. The government is very good at reacting. That is what we do very well and so if this Administration is reacting to the stimulus, the very unfortunate stimulus of Katrina, doesn't it stand to reason that they would react and say whatever it takes, get it quickly?

Mr. PROENZA. I totally embrace that any way that I can work towards getting that a reality.

Mr. INGLIS. The thing is, that undermines your whole theory of this case. It undermines the Majority's theory of the case because their theory is, you are being punished for being a critic. You would be the hero for pointing out some better technology if the Administration had been so bitten, wouldn't it?

Mr. PROENZA. I am trying to point out that we need to work immediately to begin bringing the latest science and technology to the forefront and the design of a new instrument that would be able to replace QuikSCAT whenever it is possible.

Mr. INGLIS. Let me ask you this. Can you give me the names of three people at the Center who I could call who would say that you are a good leader?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes.

Mr. INGLIS. Will you give me their names?

Mr. PROENZA. Chris Landsea.

Mr. INGLIS. Let me get this down. Chris Landsea, L-a-n-c-e-y?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, L-a-n-d-s-e-a. You know, Congressman, just a moment. I don't want to put words or expectation in any employee of mine's mind and I want them to feel free to say whatever they want to say. I would just suggest that there are employees there that would feel that way. I just don't want to invade their privacy and say—and put words in their mouth that they——

Mr. INGLIS. I am just interested in talking with them to see who you think at the Center would say you are a good leader?

Mr. BAIRD. Would the gentleman yield for one moment, if I may?

Mr. PROENZA. Would I——

Mr. BAIRD. I am not asking the witness. I am asking my colleague to yield for just a moment.

Mr. INGLIS. I don't have enough time, I don't think.

Mr. BAIRD. Well, I understand that, but there are procedural legal issues that the gentleman may be treading upon here.

Mr. INGLIS. Am I yielding? I guess I was yielding, but I consumed some of the time. I suppose I can get the time back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Proenza, the third one.

Mr. PROENZA. I just feel awkward about, there are all sorts of people, sir, that I don't want to make them, invade their privacy by bringing their names up, and giving them the expectation that I feel——

Mr. INGLIS. Let me ask you this. Why do you think 23 people signed a letter saying you should be removed, 23 out of the 46. That is about half, isn't it?

Mr. PROENZA. Sir, I wasn't there when they held the meeting, and several people stood before the rest of the employees, and asked them to sign, and the reasons why, I didn't hear those argument. It would be hard for me to judge——

Mr. INGLIS. Let me ask you this. If you, even if you were certain that somebody said before them, I would be really concerned about signing such a letter, because I would be afraid that maybe you were going to get me after I signed the letter, so there is a real resistance to me signing the letter, right?

So, if I sign the letter, 23 people overcoming that natural resistance, again, it cuts against the theory of the majority here. The 23 had to overcome enormous resistance to sign the letter, to put their name to it. Now, I am asking you for three people that I can call, and ask who would say that you are a good leader.

Mr. PROENZA. I understand, sir.

Mr. INGLIS. And you wouldn't have any trouble coming up with three more names.

Mr. PROENZA. No, it isn't that at all.

Mr. INGLIS. And then, you are trying to stop me from calling them.

Mr. PROENZA. No, no. You, sir, you have whatever authorities you have to do whatever you want to do. I am just saying upon thinking of your question, with all respect, I just feel that it would be wrong of me to list names of some of the people that I supervise, or I am in the chain of command, and say that they are going to say something about me.

Mr. INGLIS. Yes, I understand. You said that before. And let me ask you this, because my time is running out. You have spoken

here a lot today about QuikSCAT, and you spoke about the importance of the work of the Center, but I notice you never spoke about the dedication of the people and their expertise. Would you describe yourself as a people person?

Mr. PROENZA. Sir, I said that the Hurricane Center has never been more ready than it is this year——

Mr. INGLIS. I understand, but you have never mentioned the people, and it seems to be a manager's crucial question here, if you take my theory of the case, this may just be a personnel matter, is that you would mention people if you were an effective manager, rather than simply technology, and it could be that you are on a hobbyhorse of a technology, and the people are being ignored, and perhaps, that is why the assessment team made the recommendation they made. Is that possible?

Mr. PROENZA. They are not being ignored. Absolutely not. And in fact, the assessment is based on our people, and I am a people person, and I have a thousand employees, just under a thousand employees in my previous responsibility. And also in the Center. I work with professionals, and even though they may have said what they have said, I have said also that they are all professionals, and I don't expect any of them to do their job at any lower performance level than they are capable of doing now. I really believe in that, and that is why I believe that the Center is in the best ever condition to deliver the mission to the American people this year.

Chairman MILLER. All right. We are well now past the five minutes, plus a very generous allowance for that interruption. Mr. Sensenbrenner for five minutes.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Proenza.

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, sir.

MORE ON MEDIA EXPOSURE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. On June 14, your supervisor, Mary Glackin, gave you a memo outlining procedures and expectations. Could you please tell us who else on your staff you gave this memo to?

Mr. PROENZA. I shared this memo with, first of all, I had a meeting with my staff, and I shared what was in the memo with them. I handed out a few copies of the memo at that time.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Did you release this memo to the press, or leak the memo to the press in any regard?

Mr. PROENZA. No, sir.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Then, fast forward to after the assessment team paid a visit to the National Hurricane Center. Did you ask your staff not to discuss the assessment team with the media, the assessment team and its investigation to the media?

Mr. PROENZA. I remember talking to the investigators, hoping that this could all be processed in a way that it would be low key, and not disruptive to the operations at the Center.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Later on, when the media came on one of their regular calls, did you bring the assessment team's presence and investigation up to them?

Mr. PROENZA. Not that I remember. I remember that all of the interviews that I had went through the NOAA public affairs people that were there, and that they, indeed, knew at that time that the

group was there, investigating. I don't know if they picked it up while they were there, or they knew before they got there. All I did was I conducted my interview and answered the questions.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Okay. Now, I have got the assessment team's report here, and about two-thirds of the way down, on page 3 of the report, it says: "Separately, the assessment team witnessed similar behavior. In the Team's initial meeting with the Director, he asserted he wanted the assessment to be least disruptive as possible to our operations, and to be low key. He told the Team he did not want anyone going to the media, otherwise, that will engage a lot of explanation on our part to them. Nevertheless, the next day, he held media interviews on the forecast operations floor about the assessment, while the hurricane specialists were performing their duties, analyzing tropical activity." This is a report of the assessment team. It is at variance with the testimony that you just gave under oath. Which is correct?

Mr. PROENZA. My testimony is correct. When they came in, and they were interviewing me, that is when those questions came up. I simply answered those questions. The interviews were set up where they normally are set up, at the briefing desk, and I conducted and answered accordingly. I did not set up those interviews. Those interviews were set up by the NOAA public affairs people. Is the question, sir——

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. The reason the interviews were set up by the NOAA public affairs people, was that relating to the activities of the assessment team, or was that relating to the normal operations of the Hurricane Forecasting Center?

Mr. PROENZA. The person that came down with the Team, Greg Romano, was especially for the purposes of monitoring the assessment team's impact on the office, and whatever went on between NOAA public affairs, the two people, it was coordinated among themselves, and I was strictly just brought out to the floor to answer them.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Okay. Then, are you saying that Dr. Turner's report, that I just quoted, is inaccurate, where he said that you were holding media interviews on the forecast operations floor about the assessment, while the hurricane specialists were performing their duties analyzing tropical activity?

Mr. PROENZA. If I was on the forecast floor, it was the desk that I conduct my briefings from, and should questions have come up in the media about the assessment team, I would have answered them at that time, but I did not in any way invite those questions. They were set up——

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Did it ever occur to you that the word no comment, words no comment might have been a more appropriate response?

Mr. PROENZA. It did not, because I was answering honestly.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Okay. Well, all I can say is, is that you know, this is a personnel problem, which in my opinion, should have been handled internally, rather than being tried in the newspapers, and ended up being elevated to a Congressional hearing. I don't think it is our job as Congresspeople to deal with personnel problems.

Mr. Proenza, you have got a problem down there that half your employees say they don't have any confidence in you, and if the NOAA management, and particularly, the NOAA Administrator, didn't deal with the fact that you had an employee revolt on your hands, for whatever reason it was, I think that they could have been justifiably accused of being negligent, you know, to a ticking time bomb that apparently has gone off.

Thank you.

Chairman MILLER. Thank you. Ms. Johnson for five minutes. Diaz-Balart for five minutes.

MORE ON DIRECTOR PROENZA'S TENURE AT THE NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good to see you, Mr. Proenza. As many of you know, I represent and live in the area where the Hurricane Center is located, and I have actually gone to—I know Mr. Proenza, and frankly, he is a very likable guy. I have gotten to like him, but I do have some questions that I think need to be answered.

Mr. Proenza, when you joined the Hurricane Center, and you said in a lateral position, so it is not like you did it for the money, I imagine one of the reasons you did it is because, frankly, as people were saying here, because of the great job that the people in the Hurricane Center do, and also, the important responsibility that they have.

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, sir.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. And obviously, you follow a group of very distinguished professionals. Max Mayfield, you mentioned, Jerry Jarrell, Bob Sheets, Neil Frank. Some of the people that are in the Hurricane Center worked with a lot of these people before.

I think we would all agree, everybody here on the dais and you, that the people that work in the Hurricane Center like you, have a very distinguished track record. I am a little worried, however, when you answered a question from the Chairman, I believe, and he asked you, and I am paraphrasing, but did you know that the people that worked with you in the Hurricane Center had a problem, and you, in essence, said I didn't think there was a problem with the staff. And then, subsequent to that, half of the staff publicly writes a letter with some pretty strong statements. If I may quote: "The Center needs a new Director, and with the heart of the hurricane season fast approaching, urges the Department of Commerce to make this happen as quickly as possible."

How is it possible to have almost half of the people, including your secretary, senior hurricane specialists, people that have an incredible track record, how is it possible that you would not know that they had a problem, if they got to the point of, shortly afterwards, going out and writing a letter, not just saying they have got issues, but asking for you to be removed? Is that, were you disconnected entirely with your staff?

Mr. PROENZA. Congressman, there is always a few that may resist some changes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. This is half of them.

Mr. PROENZA. Let me just evolve what I would like to say.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Sure. Sure.

Mr. PROENZA. A few that may resist some changes. I know that there were some that resisted some of the graphic changes, some of the other changes associated with the research community, giving the leadership for part of the hurricane forecast research to the Hurricane Research Division, and so forth, as part of a total one NOAA type of approach, but nevertheless, I felt that those were best.

But when the Team came in, what happened with that letter being signed was after the Team came in. When the Team came in, that was so extraordinarily disruptive. We had already had four storms. We have had no problems in dealing with the four storms, but it was extraordinarily disruptive. There was a surprise inspection. It was unprecedented. It triggered, because I heard some of the concerns, it triggered a frenzy of concern for people's careers and the mission.

And I understand that, and I respect their concerns. They were popped in with this investigation, and they were concerned, and of course, at that time, after the investigation was started, and the meeting that was held, that was called for by some of the leaders, by some of the leaders of the group that wanted to do something. That particular time is when they got the signatures together.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. But Mr. Proenza——

Mr. PROENZA. It was after the Team investigation began.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Okay. Now, again, because I have had contact with these, they were constituents of mine. They have contacted me as well, and some of them have said that a group of ten of them initiated the call——

Mr. PROENZA. Okay.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART.—to your supervisors. They were the ones who initiated the calls. Now, again, that is what they said. I don't know if that is factual or not, but here is the question. You said you did not know there was a problem with the staff. I don't know, you obviously had a problem, and maybe it was a problem with one or five or ten, but you had a problem, because some of them initiated this letter. But you said that you did not know there was a problem. I mean, it just, it is hard to believe that you would, did you not know, or did you not think it was a big enough problem?

Mr. PROENZA. Perhaps they should have come to me.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Perhaps, but let me ask you this now, because you have been a very successful supervisor. If you, in one of your previous positions, have a group of highly respected professionals wrote to you, and say our direct boss has real problems, and it is making our job impossible, would you think, would you have not done anything?

Mr. PROENZA. I would have——

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Or would you have tried to, in the best way possible, tried to figure out what the problem was, and maybe sent in a group of impartial people to find out if there was a problem? Or would you have done absolutely nothing? Because this is my problem. If you have people that you and I have both said, and everybody here respect, say that the Director of the Hurricane Center must go, and if NOAA would have not done anything, if a group of highly regarded professionals calls their supervisors, as they have said they did on their own, and said our boss is a major prob-

lem, and is not allowing us to do our job, which may not have been the case, but that call took place, it seems like. If NOAA would have not done anything, do you think that would have been responsible? And in your case, if that would have happened in your case, would you have done nothing? Would that have been responsible?

Mr. PROENZA. No, I would have called the Supervisor, first thing. I have had 45 such supervisors under my responsibility, and the first thing I would have done is called the supervisor, explain what I have heard is a problem, and explain to them what can we do to help out. But I would have at least enlisted them first, to find out what we could do at that level first.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Now, it seems to me that——

Chairman MILLER. The gentleman's time has expired. We will have a second round of questions.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Baird for five minutes.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Mr. BAIRD. I don't particularly have questions. I just would suggest that as the Committee inquires about this, that we be cognizant that there are legal matters pertaining to employment issues. I personally asked the gentleman to yield previously, because I think to ask a supervisor to identify personnel in a Congressional forum in the manner that was asked is really not fair, and is not respectful of his certain legal obligations, and I think we have to respect.

However, I really don't have a dog in the fight, except that I think there is politicization. If the gentleman is doing his best to protect his country from hurricanes, I certainly worked in organizations, where sometimes, change is resisted. And I think it is problematic to say to a gentleman, whichever side you are on on this, would you identify staff members on one side or the other in this public forum, and I would urge this committee to refrain from that, out of respect not only for the gentleman here, but for the employees themselves, and for legal issues that may pertain to employee hiring and promotion and other decisions. And that was the point I was trying to make earlier.

Yield back.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Feeney for five minutes.

THE ROLE OF CONGRESS

Mr. FEENEY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I think the gentleman's comments are well taken. I mean, personnel decisions are always tough. I was Speaker of the House, I had 900 employees, and whether you are managing two people or 900. The real question for me is why Congress is involved in this one. The right decision or wrong decision may have recently been made, but you know, not long ago, I sat in a joint hearing of the House Science Committee and our corollary on the Senate side, and we had a supervisor that was accused of being too popular for his bosses, and so, we had to have a full joint hearing of the House and Senate.

Now, we have got one who is accused of being too unpopular with some of his bosses and his employees, and so, we have got to have

a full hearing. We have got admirals and other leaders waiting in the background. We are going to have a series of questions. And so, what Congress is going to do is to micromanage personnel decisions. We have had close to 400 investigations in the first six months, and I guess I should have expected, coming to work today, that I would be busy, because I am running from here to the Judiciary Committee, where we are fighting with the White House over personnel decisions. And so, as Congress, 535 of us, try to micromanage decisions that the Administration make, as we are trying to micromanage, in some cases, the war, it is useful to remember why we have a chief executive. Somebody has to call the runner out or safe at home base, and you can't have 15 umpires. You have got to have one, and the President of the United States has to make this decision.

And with all due respect, like Congressman Diaz-Balart said, you may have been the greatest supervisor in the world, and maybe just bad luck, bad timing, wrong place, wrong time, personality differences, for whatever reason, we have half your employees calling for your removal because of lack of confidence. It may not be your fault. They may have exercised misjudgment.

Secondly, we have got your supervisor saying that in order to restore confidence in the TPC, that we need to have your removal, and finally, we have an independent investigative body saying the same thing. And it may not be fair at all to you, sometimes, life isn't fair, but nobody has a right to a job, especially when it is an appointment by the President of the United States.

MORE ON QUIKSCAT

One of the big things that seems to have generated this dispute, other than personal issues and interpersonal skills, and who is mad at whom, is the question over QuikSCAT, and you have made statements to the press recently that suggest that without a very rapid replacement of QuikSCAT, essentially, our ability to track and forecast hurricane paths may be undermined. That is one of the things that people claim they are concerned about. As recently as May 22, you were quoted at a NOAA news conference as saying: "I am encouraged in those conversations that we have had, and discussions we have had, that the Nation will be moving ahead very constructively in coming up with a design next-generation QuikSCAT to replace the current, which is still operational QuikSCAT that we have at this time."

You just told this committee that we are more prepared than ever to track hurricanes. The dispersal of information gathering capabilities is much greater than when we started with QuikSCAT. For example, aircraft reconnaissance, you started your career. Congressman Diaz-Balart and I recently crawled into one of the NOAA Hurricane Hunters, so you are very familiar with the, every year, we are getting better with that sort of equipment, observations from ocean buoys, ships, Caribbean islands. We have got a European satellite, and in fact, NOAA is now investigating ways that we can get the necessary information.

So, maybe your press skills aren't the best. Lord knows, I have made my mistakes with the press, but for whatever reason, there is a great difference of opinion amongst the experts of how we need

to replace the capabilities of QuikSCAT, and some of your recent comments have generated concern that we have undermined the ability to protect Americans with the best information, and if I had to suggest one thing that probably has led to this whole scenario, it is the fact that you have made statements, your staff has tried to either correct you or change those statements, and I will allow you to respond to that, but I would just tell you, in my view, there is only one umpire. That decision has been made. I think it has been verified. It may not be your fault, but you are out.

And with that, I will let you respond to the QuikSCAT capabilities.

Mr. PROENZA. Thank you, Congressman.

First of all, on the QuikSCAT program, the statement I made on May the 22nd, that I was greatly encouraged, was based on Conrad Lautenbacher, Administrator of NOAA, saying to the press that indeed, that particular project was gaining in the priorities at NOAA, and was rising in its priority level, and I was encouraged to hear that. And I also know that we were starting to have a preliminary meeting with the NASA people, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, on the concept of how a new instrument would be designed, and again, I was encouraged. When you mention the aircraft data is valuable to us. It is essential for us. We use it operationally all the time, when we have a system.

QuikSCAT is quite different, in that that type of data, we need QuikSCAT, too. It gives us the wind direction, the wind speed, at the surface, but it gives us an 1,800 kilometer-wide swath of information across the ocean, and it covers 90 percent of the global oceans. It is a key piece of data force.

Thank you, Congressman.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Klein.

DIRECTOR PROENZA'S COMMENTS ON QUIKSCAT

Mr. KLEIN. Mr. Ehlers and Members of the Committee, if he wants to go first.

Chairman MILLER. Well, actually, I think in the ordinary rotation of Majority and Minority. Mr. Ehlers, do you care?

Mr. KLEIN. Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, thank you for being here today, and I think the public is tired of hearing about the debate. I think the public is much more interested in making sure that public safety is number one. Those of us who live in Florida or any other part of the country where hurricanes are a factor, and we have lived through some pretty substantial disasters and loss of life and property, and we know that this Hurricane Center is very much an important part of how we plan and deal with the preparation.

So, what was refreshing to me all along was the fact that you brought something up, and it was a question of let us look into it. Again, I don't personally feel qualified to determine whether or not, you know, you should be the manager or not. I think that if there is a question, that needs to be looked into. I think this process is fine, and let it play itself out, and I think none of us support or endorse the idea of politicization of any kind of job. There is a job to be done, and this is not any kind of insignificant job. This is a very important public safety job.

Specifically, my question is this. When I went to the Hurricane Center, as a matter of fact, I was there one of the days Congressman Diaz-Balart was down there, I had the chance to talk to the hurricane forecasters, and to see QuikSCAT and how it is used. I was told by the forecasters that, they showed me exactly how the data is presented, that it is one of many tools. It is not the entire tool. It is one of many tools that allows them to give a better forecast, allows them to shape the cone. We all know what that cone looks like, and how we prepare for it. It allows them to establish, hopefully, a timing element that is better, and knowing when landfall is met, and I saw that.

I read, since then, a number of comments that have come from different people, Rick Knabb at the Hurricane Center, which said when QuikSCAT, it will be like going back six years in tropical cyclone analysis. Other people in other positions have said the same thing, and I guess my question is why is it that some of these people have retracted or retrenched or backed off on some of their comments? I look at these people as professionals. These are scientists. These are career experts, and just tell me, you know, what your sense of that is. I understand you stand by your positions, and I just want to make sure that you still are in that same position, and you still feel that QuikSCAT is an important part of the data that is presented to the analysts.

Mr. PROENZA. Absolutely. It is an important part of the data that is presented for the analysis of tropical oceans, over the tropical oceans, no question about it. It is data that we vitally look at, and we need to perform our jobs. We have found a way that we can mitigate, temporarily, while QuikSCAT is designed, a new generation is designed. But at the same time, it does not equal the quality of QuikSCAT.

Why people may change their minds, it could be any number of things. It could be their perspective on an issue might have changed, evolved. I would rather give them the benefit of the doubt, and say that they went through an evolution in their thinking, even if they were in the scientific arena, and it happened.

FUTURE OF QUIKSCAT

Mr. KLEIN. And if QuikSCAT were to, and again, its beyond its useful life, we all understand what that means, it could last another few years.

Mr. PROENZA. Yes.

Mr. KLEIN. It could last another week, and since we are in the middle of the hurricane season, the question I have been asking and writing and orally all along to you and your managers is, what is plan B, and I was told that obviously, we are trying to upgrade the hurricane trackers, which I support. There is a European satellite that everybody has acknowledged that that doesn't provide the same level of precise, high definition data.

Mr. PROENZA. Correct.

Mr. KLEIN. Would you comment, tell me what is the difference, if QuikSCAT goes down, what is the difference in the amount, the quantity and quality of data, that we will have to work with?

Mr. PROENZA. For example, in the QuikSCAT data, we are getting an 1,800 kilometer swath of information. That is down to a

12.5 to 25 kilometer resolution. That means that often we will get a point where we get that type of data coming in to us. On the other hand, the ASCAT, and we will just use that comparison to the coverage, the ASCAT has got two swaths of data that are about just over 500 kilometers wide, and then, it has got a 700 kilometer opening in the middle, where it has no data. So, the data is quite interrupted, and it is not as consistent, and not as relevant to what we need.

Mr. KLEIN. So, for the layperson, understanding what the technical description you are giving us, what does that mean in terms of a forecast, for looking at the information presented? If QuikSCAT is unavailable, and we have the European satellite and the buoys and other things out there, how does this translate into the accuracy, the timing, the cone, all those kinds of things that we are all paying attention to?

Mr. PROENZA. The data is not as good, and accordingly, the analysis that we have will not be as good. A measure of that difference, the one study that I can remember, and we will have a QuikSCAT expert coming up here that you may ask that question of, but the way I understand it, that if we subtract the QuikSCAT data from the models that were run back in 2003, just to use some comparison, and see what the model forecast, with and without the data, that we could see some degradation in the outcome of the model.

I think it would be best to ask the expert from that standpoint. I stand on my position that QuikSCAT is a vitally important tool for the analysis over the tropical oceans and the rest of the oceans, for forecasting waves and warnings, winds, and at the same time, in analyzing tropical storm potential.

Mr. KLEIN. Mr. Chairman, what I would take from all that is that I think part of the process of what our committee should be doing and the Committees of Congress, is considering what the backup plans are, make sure we are supporting backup plans, and thinking short-term and long-term in this process.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you very much. Mr. Ehlers, you are recognized for five minutes.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I agree with Mr. Sensenbrenner's earlier comments, that we should not be involving ourselves in a personnel issue. There are procedures within the administrative bench to handle this. We can provide our input, but I think we should shift the emphasis away from the personnel aspects.

I think what we should, as a Science Committee, concern ourselves with is the science involved, and particularly, on the issue of QuikSCAT, but much beyond that, and to the whole picture of the weather satellite program that we have. I am a scientist. I can assure you that every scientist I know wants the maximum amount of data, and wants the data to be as good as possible. And I understand your desire to that. At the same time, I have some disagreement with your statement that the data from QuikSCAT is both important and vital. I would agree it is important. I do not agree that it is vital. I think there are other ways of getting—from my limited knowledge, I think there are other ways of getting the data that are necessary. And perhaps not as good, but I just don't think the QuikSCAT is vital, but we should be concentrating our efforts

on developing better alternatives to QuikSCAT, and do that quickly.

And I am also very disappointed, and have been disappointed for some time, with the difficulty we have had with the NPOESS satellite program at NOAA, with the huge cost overruns, and we have spent endless hours trying to straighten that mess out. We got it back on track, but the price we paid was to give up some of the sensors on NPOESS, one of which would have provided some of the data that QuikSCAT provides, and might have done it even better.

I argued against removing those sensors. I felt we should, if necessary, slow the project down a year or two, in order to get the additional money to put the other sensors back on. I lost that battle, and I think if I had won, we might have had a better handle on the data sooner than we are going to have now. Whether or not we need to replace QuikSCAT is another issue. If we do, I certainly hope that we do not simply run out and have another QuikSCAT put up there. All the technology has improved. We can certainly do much better than what we have done in the past, and even if it takes a few more years to get it done, I think it is worth doing that.

But I really think, Mr. Chairman, that the responsibility of this committee has to be a detailed review of the entire weather satellite program, and establishing good priorities for us, as to where the money should go. I am also concerned that we are not putting much money into that, when you consider the amount of money the Federal Government is putting into military satellites of various types, is putting into the GPS system, is putting into the Shuttle Program and so forth, I think we have given short shrift to NOAA and to the weather satellite program. When, I just think, if you look at the cost of one Katrina, that is far greater than the cost of the satellites that we need to help predict things better, and help to prevent things.

So, Mr. Chairman, that is the end of my speech. I don't have any questions for you, Mr. Proenza, but I do think we should concentrate on the science, not on the personality aspects, certainly not on the personalities involved. And I would ask, Mr. Chairman, that we have a complete review of our weather satellite program. We have not done it justice in the past, and we have to do a better job.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Ehlers. We will recognize, we will go for our second round of questioning at this point, and I will recognize——

Mr. INGLIS. Mr. Chairman, may I ask, do we really need a second round? We have got Admiral Lautenbacher waiting, and I think that we have heard quite a bit. It seems to me that there is no real value in an additional round here. Couldn't we go right on to Admiral Lautenbacher?

Chairman MILLER. I have some questions I would like to ask.

Mr. INGLIS. Will you be around later to hear from Admiral Lautenbacher?

Chairman MILLER. I will.

Mr. INGLIS. Okay. Will everybody be around? I hope so, because we really——

Chairman MILLER. I am not sure everybody will.

Mr. INGLIS.—need the other side of the story.

Chairman MILLER. But I will be, and I have more questions that I want to ask.

DIRECTOR PROENZA'S HISTORY

Chairman LAMPSON. I recognize myself for five minutes.

Mr. Proenza, I have a series of questions.

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, sir.

Chairman LAMPSON. Here in only five minutes, so please, short. Yes or nos will be fine. We will be able to get through this hopefully quickly.

Did you apply or seek, in any manner, the position of Director of the Hurricane Center?

Mr. PROENZA. No.

Chairman LAMPSON. I understand it was D.L. Johnson who first approached you about the possibility of your taking the position.

Mr. PROENZA. Yes.

Chairman LAMPSON. Who offered you the position, and when was that made?

Mr. PROENZA. Conrad Lautenbacher, December 1, 2006.

Chairman LAMPSON. And you began as Director of the Center when?

Mr. PROENZA. I entered on duty on January the 3rd. I was put on paper as the Hurricane Center Director on the 7th of January.

Chairman LAMPSON. I understand that although the position Hurricane Director is high profile and prestigious, it is technically a demotion, as compared to your position as head of the Southern Regional Office. Is that correct?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, sir.

Chairman LAMPSON. I also understand that your position as Southern Region Director attached to a position on the NOAA Corporate Board. Is that correct?

Mr. PROENZA. Correct.

Chairman LAMPSON. Accepting your current position means you are no longer on the Corporate Board. Is that correct?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, sir.

Chairman LAMPSON. Did you ruffle any feathers during your time on the Board?

Mr. PROENZA. I held positions that I thought were important to the delivery of the mission to the American people.

Chairman LAMPSON. I am going to take that as a yes. I understand the NOAA Corporate Board is a venue where NOAA-wide policies are established, and decisions are made about the operation of the line offices, budgets, et cetera. Right?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, sir.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS PLAN

Chairman LAMPSON. NOAA was considering a change in the way the local Weather Service offices were structured and worked together, the so-called concept of operations plan. CONOPS. Were you a supporter of that plan?

Mr. PROENZA. No.

Chairman LAMPSON. Who were the advocates for the plan on the Board?

Mr. PROENZA. The leadership, the very high leadership on the Board.

Chairman LAMPSON. And that would include D.L. Johnson?

Mr. PROENZA. That is correct.

Chairman LAMPSON. Did you believe NOAA leadership supported the CONOPS plan?

Mr. PROENZA. A mixed bag. Some support and not support.

Chairman LAMPSON. Mostly, more a yes than no.

Mr. PROENZA. More yes than no, absolutely.

Chairman LAMPSON. So, some people might see your departure from the Corporate Board as, shall we say, a positive step toward more harmony and tranquility on the Corporate Board? Yes?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes.

Chairman LAMPSON. This committee, I am pleased to say, was instrumental in halting the plan. We had a GAO team investigate and assess the plan for several years, and they produced two reports. The second one was released last month. They weren't very impressed with the planning effort, and the Admiral has told us that the plan has been abandoned. Would you tell me some about that plan, please?

Mr. PROENZA. The concept of operation?

Chairman LAMPSON. Yes.

Mr. PROENZA. Looked at the idea of trying to assign responsibilities at certain times to adjoining office, and allowing some of the forecast offices around the country to shut down, to be less than 24/7 operations.

Chairman LAMPSON. And they closed it for that reason?

Mr. PROENZA. They would close, because the adjoining office would be able to pick up the responsibility. The concern was that emergency management would not be served on a 24 hour by seven basis. In addition to that, there was concern that we could not open up an office as fast as would be needed to apply the local expertise of that particular county warning area, to the issue that might have developed overnight.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you, Mr. Proenza. I will now recognize Chairman Miller for five minutes.

CRITICISMS AND SHORTCOMINGS OF THE NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER

Chairman MILLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It certainly is not the role of these two subcommittees to look at personnel decisions, personnel matters. This appears to be something that goes beyond, well beyond office politics. The question that I raised in my opening statement. I found out in the same way most Americans found out about this controversy, by watching the news a couple of weeks ago. These subcommittees had nothing to do with this issue coming up in the national news. But when there is an explosion like what we saw a couple weeks ago, it certainly is appropriate for this subcommittee to find out what has been going on, what on Earth happened.

One unchallenged assumption in a lot of the questioning has been, and I don't want to ruffle your feathers, or those who work

at the Center, has been that this Center does the best work. I have talked to research scientists, I don't want to name names in this setting. Mr. Baird would call me down for that. But the assumption that the forecasts of the Hurricane Center are really, really good, are the best, is not what they say at all. In fact, they say the forecasts are so bad, particularly forecasts of inland flooding, and the vast majority of people who die now from hurricanes die from inland flooding. The forecasts of intensification, whether hurricanes are going to strengthen or weaken, those are really bad. Virtually every research university in the country that does atmospheric research, that does meteorological research, disregards the Hurricane Center's forecasts. They take the raw data, they run their own forecasts with their own models, which are always better, always more accurate.

So, I am not sure that I think it is a bad thing that someone come into that Center and look at whether that Center is doing as good a job as it should, and whether it is using the best science that it should be doing. Mr. Proenza, have you heard those criticisms that I just repeated?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, sir.

Chairman MILLER. Okay.

Mr. PROENZA. And it was my objective to address those. The growing challenges of the future, as far as the population centers, and the growing populations along the coastline, was an absolutely compelling argument why we had to get more accurate at forecasting intensity changes. I needed to bring all of the forecast capabilities together with the research capabilities of our organization and the academic community together to address that. Absolutely. In fact, intensity forecasts had shown very little improvement over many years.

Chairman MILLER. Okay. Your efforts to try to bring together, to try to meld research and operations, is that, were those efforts addressed to get at the failings of the forecasts of the Hurricane Center?

Mr. PROENZA. Yes, sir. We were trying.

Chairman MILLER. Well, I think, by comparison to FEMA, yes, the Hurricane Center is top notch. If we compare it to the kind of emergency management in Katrina, at least we knew there was a hurricane coming, but from all that I have heard from people who know this stuff know, the work of the Hurricane Center is not as good as it should be. It could be better right now, if it paid closer attention to the science, the best science that is out there, and research universities all across the country are doing better forecasting than the Hurricane Center.

Mr. PROENZA. And yes, Congressman, but I have to say we have to bring the very best science and tools to the Hurricane Center for them to get better at what they do. They are top notch group of professionals doing the best job they can with the information and the tools that they have.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Inglis, would you like to ask a question or a comment? You are recognized for five minutes.

Mr. INGLIS. I won't use that, except to respond to Mr. Miller that as I understand it, the Hurricane Forecasting Center accurately

predicted Katrina's path, and gave warnings three days in advance of that storm hitting New Orleans. Pretty impressive work.

Mr. PROENZA. Absolutely, sir.

Mr. INGLIS. By very dedicated people.

Mr. PROENZA. Top notch.

Mr. INGLIS. That work very hard to accomplish the objectives of the American people. I have no further questions, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LAMPSON. Mr. Diaz-Balart, you are recognized.

HURRICANE CENTER PERSONNEL

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I first want to thank Mr. Klein, Congressman Klein, for trying to get us focused on the one thing that we do do in this committee, which is science, and not personnel.

Look, it is pretty obvious that despite what I just heard from Mr. Miller that the Hurricane Center is horrible, and I beg to differ. And I don't know how many times he has been there, by the way, maybe many, and maybe he has met the incredible men and women in the Hurricane Center that Mr. Proenza says are incredible, and that I know are incredible. So, I just, despite that, I think everybody here is well-intentioned. I think Mr. Proenza is a decent, good, professional guy with a great track record.

Nobody can claim that he doesn't have a great track record, and I think the people in the Hurricane Center are the same thing. Unfortunately, and I don't want to, pardon the pun, but unfortunately, Mr. Proenza has become the lightning rod, from within the staff in the Hurricane Center and others. And that is unfortunate, and that has created a problem. I don't think Mr. Proenza is at fault. I don't think the people at the Hurricane Center are at fault. Sometimes, these things happen, and it is unfortunate. Unfortunately, it has created a problem.

Now, we shouldn't be talking about personnel here, because Congress doesn't do personnel, and even if we decided that Mr. Proenza is the person to be there, we can't really do anything about it anyway, so we are kind of just talking for the sake of talking. So, I do want to get back to, as Mr. Klein said, the science.

HURRICANE CENTER SCIENCE AND QUIKSCAT

And I do have one piece of good news for Congressman Klein. A number of us, including Chairman Lampson, Rep. Melancon, and myself, met with the Admiral, met with the NASA Administrator, Mr. Griffin. Specifically about this satellite issue, and, because we were concerned that there was no plan. And I can't speak for the other two gentlemen, but I can speak for myself. I am not satisfied that it has taken this long to come up with a decision as to what has to go up, but I think we are all, at least I was satisfied, that at least there is a plan to, and I guess by January, they are supposed to get back us, Mr. Chairman. They are supposed to get back to NOAA and NASA and everybody else as to what exactly is the right satellite that has to go up, in order to make sure that we have not only QuikSCAT but actually, a much better version of it.

So, and by the way, I think Mr. Proenza has got to be given a lot of credit for bringing up this issue, whether you agree with him

that it is less important or more important, the reality, however, is that now, at least, there is a plan, and I feel good about that. And I think that is what we, frankly, need to be talking about, because we keep talking about personnel issues, and the reality is, you know, are we going to have, then, the 20 plus people that don't like Mr. Proenza for good reasons or bad, and the 20 plus people that do like Mr. Proenza for good reason or bad, to come and testify as well?

You know, we are kind of getting a little trivial here. Those are important issues. I think we need to get into the science, and when we get into the science, I think there are much better questions to ask, and I wish we would kind of focus on that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PROENZA. Thank you, Congressman.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you, Mr. Diaz-Balart. I recognize Mr. Klein.

Mr. KLEIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And listen, there is a reason, in my view, for Congress to have oversight, and make sure there is accountability in our systems, and sometimes, appointments are good, and sometimes, they are not. We all don't like, the public doesn't like cover-ups. The public does like when someone is straightforward and open and honest, and brings something forward.

You know, what happens from this point on is going to play itself out, but most importantly, what I appreciate is Mr. Proenza's bringing this issue forward. And I can't address what happened inside the office there, but I really believe that this Congress today, and the meetings that you have had, and the meetings I have had with the Air Force Reserve and with the NOAA representatives, and forcing people to come forward, and say what is plan B, because America wants to know what plan B is.

If QuikSCAT goes down, and it is even 10 percent of the information that is provided for hurricane forecasting, that is real information. And Mr. Ehlers said it correctly, scientists want to know that they have got everything on the table to figure that out.

I will tell you also, I participated in the Senate hearing on QuikSCAT about a couple weeks ago, that Senator Nelson and others participated in, and another fact that we haven't even brought up today, is there is no question whatsoever that QuikSCAT has everything to do with marine forecasting. Nobody has even questioned that. So, if you have got large vessels, small vessels, anywhere around the world, the fact that, you know, the service that gets this information, QuikSCAT, is providing valuable information to our shipping, our recreational, all the safety factors that go into commerce and safety of individuals on the water, QuikSCAT has a big role. So, even if people are questioning whether it has the same level of impact on landfall, there is no question that on the marine side, it does have a big impact.

So, there is a reason to have this conversation. There is definitely a reason to make sure that our colleagues at NOAA and the National Hurricane Center have the tools, that they are doing whatever they can do to make sure that we are properly protected, and I do give credit for this conversation coming forward to this point, and that we stay on top of this, as has been suggested by all the

Members of this committee, to make sure that we understand the total comprehensive picture on our weather satellites and, of course, QuikSCAT, and anything else that gives us this data to help best prepare Americans for any kind of——

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Will the gentleman yield for a few seconds?

Mr. KLEIN. Yes, sir.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you. I just want to make sure that, because you have been in the Hurricane Center, like I have, and I just want to make sure that we don't scare the American people. I think you would agree with me that they do an incredible job. Obviously, we need to do everything we can in our power, so that they have all the technology and the funding, but I just want to make sure that we don't scare the American people, because I have heard some things here today on this dais. Mr. Miller, I think said something which I think was unfortunate. I think you would agree with me that they do a heck of a job, and they are really good, dedicated people that are good at what they do.

Mr. KLEIN. Mr. Chairman, if I can respond. The answer is, of course. The personnel are highly qualified scientists. The question that we are grappling with today is making sure that they have all the tools necessary to get us even better.

I think Mr. Miller's point is well taken. Can they do better? Can that cone get narrower? Can the prediction of the landfall get tighter? You bet, and we have made progress over time. But we can do more, and we should do more. That doesn't mean America should be concerned today that we don't have the necessary good people in place that are doing it, but this Congress needs to back up the National Weather Service and the Hurricane Center, and make sure that they have got what they need to best protect Americans.

Chairman MILLER. I think we are going to thank you very much, Mr. Proenza——

Mr. PROENZA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MILLER.—for coming, and for your comments. The panel, I mean the Committee, Committees, for their questions and comments. We will take a short break, and convene our next panel of witnesses.

Thank you very much.

[Recess.]

Panel II

Chairman LAMPSON. I call this meeting of our two subcommittees, Energy and Environment and Investigations and Oversight, back to order. Witnesses have taken their seats. I will introduce our panel at this time.

Dr. Robert Atlas is the Director of the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Dr. Atlas' laboratory is part of the Hurricane Research Division, which works with the Tropical Prediction Center to improve tools and techniques in hurricane forecasting.

Mr. Don McKinnon is the Director of the Jones County Emergency Management Agency, Jones County, Mississippi. Mr. McKinnon addresses the weather services the National Weather Service provides to emergency management offices, and he also

worked with Mr. Proenza during his service as Director of the Weather Service Southern Regional Office.

Mr. Robie Robinson, Director, Dallas County Office of Security and Emergency Management is testifying on behalf of the Emergency Management Association of Texas, and he will discuss the service provided to the emergency management community in Texas by the National Weather Service, by the Southern Region Office during the period of Mr. Proenza's tenure as its Director.

As our witnesses, again, should know, spoken testimony is limited to five minutes. I am going to try to keep you on that, so if you will pay close attention to it, please, I would appreciate it.

And after which, the Members of the Committee will each have five minutes to ask their questions, and it is also the practice of the Subcommittee to take testimony under oath. Do you have any objections to being sworn in?

You also have the right to be represented by counsel. Is anyone represented by counsel at today's hearing?

Then, if you will please stand and raise your right hand.

[Witnesses sworn]

STATEMENT OF DR. ROBERT M. ATLAS, DIRECTOR, ATLANTIC OCEANOGRAPHIC AND METEOROLOGICAL LABORATORY, OFFICE OF OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH, NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Dr. ATLAS. Chairman Lampson, Chairman Miller, and Members of the Committee, as mentioned, I am Bob Atlas. I am the Director of NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory in Miami.

At my laboratory, we do open ocean and coastal ocean research. We do research on climate, and we have as one of our divisions, within my laboratory, the Hurricane Research Division of NOAA.

Prior to joining NOAA, I was a NASA scientist for 32 years. I have helped pioneer many of the satellite systems that are in use today, and one of them being QuikSCAT, but many others, and I was a member of the team that developed QuikSCAT, and am still a member of the team working on the future of such measurements.

The QuikSCAT, as mentioned, is a NASA satellite. It is the third in a string of satellites that do ocean surface wind, direction and speed. The first satellite lasted three months. The second satellite lasted 10 months, and QuikSCAT has been there now for over seven years. It is a major success, not only in its longevity, but in the quality of the data that it produces under most atmospheric conditions, and also, in the amount of data that it provides.

Its advantages are that it has higher resolution than any of the other datasets available. The normal resolution is 12.5 kilometers between observations. This is twice as good as the European ASCAT and twice as good as any of the preceding satellites. And it is capable, under research conditions, or limited operations, to do even double that resolution, 6.5 kilometers. It also has disadvantages. The disadvantage is that it does not see very well through heavy rain, so in heavy rain situations, especially where the wind isn't strong, it cannot predict wind direction accurately, and the

data is not as high quality in heavy rain, high wind situations, such as exist within hurricanes.

QuikSCAT is used for many applications. It is used in research of the atmosphere, ocean, and climate. It is now considered an essential climate monitoring dataset. It is used for ocean prediction, for driving ocean models, and it is used in both numerical weather prediction and operational prediction. I want to say first about operational prediction and the Ocean Prediction Center of NOAA, the Ocean Prediction Center of NOAA forecasts for ships at sea and other maritime interests.

I asked forecasters at the Ocean Prediction Center if they are using QuikSCAT many years ago, and they said we depend upon it. I said how would you rate it. They said it was the most valuable dataset they had. I heard that from three forecasters of the Ocean Prediction Center, and I also heard from them that they believe this data is contributing to saving lives, that ships, some ships are not sinking in bad weather, and some sailors are not drowning in bad weather, because we have these kinds of measurements.

For hurricane prediction, it is used directly by the forecasters at the Tropical Prediction Center and—slash—National Hurricane Center, and its primary use is for tropical analysis. It enables them to define what we call the wind radii, the aerial extent of tropical storm force winds. This is a very useful application of the data. It also will sometimes show that a storm, a tropical depression, has formed. It will show the circulation within the winds, on occasion, before geostationary satellites show it in the clouds.

So, from those two perspectives, it is an extremely valuable instrument, but it is only one of the tools that the Hurricane Center forecasters use. They have heavy reliance upon the reconnaissance aircraft, and upon ground-based radar, ships' buoys, and the numerical models. And the numerical models is the other use of QuikSCAT that affects hurricane forecasts, and in fact, forecasts everywhere on the globe.

There are three studies defining what the impact of QuikSCAT is, one by the Joint Center for Satellite Data Assimilation,[1] which showed a 10 percent degradation at 48 hours, and a 16 percent degradation at 72 hours, if this data wasn't there. This study is a rigorous, scientifically correct study. It is limited in its sample size. There is a Navy study that has conflicting results, and the authors of that study have stated that it applies only to the Navy model, and in fact, the Navy model does not use QuikSCAT as effectively, because they do something, and they create what is called a bogus or synthetic hurricane vortex within their analysis. The QuikSCAT then has to compete with that data, and it is not able to make as much of an impact.

To sum up, QuikSCAT is an extremely important tool. We need not another clone of QuikSCAT, but we need a next generation system that will enable us to make the improvements to hurricane prediction that the Nation deserves, and NOAA is working actively to pursue both a follow-on to QuikSCAT and has an effective mitigation plan now to deal with a possible demise of QuikSCAT.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Atlas follows:]

[1] References to the studies can be found on p. 54.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT M. ATLAS

Introduction

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am Dr. Robert Atlas, Director of the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory in the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR). OAR is a line office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, within the Department of Commerce (DOC).

NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory, Hurricane Research Division

NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML) is located in Miami, Florida and specializes in hurricanes and open and coastal ocean research. Scientists at AOML study the relationship between the ocean and atmosphere by conducting research in both near-shore and open ocean environments. This research includes the dynamics of the ocean, its interaction with the atmosphere, and its role in climate change. AOML's research improves the understanding and prediction of hurricane track and intensity change, and the impacts from wind, storm surge, waves, and rain. Key to this work is the annual hurricane field program supported by the NOAA Aircraft Operations Center research/reconnaissance aircraft. AOML scientists cooperate with other federal, State, and local authorities to maximize research expertise for use in economically and environmentally important projects. AOML also provides and interprets oceanographic data collected via ships, satellites, aircraft, drifting buoys and floats, and conducts research relevant to annual-to-decadal climate change, coastal ecosystems and hurricanes.

Within the Hurricane Research Division (HRD) at AOML, scientists conduct research into hurricanes and related tropical weather phenomena, using theoretical studies, computer models, and an annual field program employing NOAA hurricane research aircraft. This research has resulted in a deeper, scientific understanding and in numerous practical applications which have improved forecasts. HRD employs meteorologists, computer scientists, and other professionals, who collaborate with other governmental and academic scientists worldwide in this on going effort to advanced scientific knowledge and increase public safety. HRD coordinates parts of its programs with other NOAA organizations, e.g., the Aircraft Operations Center and the National Centers for Environmental Prediction, in particular the Environmental Modeling Center and the Tropical Prediction Center/National Hurricane Center (NHC).

NOAA's Hurricane Forecasting

NOAA strives to improve the reliability, accuracy, and timeliness of our predictions of hazardous weather, such as hurricanes, to help society cope with these high impact events. Over the last 15 years, hurricane track forecast errors have decreased by 50 percent, largely due to advances in hurricane modeling, an increased understanding of hurricane dynamics, improvements in computing and technology, and increased observations in both the region around the hurricane and in other data sparse regions. Today's five-day forecasts of a hurricane track are as accurate as three-day predictions were 20 years ago. Hurricane predictions are better today than they have ever been and will continue to improve in the future.

To help guide future research efforts and improvements, NOAA requested that the NOAA Science Advisory Board commission a Hurricane Intensity Research Working Group to provide recommendations to the agency on the direction of hurricane intensity research. The Working Group transmitted its final report to the Advisory Board in October 2006 (*http://www.sab.noaa.gov/reports/reports.html*). The Federal Coordinator for Meteorological Services and Supporting Research released a report in February 2007, *Interagency Strategic Research Plan for Tropical Cyclones: The Way Ahead,* to provide a strategy for continuing to improve the effectiveness of operational forecasts and warnings through strategic coordination and increased collaboration among the major players in the operational and R&D communities (*http://www.ofcm.gov/p36-isrtc/fcm-p36.htm*). Both of these reports call for accelerated research investments and a deliberate focus on moving research results to operations. In response, NOAA has created a Hurricane Forecast Improvement Project Team to develop a unified approach to define and accelerate hurricane forecast improvements over the next ten years. Objectives will be focused on improved tropical cyclone forecasting (intensity, track, precipitation, and uncertainty forecasts), storm surge forecasts, flooding forecasts, and information and tools to support community and emergency planning.

NOAA Hurricane Observations

Before I talk about the QuikSCAT satellite, I wanted to explain the systems NOAA uses to monitor hurricanes. Over the open oceans, continual images from our

GOES satellites are the first reliable indicators of any storms or inclement weather. GOES provides near real-time critical data to help our forecasters determine a storms location, size, intensity, and movement. These satellites are so important we keep a spare in orbit. As tropical systems come closer to land, information from NOAA and Department of Defense (DOD) aircraft and ocean buoys provide real time direct measurements of the storm. Within 200 miles of the coast, ground-based radars are used to track the storm. Computer models used to predict storm track and intensity require extensive amounts of data, which are mostly provided by NOAA and various National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), DOD polar satellites, and where appropriate foreign environmental satellites. Together these systems provide the forecasters with layers of information critical to helping them make their forecast.

What is QuikSCAT?

QuikSCAT is a NASA satellite that has demonstrated the ability to measure ocean wind speed and direction from space with unprecedented coverage. QuikSCAT data is used for many applications, including climate monitoring, ocean research and weather prediction. It can be used to produce improved forecasts of hurricanes in three ways: its direct use by forecasters, its use as initial conditions for numerical weather prediction models, and its use as validation data in the development of advanced "next generation" weather prediction models. According to the forecasters at the National Hurricane Center, "QuikSCAT has become an important tool, especially for estimating the track, intensity and size of tropical and other strong marine storms." In most cases, however, QuikSCAT has little demonstrated impact on hurricane intensity forecasts. In hurricanes, winds above 75 miles per hour typically occur over an area that is smaller than the QuikSCAT measurement resolution and are usually associated with heavy rain events. Thus QuikSCAT usually cannot distinguish winds above 75 miles per hour in a hurricane due to its lower than desired resolution and signal attenuation in heavy rain. However, QuikSCAT can distinguish winds above 90 miles per hour in extra-tropical cyclones where strong winds exist over larger regions of the ocean surface. In addition, until very recently, most numerical models did not have sufficient resolution to represent key processes leading to rapid intensity changes or the ability to assimilate much of the detailed information contained in the QuikSCAT observations.

QuikSCAT is well past its design life. NASA says QuikSCAT appears healthy and has fuel to last until 2011. It is not possible to predict how long QuikSCAT will continue to provide data. It could last several more years or cease to provide observations very quickly.

There are three studies that address the potential degradation to computer hurricane forecasts that might result from the loss of QuikSCAT. Each of these studies has limitations that prevent definitive conclusions, and additional studies are needed. In my opinion, the preponderance of evidence from the three studies indicates that computer model forecasts of landfalling hurricanes, especially in the 2–5-day time range, could be degraded if we do not mitigate the loss effectively. Forecasters at the NHC are able to improve upon the computer forecasts, so that the potential degradation can be diminished. This is especially true as the storms are approaching land in the shorter time ranges. In addition, NOAA has recently developed an effective mitigation plan that would make substantial use of other satellites as well as enhanced aircraft observations.

What are the options to replace QuikSCAT data?

If QuikSCAT were to fail today, the NHC would still receive ocean wind speed and direction data from space. NOAA is now receiving data from a new instrument aboard a European satellite, called ASCAT—which has similar technology to QuikSCAT. ASCAT will not provide the same quality data as QuikSCAT, especially in terms of coverage and resolution. NOAA is rapidly developing procedures for inserting the data into models and using the visual display of these data in forecasting. We are also examining how to increase the use of our hurricane hunter aircraft through more flight hours and outfitting the planes with more advanced technologies. In addition, we are researching the feasibility of placing scatterometers on Unmanned Aircraft Systems.

In June 2006, NOAA held a workshop at the National Hurricane Center to discuss the requirements for ocean wind speed and direction. Hurricane forecasters, researchers, and numerical modelers all prefer a next generation QuikSCAT, which they hope would be able to meet the new requirements. Such a satellite would be able to provide observations of ocean surface wind that would greatly enhance ocean surface wind measurements for hurricane intensity forecasting, as well as for weather, ocean and climate applications. In January 2007, Vice Admiral

Lautenbacher, the head of NOAA, was briefed on the conclusions of the workshop and the need to replace QuikSCAT data. After receiving our fiscal year 2007 appropriations, NOAA initiated a study with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which built the original QuikSCAT, to examine replacement options. Those studies are due in January 2008 and from these studies, we will determine the best way to provide ocean surface wind speed and direction to forecasters.

Details on QuikSCAT

1. We now believe that the quality of ocean surface vector wind retrievals in storms at sea using any passive sensor (such as WindSat, or the Microwave Imager/Sounder on the National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS)) will never be comparable to those retrieved using an active sensor such as QuikSCAT. NPOESS will not provide an acceptable solution for ocean surface vector winds retrievals, but it will provide many other types of useful data and imagery.
2. QuikSCAT has provided many benefits but also has significant limitations. While it provides important additional data for estimating the intensity and size of tropical storms and other strong marine storms, it cannot be used for measuring the intensity of most hurricanes.
3. Data from any non-satellite platform could never replicate the coverage provided by a satellite. Therefore, no non-satellite option exists to replace QuikSCAT for wide-area measurements of ocean surface vector winds. Satellites are complementary to other data sources, such as aircraft and buoys, which have their own strengths and limitations. Satellites, aircraft, and surface-based observations are all critical components of the Nation's weather monitoring and forecasting enterprise.
4. Data from the European ASCAT satellite instrument are just now becoming available to National Weather Service (NWS) forecasters. ASCAT is not a replacement for QuikSCAT, since it provides only about 60 percent of the coverage and only about half the resolution of QuikSCAT. It will, however, provide partial mitigation against the eventual loss of QuikSCAT, and it will be fully evaluated for maximum possible use by NWS operational forecasters and models.
5. Since even QuikSCAT data do not meet NOAA operational requirements for ocean surface vector winds, serious consideration should be given to a sustained, more capable, next-generation satellite program for ocean surface vector winds using already existing technologies. A next-generation capability is needed to more accurately measure the strength and size of hurricanes and other intense marine storms, since aircraft data are not always available and only cover a small portion of the storm circulation. Such a capability would enhance operational NWS forecasts of many weather systems for the United States, and it would benefit research on the intensity of hurricanes and other marine storms that occur worldwide.
6. NOAA and NASA are working together during the next several months to examine the costs and benefits of options for what kind of satellite should replace QuikSCAT: a QuikSCAT copy, or a next-generation sensor. NOAA and NASA engineers will work directly with NWS operational forecasters during this study to provide recommendations by early 2008 on next steps for an ocean surface vector winds mission to replace QuikSCAT.
7. Track forecasts for landfalling storms have the added benefit of the national and international rawinsonde network (sensors to obtain detailed atmospheric profiles of wind, temperature, and dewpoint information), and from aircraft reconnaissance flights into and around the approaching hurricane. With these data, if QuikSCAT would fail, the impact on the track forecasts of hurricanes as they approach land would on average be smaller than for forecasts for storms in the open ocean. Studies on landfalling storms are insufficient to quantify the impacts. However, available experiments show that observations far away from the location of hurricanes can have a significant impact on model track forecasts. As such, NOAA's mitigation plan will attempt to minimize any degradation that might otherwise occur.

Current Research Studies of QuikSCAT in Models

Studies have shown either negligible or slightly positive impacts of QuikSCAT observations on track. The major drawback of these studies is the small number of cases examined. A more systematic study using cases from a number of seasons

should be performed to clarify the impact. To date there are no studies of the impact of QuikSCAT data on tropical cyclone intensity forecasts. The main problem is that until this season models that forecast tropical cyclone intensity relied only upon coarse resolution global data assimilation system for their initial conditions. The impact on intensity must be tested in the future using very high resolution global and regional models, where inner core observations can be assimilated.

One study using the NOAA global data assimilation system and global forecast system tested the impact of QuikSCAT on track forecasts from two months of Atlantic storms in 2003 (Zapotocny et al., 2007). The study, conducted at the NOAA/NASA/DOD Joint Center for Satellite Data Assimilation, examined storms in August-September 2003 and showed that a degradation in the 48 hour track forecasts of 10 percent and in the 72 hour track forecast of 16 percent when QuikSCAT was removed. A drawback of this study was the number of cases (only 25 cases at 48 hours and 19 cases at 72 hours). Nevertheless, this study provides the best available estimate of the degradation of model track forecasts that might result from a QuikSCAT failure.

A second study used the Navy Operational Global Atmospheric Prediction System and data assimilation system from two months in the 2004 Atlantic hurricane season (Goerss and Hogan, 2006). This study, using 8–10 times as many cases as the previous one, found little significant improvement in the track forecasts due to the inclusion of QuikSCAT observations of ocean surface vector winds beyond that at 24 hours, which showed a three percent improvement (two percent improvement at 48 hours, and slight degradation at 72–120 hours. In my opinion, the impact of QuikSCAT data in this experiment was limited by the way in which the data was assimilated, and the results should apply only the Navy model used in the experiment.

A third study by NASA and NOAA (Atlas et al., 2005) using the NCEP forecast system for two months of forecasts in 1999 showed a meaningful positive impact of QuikSCAT. In one case (Hurricane Cindy, 1999) the 60-hour forecast intensity and location with QuikSCAT observations of ocean surface vector winds was more accurate than the 24-hour forecast without them. This study should be considered in the context of two decades of numerical experiments with NASA models that have consistently shown improved predictions of storms over the oceans (Atlas et al., 2001).

In summary, QuikSCAT provides vital data for a variety of important applications, including weather prediction for ships at sea, hurricane forecasting, atmospheric and oceanic research, and climate monitoring. NOAA has developed an effective mitigation plan that should reduce the impact of a QuikSCAT failure on hurricane forecasting while working with NASA to evaluate an advanced replacement for QuikSCAT.

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BIOGRAPHY FOR ROBERT M. ATLAS

Dr. Robert Atlas is the former Chief Meteorologist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC), and is currently the Director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory in Miami, Fla. Some of the areas he focuses his current research on include the prediction, movement and strengthening of hurricanes. Atlas has worked with both satellite data and computer models as a means to study these hurricane behaviors. He is also recognized world-wide as an expert on satellite surface wind data

and performed the original research that demonstrated the use of these data to improve weather prediction.

Robert Atlas received his Ph.D. in Meteorology and Oceanography in 1976 from New York University. Prior to receiving the doctorate, he was a weather forecaster in the U.S. Air Force where he maintained greater than 95 percent forecast accuracy. He was also a summer intern at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and an instructor of physics for the State University of New York (SUNY).

From 1976 to 1978, Dr. Atlas was a National Research Council Research Associate at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, New York, an Assistant Professor of Atmospheric and Oceanic Science for SUNY and Chief Consulting Meteorologist for the ABC television network.

In 1978, Dr. Atlas joined NASA as a research scientist. He served as head of the NASA Data Assimilation Office from 1998–2003, and as Chief meteorologist at NASA GSFC from 2003–2005. During this time, he was also an Adjunct Professor of meteorology, teaching weather prediction to both experienced and inexperienced weather forecasters.

Dr. Atlas has performed research to assess and improve the impact of satellite temperature sounding and wind data since 1973. He was the first person to demonstrate the beneficial impact of quantitative satellite data on weather prediction, for both satellite temperature soundings and satellite surface winds.

He served as a member of the Satellite Surface Stress Working Group, the NASA Scatterometer (NSCAT) Science Team, the ERS Science Team, the SeaWinds Satellite Team and the Working Group for Space-based Laser Winds. He is also a member of the Scientific Steering Group for GEWEX (the Global Energy and Water Cycle Experiment), Chairman of the U.S. World Ocean Circulation Experiment (WOCE) Advisory Group for model-based air-sea fluxes, and is a past member of the Council of the American Meteorological Society.

From 1974–1976, he developed a global upper-ocean model and studied oceanic response to atmospheric wind forcing as well as large-scale atmospheric response to sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies (unusual events). In more recent years, his research concentrated on the role of how the air and sea interacts in the development of cyclones, the role of soil moisture and unusual SST events in the initiation, maintenance and decay of prolonged heat waves and drought, and most recently on the modeling and prediction of hurricane formation, movement and intensification.

Atlas was one of the principal investigators of a new hurricane computer model called the "Finite Volume General Circulation Model" (fvGCM), being run at NASA's GSFC and Ames Research Center, Moffitt Field, Calif. The model provides a more realistic representation of hurricanes and their behaviors, which is enhancing the state of hurricane forecasting.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you, Dr. Atlas. Mr. McKinnon, please proceed for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF MR. DONALD L. MCKINNON, DIRECTOR, JONES COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, LAUREL, MISSISSIPPI

Mr. MCKINNON. Chairman Lampson, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Inglis, and Ranking Member Sensenbrenner, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittees, thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to provide testimony regarding the service provided by the National Weather Service's Southern Region during Mr. Proenza's tenure.

I am Don McKinnon, Director of the Jones County Emergency Management Agency in Laurel, Mississippi. I am representing the Mississippi Civil Defense and Emergency Management Association, which has 300 members across all 82 counties of the State of Mississippi. I have worked in the Emergency Management Agency in Jones County for 26 years. I have been the Director since 2001.

Current, accurate, and timely weather information plays a significant role in all weather events, as well as other incidents. The accessibility and the willingness of the National Weather Service to

help emergency management are critical in our incident action plans, as we prepare for and respond to these incidents.

Over the past six years, I have had the opportunity to work with the Southern Region Director, Mr. Bill Proenza, on many occasions. At conferences and other meetings, Mr. Proenza would always solicit comments from the emergency managers, and took their concerns to heart. Mr. Proenza convinced me that the National Weather Service could be more than a reactive weather source, and could, in fact, be a proactive weather resource in the emergency management community.

Mr. Proenza encouraged the local weather offices to involve emergency managers in their outreach activities. He fostered an environment within the Southern Region that allowed his personnel to work with and meet the needs of the customers that they served. Mississippi emergency managers could give you many examples of how Mr. Proenza made a difference in their ability to protect their citizens. I have listed a few in my written statement.

The Warning Coordinating Meteorologist in San Angelo, Texas came up with the Turn Around, Don't Drown Program. Mr. Proenza recognized the benefit the program could have on saving lives, and brought the program to the emergency management community. Once he sold the emergency managers on the program, he promoted it across the United States. The National Weather Service office in Jackson, Mississippi partnered with the Mississippi Civil Defense and Emergency Management Association to develop an eight-hour training course geared toward the emergency management community that included the National Weather Service offices in Slidell, Louisiana, Memphis, Tennessee, and Mobile, Alabama. Now, the training is offered annually and available to emergency management and the media.

Without Mr. Proenza to institute changes and growth in the Southern Region, we may not have had the Radar Integrated Display and Geospatial Elements, or RIDGE System, which provides area-specific warning information in the form of graphic polygons and text messages. This allows emergency management to focus on specific areas of the county, and makes our decision-making process much quicker and more reliable. Now, we do not have to make broad advisories, but we can focus on a specified area. Mr. Proenza recognized our need, and worked with his staff to get us a better tool. The end result is saving lives and property.

Many counties in the State were plagued by inefficient coverage by the National Weather Service Doppler radar system. Simply stated, it did not cover the counties the way it was designed to, due to elevation and geographical location. Mr. Proenza was aware of this problem, and worked constantly to correct it. Thanks to his support and tenacity in getting the radar moved, we now have a more reliable Doppler radar covering our counties.

Recently, NOAA was considering the concept of operations, which would have resulted in lowering National Weather Service field office staffing and hours of operation of some field offices. Mr. Proenza defended the much-needed local presence of full-time service, and stood with local emergency managers to question this dangerous concept. We are concerned that Mr. Proenza's defending the

interests of the public safety and the emergency management community may have brought retribution on him.

Mr. Proenza is a dedicated servant of the American people. If you are uncomfortable with straight, honest, truthful answers to the hard questions, then don't ask Mr. Proenza the question, because that is what you are going to get, the truth.

When I learned that Mr. Proenza had been appointed the Director of the National Hurricane Center, I was extremely happy, and at the same time, I was sorry to see him leave managing the Southern Region. We hoped he would have the opportunity to bring the same innovative approaches to the National Hurricane Center that we came to expect when he managed the Southern Region.

Mr. Proenza is an advocate for the people he serves, and when he encounters problems, he faces them head-on. If it is broken, he wants it repaired. If it is working correctly, he wants it improved. In my dealings with Mr. Proenza, he has never been one to sit back and watch things happen. He has always been on the forefront making things happen. Sadly, it seems that he made the mistake of trying to improve the National Hurricane Center.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today, and I will be glad to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKinnon follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DONALD L. MCKINNON

Chairman Lampson, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Inglis, Ranking Member Sensenbrenner, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittees, I thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to provide testimony regarding the service provided by the National Weather Service's Southern Regional Office during Mr. Bill Proenza's tenure.

I am Don McKinnon, Director of the Jones County Emergency Management Agency, Laurel, Mississippi. I am representing the Mississippi Civil Defense and Emergency Management Association (MCDEMA), which has 300 members from all 82 counties in Mississippi. Since 2000 the State of Mississippi has had 11 Presidential Disaster Declarations, nine Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Declarations and 19 Governor State of Emergencies. I have worked in the emergency management agency in Jones County for approximately 26 years. I have been the Director since 2001. Emergency Management is a coordinating agency responsible for maintaining emergency plans, preparedness, response, disaster exercises, recovery, and mitigation projects. We work with all public safety agencies, local, State, and federal, as well as volunteer and non-emergency agencies. One of our primary missions is to prepare for and respond to weather-related events. We in Jones County are no strangers to tornadoes, floods and hurricanes. I am responsible for responding to all of them. We also have incidents that are not caused by weather that we rely on the National Weather Service (NWS) to assist us with. For example, chemical spills, hazardous shipment accidents, bridge collapse, fire, search and rescue, etc. Current, accurate, and timely weather information plays a significant role in each of these incidents. The accessibility and the willingness of the NWS to help emergency management are critical in our Incident Action Plans as we prepare for and respond to these incidents.

Jones County, Mississippi, is located approximately 100 miles inland from the Mississippi Gulf Coast. When Hurricane Katrina slammed into Mississippi on August 29, 2005, we suffered everything the Gulf Coast suffered except the storm surge. We had 130 + mph sustained winds with gusts much greater. We had 250 homes destroyed, 650 homes with major damage and several thousand homes with minor damage. We suffered seven Hurricane Katrina-related deaths. Remember we are 100 miles inland from the coast.

Over the past six years in my tenure as the Emergency Management Director I have had the opportunity to work with the Southeastern Regional Director of the National Weather Service Mr. Bill Proenza on many occasions. I first met Mr. Proenza at a Mississippi Civil Defense Emergency Management Association conference. Mr. Proenza was speaking to the conference attendees on the importance of the National Weather Service and the Emergency Management Community work-

ing together to achieve more success in warning our citizens of impending weather events. Mr. Proenza was passionate about his topic and would later meet with conference attendees to network individually and continue his discussion. Mr. Proenza would always solicit comments from the local emergency managers and took their concerns to heart. Mr. Proenza convinced me that the NWS could be more than a reactive weather source and could, in fact, serve as a proactive weather resource working with the emergency management community.

Not only did Mr. Proenza come to us, he asked us to come to him. Mr. Proenza encouraged the local weather offices to involve emergency management in their outreach activities. The National Weather Service Office in Jackson, Mississippi, partnered with the Mississippi Civil Defense Emergency Management Association to develop an eight hour training course geared toward the emergency management community and the interaction with the NWS. Then the NWS offices from Slidell, LA, Memphis, TN, and Mobile, AL were invited to attend so the emergency management customers they serve could interact with them. Some of the topics included understanding the Doppler Radar, understanding the products produced and offered by the NWS and tracking specific events that had occurred. Now the training is offered annually and available to emergency management and the media. Mr. Proenza recognized that there are, aside from the general public, two core customers, emergency management and the media, that needed personal and daily interaction with the National Weather Service. He fostered an environment within the Southeastern Regional NWS that allowed his personnel to work with and meet the needs of the customers they served.

Mr. Proenza was deeply involved in the development of the NWS Southern Region program "Turn Around, Don't Drown." Flooding is the number one cause of drowning deaths in the United States. Realizing that the National Weather Service could do more to educate the public on what they should and should not do during a flood Mr. Proenza solicited information from the NWS Offices in his region. The Warning Coordination Meteorologist in San Angelo, TX came up with the "Turn Around, Don't Drown" theme. Mr. Proenza recognized the benefit the program could have on saving lives and brought the program to the emergency management community. Once he sold the EMs on the program he promoted the program across the United States. The next time you hear that slogan, remember where it came from. Without Mr. Proenza we would not have it.

Not one to just continue a practice because "that is the way we have always done it," Mr. Proenza encouraged the NWS Southern Region Headquarters Staff to develop a computer program that would give a graphic display of severe weather information on the NWS Radar sites on the Internet. Users could already see the weather cells or lines moving into their areas but when a watch or warning was issued that information was not visible on the Internet site. Mr. Proenza knew that emergency management and the public needed more and that's what he gave them. Now when a flood, storm or tornado watch or warning is issued they get a graphic box showing the area affected simultaneously with the weather on the NWS Radar page of the Internet. Not only do you get visual representation, if you click on a county/parish in the box you get the text message associated with the watch or warning. You will know the program as Radar Integrated Display with Geospatial Elements or RIDGE. Without Mr. Proenza to institute changes and growth in the NWS Southern Region we may not have the RIDGE System. What we had, worked. Mr. Proenza knew that it could work better and provide more useful information to a public who needed it. That's what we have because Mr. Proenza would accept no less.

Mr. Proenza was contacted in 2004 by a local emergency management director in a small rural county about a problem with the NOAA weather radio system in their area. This is a county with a population of approximately 22,000 people. Mr. Proenza met with the local officials and listened as they explained their concerns. Mr. Proenza then went to work for them. In late 2005 the county received equipment to replace the defunct system. The County now has a working NOAA weather radio system and the citizens of Carthage, Mississippi, can rest easier knowing that they will get timely weather information that may save their lives. I later learned that Mr. Proenza had repeated this process in several other counties in Mississippi. Not only did he follow through with the equipment that he promised, he personally followed up on the resolution of the problems to ensure that the systems were performing as they should and nothing else was needed. Mr. Proenza was instrumental in making these systems functional.

Problems are plentiful in the emergency management business. Mr. Proenza is not afraid to face these problems with us when they concern the National Weather Service. Jones County as well as many other counties in the state was plagued by inefficient coverage by the new (1993) NWS Jackson Doppler Radar system. Simply

stated, it did not cover my county the way it was designed to. In defense of the NWS it was designed to give full coverage to the NWS Jackson coverage area of which my county is a part. But when construction was started on the site, the Federal Aviation Administration notified the NWS Jackson office that the tower housing the radar would have to be lowered by 10 meters (30 feet) because of the proximity to the Jackson International Airport. Having no alternative site the construction had to proceed. From day one the radar coverage was degraded by approximately 50 percent in the eastern part of the state. This was because of a terrain issue. What did this mean to the radar coverage? It meant that the forecasters could not accurately monitor rain data and wind data below six to eight thousand feet. Unless a storm was well above six to eight thousand feet then the forecasters could possibly miss it, as was the case in November of 2001 in Jones County. A small tornado touched down in west Jones County at approximately 7:20 P.M. and destroyed several homes. The West Jones High School and Middle School received major damage. NWS officials came to Jones County the next day and explained that they simply did not see the storm. Mr. Proenza was aware of the Doppler Radar problem and was working to correct it. He kept me updated. The emergency management community wrote many letters of support in this push to get the radar moved to a more suitable location. Finally the radar was moved in 2002 to a site in Rankin County, Mississippi, approximately seven miles from the original site. Coverage has improved tremendously and we have not had any "surprises" since the move. Without Mr. Proenza's support and tenacity we may not have achieved the move. He made it happen and my citizens are safer because of it.

Mr. Proenza asked for my input on an issue concerning the National Weather Service name and logo a number of years ago. NOAA wanted to change the name and the logo of the National Weather Service to the NOAA Weather Service. This came as a surprise to me and quite honestly I was baffled by the proposed change. The NWS is a national brand name. It is trusted and credible with a history going back over 130 years. The logo represents quality and knowledge in the weather service. To change the name for no more reason than to just change the name doesn't make sense to me. I understand that this is still an issue.

More recently Mr. Proenza asked me to represent the emergency management community in the interview process to replace the retiring NWS Jackson Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM). I had worked with the outgoing WCM for many years and had grown to trust and respect his opinion. Finding a suitable replacement was going to be a challenge. We found a very capable applicant. Before the applicant was approved for the position Mr. Proenza called me to make sure I was comfortable with the applicant and that this person would be a good fit in our emergency management programs. I am happy to report that the new WCM has been well received by emergency management and has brought with him many new and useful ideas. Mr. Proenza did not have to include the emergency management community in this process. However, he recognized the importance of this position to emergency management and took the step to include us in selecting the person we would be working so closely with.

Recently NOAA was considering a "concept of operations" which would have resulted in lowering NWS field office staffing and hours of operation of some field offices. Mr. Proenza defended the much-needed local presence of full time service and stood with local emergency managers to question this dangerous concept. I know my meteorologists and they know me. They know where Jones County is and what the terrain is like here. We work together to inform and protect the public. The meteorologists in NWS Jackson, Mississippi, treat Jones County as more than a statistical spot on a map. We were grateful that as a result of questions raised by Congress and particularly this committee that proposal is on hold. We are concerned that Mr. Proenza's defending the interests of public safety and the emergency management community may have brought retribution on him.

Mr. Proenza is a dedicated servant of the American people. If you are uncomfortable with straight, honest, truthful answers to the hard questions then don't ask Mr. Proenza the question. Because that's what you are going to get, the truth. Mr. Proenza has always been accessible and approachable. He really cares about the public he represents. When I learned that Mr. Proenza had been appointed the Director of the National Hurricane Center I was extremely happy and at the same time I was sorry to see him leave managing the Southern Regional Office of the NWS. However, The NHC is a vital part of Mississippi's emergency management program. The information provided to me and the State of Mississippi from the NHC in times of emergency is critical in the decision-making process of my Emergency Operations Center.

Mr. Proenza is an advocate for the people he serves and when he encounters problems he faces them head on. If it is broken, he wants it repaired. If it is working

correctly, he wants it improved. In my dealings with Mr. Proenza he has never been one to sit back and watch things happen. He is on the forefront making things happen. Sadly it seems that he made the mistake of trying to improve the National Hurricane Center.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to come to our Capitol to meet with distinguished leaders of our nation's Congress and present this testimony on behalf of Mr. Proenza's leadership at the NWS Southern Regional Office. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

BIOGRAPHY FOR DONALD L. MCKINNON

Donald L. McKinnon currently serves as the Director of the Jones County Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security in Laurel, Jones County, Mississippi. Don has held this position since 2001. Jones County consists of approximately 702 square miles with four municipalities and a combined population of approximately of 68,000 people. Jones County is located 100 miles inland from the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Prior to becoming Director Don served in various positions within the Emergency Management Agency to include: Search and Rescue Coordinator; Storm Spotter; Administrative Officer; and Operations Officer.

Don is responsible for the Jones County Emergency Operations Center; the Office of Homeland Security; the 911 Office; the Communications Dispatch Center; the 800 Megahertz Trunked Public Safety Radio System; the Public Safety Paging System; two 911 Tower Sites; and the Communications Technical Services Staff.

From 1972 until 1978 Don served in the United States Marines Corps. Don held the rank of Staff Sergeant with a Secret Security clearance and was assigned communications duties. During his service Don spent two terms of duty in Okinawa, Japan where he was the Communications Center Supervisor for the 1st Marine Air Wing. Don was later assigned to the Marine Corps Development and Education Command (MCDEC) in Quantico, VA where he was a communications center shift supervisor.

Don moved to Laurel, Mississippi in 1979 and took a position with Northern Electric Company as a computer programmer/software analyst.

Don began his service with the Jones County Emergency Management Agency in 1980. It was during this time that Don volunteered to serve the emergency management agency as a dive rescue team member. Don organized and directed the Dive Team from 1980 until 2000. Don also served as the Jones County Volunteer Fire Coordinator during this time.

He is the past President and founding member of the Mississippi Chapter of the National Emergency Number Association (911); active member of the Associated Public Safety Communications Officers International (APCO); active member of the Mississippi Civil Defense and Emergency Management Association (MCDEMA); former Board Member of the MCDEMA; Chairman for Communications and Technology committee of MCDEMA; and active member of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM).

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you, Mr. McKinnon. Mr. Robinson, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF MR. ROBIE ROBINSON, DIRECTOR, DALLAS COUNTY OFFICE OF SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Mr. ROBINSON. Chairman Lampson, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Inglis, Members, thank you very much for inviting me; again, Robie Robinson, Director of Security and Emergency Management, Dallas County. Today, I am speaking on behalf of the Emergency Managers' Association of Texas.

As you know, every state in the Nation is at risk to disasters, and Texas is no exception. Disaster situations occur in our state practically every day. From '89 to 2000, floods and flash floods caused 35 percent of the weather-related deaths in Texas. They are followed in order by tornadoes, lightning, winter storms, extreme heat, severe thunderstorms, and finally, hurricanes and tropical storms.

As I was preparing this testimony, Texas had 61 counties with declared disasters going on. We also know that a proactive, robust emergency management program can reduce risk, property loss, and even death. A critical component of local emergency management programs is timely, accurate weather data that we can understand.

Bill Proenza has always been an active supporter of local emergency managers. During his tenure as the Southern Director, Bill ensured that the local emergency managers had ready access to weather information. He ensured that his folks took the time to understand our weather information needs. He ensured that they were available during weather events to answer our questions and provide forecasts. He also ensured that they worked closely with storm spotters and volunteer weather monitors to improve forecast models. Bill encouraged his staff to conduct training classes, teach local emergency managers one on one, and give presentations at local events and conferences.

Support for local emergency managers was evident in my first emergency management position in Fisher County, Texas. I had only been the volunteer EMC for ten days when a tornado struck the largest town in our community. It was not a large tornado, but it was not a large town, either, and the warnings given by the National Weather Service and the follow-up concern that they displayed were incredible.

It changed the relationship from Service and County to Robie Robinson and Buddy McIntyre, who worked at the San Angelo office of the National Weather Service. I went on to learn a lot more about weather from Buddy, and he hosted the first disaster exercise that I ever participated in as an emergency manager. Now, if I had never moved from rural West Texas, I would have chalked that one up to small town hospitality, but now, I am in the ninth largest county in the Nation, and the relationship that I have with the people there, Bill and Gary, is the same as it was back in West Texas. It is clear to me that the commitment of the National Weather Service personnel that I have worked with is a reflection of the leadership that they had coming down from the regional level.

Thanks to Bill's leadership, we now have a wealth of weather data available in our emergency operation centers that we did not have 10 years ago. That data increases the time available for emergency managers and elected officials to consider alternative courses of action, and choose the appropriate action to take.

Now, some people say that weather has changed, but the weather hasn't changed. It is the same thing it was when I was Isaac Cline was watching the clouds over Galveston before the 1900 hurricane that is still the deadliest disaster ever to have struck on U.S. soil, but there are differences in us. There are different things that we do. We have more citizens in buildings, more densely populated cities, more people who don't rely on their own eyes and wives' tales, they rely, instead, on reliable forecasts, to safeguard their families and their businesses.

Thanks to Bill's leadership, we have a National Weather Service office in our area with a staff of professionals who keep us informed and answer our questions any time, day or night. Local

emergency managers used to only get weather warnings and watches information by NOAA Weather Radio, phone, or fax. Now, we get them by Internet, e-mail, and pagers, as well as those other options. National Weather Service personnel listened to our needs and met them.

Bill actively pushed for the Warning Coordinating Meteorologist Program to support local emergency managers. The National Weather Service has also built, during his tenure, valuable partnerships. Just a couple of years ago, in Galveston, the National Weather Service opened a joint office with the Galveston County Emergency Management Agency. This is an innovative, forward-thinking partnership. Now, we all claim that we want to work together in our respective fields, but how many of us voluntarily go in to share offices on a day to day regular basis?

Jack Colley is the State Director of Emergency Management in Texas, and he couldn't be here today, but he asked me to say: "We could not operate without the National Weather Service. They are a key partner in our state, and Bill is an innovator and an advocate for serving the needs of the locals, so that we can protect the people who rely on us."

My county is currently building a new Emergency Operations Center to help keep our citizens safe. I hope that the National Weather Service will continue to look toward the future as we are, and bring new tools and new products to the table. I hope that they continue the personal contact with emergency managers surrounding their regional offices. I hope their funding will be maintained at a level that we won't ever question their ability to serve the emergency management community and protect our people. I hope I can see and rely on the same enthusiasm and commitment from the National Weather Service during the last half of my career that I have witnessed during the first half.

In closing, I hope the National Weather Service will continue the partnerships, energy, and knowledge and innovation that Bill Proenza fostered. I hope the information sharing will continue to us at the local level, as we are the conduits through which their warnings and watches are delivered to the moms and the dads and the sisters and brothers whose actual literal lives depend on that information.

Members of the Subcommittees, forecasting the weather requires courage, because human beings don't control the weather. But I hope the leadership of NOAA and the National Weather Service do not move in this new century by squelching the courage of their people to speak out when they feel it is important.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Robinson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBIE ROBINSON

Chairman Lampson, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Inglis, and Ranking Member Sensenbrenner and Subcommittee Members, thank you for inviting me to speak to you this morning. My name is Robie Robinson. I am the Director of Security and Emergency Management for Dallas County, Texas, and I am here to speak on behalf of the Emergency Managers' Association of Texas.

As you know, every state across the Nation is at risk to some form of disaster. Texas is no exception. Our state is vulnerable to multiple forms of disaster situations—whether they are triggered by an act of nature, an accident, or man-made. We know from historical data that disaster situations occur in the state nearly every

day, and weather threats cause the majority of deaths. From 1989–2000, floods and flash floods caused 35 percent of the weather-related deaths in Texas. These are followed by tornadoes, lightning, winter storms, extreme heat, severe thunderstorms, and finally by hurricane/tropical storms. As I was preparing this testimony, Texas had 61 counties dealing with declared disasters. We also know that a proactive and robust emergency management program can reduce risk, property loss, and death. A critical component of a local emergency management program is timely and accurate weather data that decision-makers understand.

Bill Proenza has always been an active supporter of local emergency managers. During his tenure as the southern regional director, Bill ensured that the local government emergency managers had ready access to weather information. He ensured his Warning Coordinating Meteorologists took the time to understand our weather information needs and to explain the impacts and probabilities of weather events on our local areas. He ensured the Warning Coordinating Meteorologists were available during weather events to answer our questions, provide forecasts, and discuss the various weather products with us. He also ensured the Warning Coordinating Meteorologists worked closely with the storm spotters and volunteer weather monitors to improve the forecast models that applied to our most common hazard, flooding.

The Warning Coordinating Meteorologists and National Weather Service forecasters provide valuable training for local emergency managers and weather spotters. Bill supported and encouraged his staff to conduct training classes, teach local emergency managers one-on-one, and give presentations at local events and professional conferences.

National Weather Service support for local emergency managers was evident in my first emergency management position in rural Fisher County, Texas. I had only been the volunteer EMC for 10 days when a tornado struck in the middle of the largest town in the county. It wasn't a large tornado, but it wasn't a large town either. The National Weather Service assistance began with tornado warnings, but it did not end there. They stayed in touch as we had crews searching through debris and cleaning up streets over the next several days. The warnings given by the National Weather Service and the follow-up concern that they displayed were incredible. That experience changed the relationship from Service and County, to Robie Robinson and Buddy McIntyre, Warning Coordination Meteorologist for the San Angelo office of the National Weather Service. I went on to learn more about thunderstorms and weather from Buddy and he hosted the first disaster exercise that I attended as an emergency manager. If I had never moved, I would have put it all off to small town hospitality, but I am now in the ninth largest county in the Nation and the relationship that I have with Bill and Gary in the Fort Worth office is the same. They interact with the emergency managers in our area on a regular basis. That is how they are able to keep an eye on our needs and modify their efforts to help us. It is clear to me that the commitment of the National Weather Service personnel with whom I have worked is a reflection of the leadership they had at the regional level.

Bill's support of local emergency managers also applied to the River Forecasting Centers. The Fort Worth River Forecast Center worked closely with local emergency managers as well as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Texas River Authorities before, during, and after heavy rainfall and flooding events. This coordination has been critical in our abilities to protect critical infrastructures, government facilities, and the public from flooding events.

The new weather products now available are very useful in our planning efforts. We have various text products, river data, hydrographs, various precipitation images, reports and forecasts. We now have better maps, charts, and tables; weather forecasts, hydrometeorological data and discussion, climate data, and historical data. Local emergency managers get the weather information we need in the format that best meets our needs thanks largely to the programs and the leadership of Bill Proenza.

The increased variety of weather products, discussions, and graphs, coupled with probability estimates improved decision-making in our emergency operations centers before and during extreme weather events. We now have a wealth of weather data available in our emergency operations centers that did not exist ten years ago. That data, and our understanding of it, increases the time available for the local emergency manager and the elected officials to consider alternative courses of action and to select the most appropriate one for the jurisdiction. Bill worked with local emergency managers to ensure we had the data we needed.

There are those who say that technology has changed our world so that the weather is different or that our dependence on weather has lessened over the years. I would say that weather is not any different today than what it was back when

Isaac Cline was watching the clouds in Galveston, Texas before the 1900 hurricane that is still the deadliest disaster to have struck in the United States. There are, however, differences in us and how we live. Our vulnerability is even greater than ever before. We have more citizens, buildings and vehicles at risk, and more densely populated cities with people who rely, not on their own eyes and wives' tales, but instead on reliable scientific forecasts to safeguard their businesses and their families. Thanks to Bill's leadership, we have a National Weather Service Office with a staff of professionals who work to keep us informed and to answer our questions any time, day or night.

We have all learned to listen to forecasts and we have all heard when there were watches and warnings in our area. Admittedly, I am among the ranks of professional emergency managers who are professional paranoids. It is my job to watch the weather and plan for disasters but everyone wonders whether it will rain during the game or if today is a good day to go to the beach or to the lake. We rely on the National Weather Service for that information.

The National Weather Service distributes weather data based on our needs. Local emergency managers used to get weather warnings, watches, and information only by NOAA Weather Radio, phone or fax. Now we get them from the Internet, by e-mail, and by pagers. The Warning Coordinating Meteorologists and other National Weather Service Personnel listened to the local emergency managers needs for weather-related information and they met them. Bill Proenza actively pushed for the Warning Coordinating Meteorologist program and for the National Weather Service support of local emergency managers. The improvements we experienced over the last ten years would not have occurred without his leadership in the southern region.

I interact with people all over the state on a regular basis. People from cities, counties, private industry, health care, transportation, State employees, and federal personnel. Across the board, they have nothing but positive comments when asked about the National Weather Service. Under Mr. Proenza's leadership, the southern region built this reputation and those in place today are working diligently to maintain it. However, don't make the mistake of thinking that they are content to stop there. They are constantly leaning forward in the saddle looking for new, innovative ways to help us do our jobs better for the people of the Lone Star State. I have attended numerous meetings where I have spoken with National Weather Service representatives who were eager to hear comments from emergency managers about how we used their products and what we would like to see in the future.

The National Weather Service has also built valuable partnerships. Just a couple of years ago, they opened a new office jointly with Galveston County Emergency Management. This is an innovative, forward thinking partnership. We all want to claim that we can cooperate with others in our respective fields but how many of us actually go so far as to share our offices daily. Emergency managers and the National Weather Service have a strong tradition of working together but that isn't enough. It is more important to look toward the future and to ensure that we are prepared. That is where the southern region was incredibly effective during Mr. Proenza's tenure. When I was fighting wildfires across the state for the Texas Forest Service in 2000, I knew I could and frequently did call the National Weather Service for spot weather forecasts. This required that meteorologists stop what they were doing and give me specific information for the very coordinates where property and lives were hanging in the balance. I needed that information to keep firefighters safe and to protect the homes and ranches of many of our citizens. These efforts weren't required; they were done because the service and the people behind it knew they needed to be done. I was safer and better able to do my job with the knowledge that they shared.

In the end, the National Weather Service is not a federal agency with people who sit in Washington to hand down products, guidelines, and grant funds. It is an agency of people who provide essential services to the emergency management community. Jack Colley, the Texas State Emergency Management Director could not be here today but he asked me to say, "We could not operate in Texas without the National Weather Service. They are a key partner in our state. Bill Proenza is an innovator and an advocate for serving the needs of the locals so that we can protect the people who rely on us."

My county is currently building a new Emergency Operations Center with County funds, not grant funds, to help keep our citizens safe. I hope that the National Weather Service will continue to look toward the future and bring new tools and products to the table. I hope that they continue the personal contact with professional emergency managers surrounding their regional offices. I hope their funding will be maintained at a level such that we won't ever question their value or their ability to serve the emergency management community and protect our people. I

hope that I see can see and rely on the same enthusiasm and commitment from the National Weather Service during the last half of my career that I saw and relied on in the first half. They share in our common goal and our common role as we work hand-in-hand to protect people.

In closing, I hope that the NWS will continue the partnerships, energy, knowledge and innovation that Bill Proenza fostered. I hope that the information sharing will continue to us at the local level as we are the conduits from which the warnings and watches are communicated to the Moms and Dads and sisters and brothers whose very lives depend on that information.

Members of the Subcommittees, forecasting the weather requires courage because human beings can not control what is going to happen. I hope that the leadership of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Weather Service do not move into this new century by squelching the courage of their people to speak out.

BIOGRAPHY FOR ROBIE ROBINSON

Mr. Robie Robinson is currently the Director of the Dallas County Office of Security and Emergency Management. Dallas County is the ninth largest county in the United States and is home to over 2.2 million people. Under Robinson's direction are Emergency Management, Homeland Security, Fire Marshal, and Security for all Dallas County buildings, personnel, and operations.

Robinson was previously an Assistant Professor of Emergency Administration and Planning at the University of North Texas. Prior to joining the UNT faculty, Robinson was employed as Regional Fire Coordinator for the Texas Forest Service where he responded to disasters across the State of Texas. Robinson has also served as the elected County Attorney and Emergency Management Coordinator for Fisher County, Texas.

Robinson completed a B.A. in history from Texas A&M, a Ranch Management Certificate from Texas Christian University, and a J.D. from Oklahoma City University. In addition, he has completed the Executive Leadership Program from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. Robinson serves on numerous committees at the local, State, and national level and holds certifications from both the International Association of Emergency Managers (CEM) and Emergency Managers Association of Texas (TEM).

DISCUSSION

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you very much.

We will move into our first round of questions, and I yield myself five minutes, as the Chairman.

DIRECTOR PROENZA'S TENURE IN THE SOUTHERN REGION

You have commented on, both Mr. Robinson and Mr. McKinnon, have commented on the work that Mr. Proenza did as Director of the Southern Region. He met the needs of your offices. Did you have any concerns about the quality of the products that he would deliver, or his agency would deliver to your agencies, your offices?

Mr. MCKINNON. On the contrary, no problems with the products at all, and if he had questions, then he would come to us and ask if we needed to improve what he was offering to us.

Mr. ROBINSON. Typically, he would ask us if we needed anything else, and we got what we asked for.

Chairman LAMPSON. Consider him a people person? Did he have a hard time getting along with people?

Mr. MCKINNON. Very approachable and a very personable person to me.

Chairman LAMPSON. Did you have any reason to lack confidence in the forecasts, warnings, data, or other product that you had been receiving from the Center?

Mr. ROBINSON. None at all.

Mr. MCKINNON. None, sir.

HURRICANE RESEARCH DIVISION AND HURRICANE CENTER COLLABORATION

Chairman LAMPSON. Dr. Atlas, did you ever discuss with Mr. Proenza greater collaboration between the Hurricane Research Division and the Hurricane Center, after he became Director in January?

Dr. ATLAS. Yes, I did. When, immediately after Bill became Director, we were both approached by the NOAA Chief of Staff, and we were asked to work closely together, to bring research and operations much closer, and to be able to transition more of what we do in research into the operations of the Hurricane Center.

Chairman LAMPSON. How was that received by people who worked beneath the two of you?

Dr. ATLAS. The people who worked at AOML, at the Hurricane Research Division, were extremely pleased. We had been wanting to do this for many years. It had not been as effective as it could have been in the past. There are many new developments in research that need to get into operations, and we were working extremely well together to bring that about.

HURRICANE RESEARCH

Chairman LAMPSON. What would a research program look like, to accomplish the goal of figuring out how to forecast hurricane intensity, if that is the primary question?

Dr. ATLAS. In order to be able to forecast hurricane intensity well, we need to have numerical models at very high resolution, that are capable of representing the key processes that go on within the hurricane, including the hurricane core. What this means is we need to have better and more observations, we need to have better ways of using that data. We need to have a better understanding, and we must have these new models.

Chairman LAMPSON. What kind of observational data will be needed to develop our understanding of hurricane intensity, and what kinds of sensors does that imply, that we will need in the future?

Dr. ATLAS. Well, we need essentially everything we have there now, but we need more of it, and we need it at higher resolution. If we are—the models that are being run now were based on observations that were at pretty coarse resolution, and so were the models. Now, as we get down to a few kilometers in scale in our numerical weather prediction models, we must have data that is on a comparable scale. We need it for the development of the models, and we need it to provide initial conditions to the models.

Chairman LAMPSON. How would findings from such a research program be translated into upgrades to models or other tools and techniques for the staff at the Hurricane Center?

Dr. ATLAS. This is, there is a process in NOAA for transitioning research, and there are new facilities that will make this go even better. There is something called the Developmental Test Center, located in Colorado, which enables researchers to work with the operational models, and enable us to upgrade them. Ultimately, it

goes through the Joint Hurricane Testbed at the Hurricane Center, and if it passes the test, it then goes into operations.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you very much. I only have a few seconds left. I am going to yield that back, and I am going to turn it over to Mr. Diaz-Balart for five minutes.

MORE ON THE HURRICANE CENTER PERSONNEL

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you gentlemen for being here.

Also, I just want to tell the Chairman and others on the Committee, and my dear friend, Mr. Klein, that one thing that is worth seeing is the operation that Dr. Atlas has down there in South Florida, incredible people and led very well by Dr. Atlas, and I recently had the privilege to visit with them, and thank you for your hospitality, sir.

I am glad that we are kind of getting away from personnel issues, and more on science issues, which is what this committee knows how to do, and we don't know how to deal with personnel, nor do we have the power to, but since a couple of things were brought up, I very briefly want to address it.

Mr. Robinson, and I think very well, stated that obviously, we need to make sure that the courage to do the right thing continues, and I have no doubt whatsoever that Mr. Proenza has had that courage. But I just want to, you know, there are some incredible people at the Hurricane Center, and I don't know if you all have had, you know, have had a chance to meet with them, but since I do live and represent that part of town, that part of the country, you know, you get to kind of know some of them, and you know, Dr. Avila, James Franklin, so, so many, Richard Knabb, Dr. Knabb, I should say, Daniel Brown. There are so many incredible leaders.

Obviously, you are not, and I know you are not, but I just want to make it very clear for the record, you are not implying that the people in the Hurricane Center don't have the courage or the expertise to do their job, correct? I mean, I know you are not——

Dr. ATLAS. That is correct.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. But I just want to make sure that, you know, right.

Dr. ATLAS. That is correct.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. I don't want anybody to ever misinterpret what you are saying, because I thought you were very positive and very clear.

IMPROVING HURRICANE FORECASTING

Getting back to the science now. Dr. Atlas, you and I have had conversations, and you just repeated it now, that one of the areas that we didn't need to do much better is in forecasting the strength, the intensity of a storm, and you have given me some, I think, very easy to understand in layman's terms, explanations as to where we are, and how we can do better, and if you could just give me a little bit of your outlook. Are you optimistic that we can do better, and what do we need to do in order to do better?

Dr. ATLAS. When I left NASA to come to NOAA, I did it because I had a specific goal in mind, and one of those goals deals with the

improvement of hurricane prediction. I agree wholeheartedly with every positive statement said about the National Hurricane Center and its personnel. They do an excellent job. It represents the state of our science, the state of the art. However, it is still not good enough for what the Nation needs. We need to narrow the cone of uncertainty. I believe that if we develop the kinds of models, and get the kinds of observations, and increased understanding that I have mentioned to forecast intensity, we will be able to narrow the cone of uncertainty as well.

We are at a time in hurricane science where resources put into computing, into research, into model development, and new observations can have tremendous payoff.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will yield back. Thank you, sir.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Diaz-Balart. I will recognize Ron Klein for five minutes.

ALTERNATIVES TO QUIKSCAT

Mr. KLEIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Dr. Atlas, and gentlemen, for coming today, and being part of our discussion.

I was focusing, in my questions to Mr. Proenza, on the difference of QuikSCAT and the role that QuikSCAT plays, and the difference if QuikSCAT is unavailable or in some diminished capacity, on marine forecasting, and of course, hurricane forecasting in general.

Can you give some comment on the quality and quantity of difference, based on what NOAA said, is here—is our, after pushing them a little bit, but here is the backup on how we are going to approach this, between the European satellite, and I guess there is a new Indian satellite that is coming online, or a couple of other things, plus the other data and resources we have available to us.

Dr. ATLAS. There is actually another American satellite that is functioning right now called WINDSAT, and I have done numerical experiments that show that WINDSAT does provide useful data, although not nearly as accurate or as much as QuikSCAT. In general, if we only had WINDSAT to replace QuikSCAT, we would lose about half of the beneficial effect of satellite surface wind data.

The European scatterometer, ASCAT, is comparable to their earlier scatterometer, in how it senses the surface wind, and does a little better than QuikSCAT in heavy rain situations, but is much poorer in terms of resolution and coverage, and does not have the ability to represent an entire storm circulation within its data coverage.

We believe that we will lose some forecast accuracy. Certainly, if we do nothing, we will lose forecast accuracy, but the mitigation plan that NOAA has, to make use of ASCAT, to augment our reconnaissance aircraft, and to potentially put new observing systems on unmanned aerial systems, could mitigate the loss of QuikSCAT very effectively. I think that one of the very good things NOAA has done is to develop this mitigation plan, and it is being thought out very carefully.

Mr. KLEIN. Okay. And just a followup on your comments on ASCAT, and your previous comment, the fact that QuikSCAT in its present form has more of a difficult time in heavy rains and things

like that. Are we already currently getting data from ASCAT? Is that part of our engagement currently, or is that just as a backup in the event QuikSCAT goes down?

Dr. ATLAS. We just started receiving data from ASCAT very recently. The forecasters are evaluating the quality of the data, and to what extent they can use it. There are several difficulties in applying the ASCAT data the way they applied QuikSCAT, and so, there is a learning curve that we need to get over.

Mr. KLEIN. And is there anything else going on in the rest of the world? I mean, obviously, the Far East has significant storms and typhoons and a lot of other things, other countries, other technologies, that are currently in place, that we are considering, or should be considering, or are we at the top of the curve here in science, and there is nothing for us to grab onto in any other part of the world?

Dr. ATLAS. Congressman, there are other countries that are developing scatterometers, but we don't know how good that data will be, or even whether or not they will make it available to us. There are other technologies that could also go into space, or be used on aircraft, that would bring about or contribute to significant further improvements in weather analysis and prediction.

MORE ON HURRICANE RESEARCH

Mr. KLEIN. Okay. And the last question is, we have heard a number of times that research, it is not just the satellite or the buoy, research is a key component of everything from developing models to, you know, identifying new factors that we should be considering. Are we currently researching or supporting the level of research that you believe is necessary for the future of weather forecasting at this moment, and if not, what do you recommend?

Dr. ATLAS. If I had to answer with a yes or no, I would have to say no, but that is partially because, as was pointed out earlier, scientists never believe they have, that we have enough resources for what we want to do.

I think the level of resources that has existed up to this point, with where we were in the period of less hurricane activity, and the state of our science, was appropriate. Now, in this period of very active hurricanes, and the fact that our science is now at a stage where we can rapidly capitalize upon additional resources, certainly more would be warranted.

Mr. KLEIN. And if you can get back to us on exactly what, it is easy to throw a number at something, but I think it would be helpful to this committee to understand what specifics that we could support, types of research, the amount of support, resources necessary to get you where you need to be. Thank you.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you, Mr. Klein. Mr. Inglis, five minutes.

DIRECTOR PROENZA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH WITNESSES

Mr. INGLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. McKinnon and Mr. Robinson, testimony from you is very helpful to establish that Mr. Proenza is a capable fellow, who did excellent work while he was

in a liaison role with the two of you. Is that a good way to characterize your testimony?

Mr. ROBINSON. Yes, sir. It is mine.

Mr. MCKINNON. It is fair enough.

Mr. INGLIS. That he was very effective in working with you, and a capable fellow. And I think that it is important for all of us to stipulate that that seems to be the case. You are here saying that, and apparently, the Administration thought that when they hired him to go the Center, right? Because they thought he was a very capable fellow.

I just was out in the hallway with some teachers, and had a little discussion about how, do you think it is possible that somebody that is a very good match for the superintendent of schools for a county is maybe not the best match as the principal of an elementary school? And of course, they immediately were shaking their heads yes. There is a different role involved. If you were the leader of a small elementary school, you are rubbing shoulders every day with the teachers, you are energizing them, you are being enthusiastic about their kids and what they are doing. You are working with them in their individual lives. Whereas if you are at the ed shed, the district superintendent, you are basically interacting with the community and principals, and various, at a different level.

Is it fair to say that your interaction with Mr. Proenza sounds like it might fit more the model of the ed shed guy, right, the district office person, that was interacting with you as community members? Is that accurate?

Mr. ROBINSON. I only interacted with him as a local representative. I work on the county level.

Mr. INGLIS. Yeah, so you worked with him in your capacity as a county employee, right?

Mr. ROBINSON. County emergency management. Right.

Mr. INGLIS. You never worked for him.

Mr. ROBINSON. No, I did not.

Mr. INGLIS. And Mr. McKinnon, you never worked for him.

Mr. ROBINSON. No, sir. I never worked for him.

Mr. INGLIS. So, in that way, you, while your testimony is very helpful in seeing that he is a very capable fellow, and substantiates the decision of the Administration to hire him in the first place, to go to the Center, you really can't testify as to what it would be like to work with him in a group of 46 people, sometimes 24 hours a day, sleeping at the Center when a storm is bearing down. You really don't know what it would be like to be there with him in that environment.

Mr. MCKINNON. And my comment would be, sir, we have worked very closely over the years, and I found Mr. Proenza to be very approachable, very personable, and an effective leader.

Mr. INGLIS. Yeah.

Mr. MCKINNON. I don't believe we have had enough time at the National Hurricane Center to find out exactly, we haven't even gone through an entire hurricane season with him at the helm, to find out exactly how effective he would be at the Hurricane Center.

Mr. INGLIS. Right. And of course, if 23 people of the 46 say that he is not effective, and hurricane season is coming on, it sort of indicates it is a scary proposition, that 23 say the elementary school

teachers don't have confidence in the elementary school principal, and think perhaps he or she should go back to the district office.

And of course, I would ask my colleagues to be thinking about how we have different relationships with our staff, perhaps, than we do with our constituents. With our constituents, we can be very friendly. They are out there. With our staff, we might have a very different relationship. And so, it is a different role, right?

Mr. MCKINNON. Yes, sir, but I think the word be out if your staff disliked you for that reason, and I have never heard that about Mr. Proenza.

Mr. INGLIS. You know, I have always been amazed at Members of Congress getting away with it. But anyway, I have no further questions. Thank you.

RETURNING DIRRECTOR PROENZA TO HIS FORMER POSITION

Chairman LAMPSON. Just one thing, as we wrap this up. How would either of you, Mr. McKinnon and Mr. Robinson, react to a decision that would return Mr. Proenza to his former position as Director of the Southern Regional Office?

Mr. ROBINSON. I would be very happy to hear that.

Mr. MCKINNON. Let me think about the question a moment, sir. That is a very good question. I think Mr. Proenza has a lot of potential. I think he has a lot to offer the American public, to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and to the National Weather Service. I think he would do the National Hurricane Center and the American public very proud, and I think he would make it, again, not to say that it has lost its reputation, but I think he would elevate its reputation back to the premiere hurricane center in the world, given the opportunity to advance the ideas that he has.

Chairman LAMPSON. Gentleman, thank you. Does anyone else have any? Mr. Diaz-Balart.

INVESTIGATING PERSONNEL PROBLEMS

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for your indulgence. And again, sort of speaking hypothetically, but—and again, as someone who really likes Mr. Proenza, I think he is a really good, decent man. And I think, not only that, that he is really trying to do the best job he can. And I don't think, see, I don't think there are any evil people here. This is not a conspiracy thing. I don't buy that. I think it is what it is.

But let me just ask you this, then, kind of theoretically, as well. If you all have a number of, you supervise an individual, and that individual has a number of people that he or she supervises, and if you get notified by those employees, half of them, the very people that you really respect, that their supervisor, the person that works under you, they cannot work with, that they are having major problems with, and you know that it is a very important job, would you ignore that request? Will you just say I don't care what you say, I am not going to do anything about it? Would you, in one way or another, and there are different ways of doing that? Or would you try to see what is actually going on, to make sure that things are running smoothly?

Mr. MCKINNON. Are you directing the question to me, sir?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Whoever, you know, whoever wants to.

Mr. MCKINNON. I believe there is two sides to every story, as you have said.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Absolutely.

Mr. MCKINNON. And for a matter of record, I do not want to cast any doubt on the credibility or the professionalism of anyone at the National Hurricane Center.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Which is what I hope we don't do.

Mr. MCKINNON. Exactly. Thank you. Certainly not. Certainly not.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Right.

Mr. MCKINNON. I do believe, in this case, opposites do not attract, and we may have some friction there. As with any case, and to answer your question, I do have people that report to me, and I do have supervisors that report to me. If there is a problem that the supervisor cannot resolve, then I do, if the information if brought to me, I do question the supervisor, and I question the person who has made the allegations, and we try to come to a suitable conclusion for all the parties that matter.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. And I think, again, in a more hypothetical way, I think that would be the only responsible, what I do now, we can argue as to what procedure you should take, in order to do that, but I think it would be, frankly, not reasonable to expect, if you have people that are well respected, who complain, and maybe they don't have good reason to, I think it would be totally irresponsible to not try to find out whether there is something to those complaints. And the reason I mention that is because again, I don't think there are, I agree with you, I don't think there are evil people here. The people at the Hurricane Center, by the way, who have not lost their reputation, who are incredible and who are very good, despite what, again, you know, we all say some things that we shouldn't say, I am sure we regret up here, but I am talking about Members of Congress, not you.

But when you have professionals at the Hurricane Center, with good or not so good reasons, whether an individual there is making the job impossible to do, I think it would be irresponsible to not take measures, whether the right ones are taken or not, to try to address. So, therefore, I don't see how NOAA acted wrong. I don't see how Mr. Proenza acted wrong. I don't see how the people in the Hurricane Center acted wrong. I think what you have here is, frankly, people that just can't work together very well. It doesn't mean they are evil. It doesn't mean they are not qualified, because clearly, Mr. Proenza is qualified, and clearly, the people in the Hurricane Center are qualified. And clearly, NOAA has tried to address it.

Would you disagree with that kind of general assessment?

Mr. ROBINSON. No, I think that is a reasonable statement. But I don't have all the inside knowledge.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Correct.

Mr. ROBINSON. And neither do you.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Correct.

Mr. ROBINSON. I mean, you have said that, and I think that, given that, all we can do is look at it from the outside and evaluate

it. I have given my perspective, and you all will have to work from your perspective.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. And Mr. Chairman, we obviously appreciate the perspective. Thank you, sir. Thank you, gentlemen.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you, Mr. Diaz-Balart. Gentlemen, thank you very, very much for your time, your insight, your answers. May you all have a good day. I hope you make your flight, and it is a nice one, and we will call you again.

At this point, well, shall we take—stand up, and take a deep breath as he comes in. Admiral Lautenbacher will be—Vice Admiral Lautenbacher is the next witness.

[Recess.]

Panel III

Chairman LAMPSON. After a very brief recess, we welcome the next panel, and that includes Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, who is the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, and the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

And also, Dr. James Turner, Deputy Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Dr. Turner led the assessment team, at the request of Admiral Lautenbacher, and will testify on the assessment and the findings of the assessment team's report.

Again, as our witnesses should know, spoken testimony is limited to five minutes, after which, we will ask, as Members of the Committee, five minutes, and it is also the common practice of the Subcommittee to take testimony under oath. Do you have any objections to being sworn in?

You also have the right to be represented by counsel. Is anyone represented by counsel today?

So, if you will, please stand and raise your right hand.

[Witnesses sworn]

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you, gentlemen. If you will have your seats, and Dr. Lautenbacher, would you please begin?

STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL CONRAD C. LAUTENBACHER, JR. (U.S. NAVY, RET.), UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR OCEANS AND ATMOSPHERE; ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA)

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Inglis, and distinguished Members of the Committee, and staff. I am here at your request today to address issues concerning the Tropical Prediction Center's National Hurricane Center, and the decision to place its Director, William Proenza, on leave.

Before I begin, however, I want to make clear to the Committee and all residents of coastal states in no uncertain terms that NOAA, the National Weather Service, and the TPC are fully prepared for this hurricane season. Our forecasting ability continues to improve, and the American people can expect nothing less than the full capabilities of the National Hurricane Center.

The scientists and forecasters at the TPC answer to one of the highest callings in public service, the protection of life and property. They have dedicated their careers to preparing their fellow citizens for the dangers brought on by tropical weather. When a storm is bearing down, they continue to calmly provide accurate and timely forecasts.

It is for these reasons that we want to provide them with all the support they need to do their jobs.

In recent weeks, some concerns about operations at the TPC have come to my attention. When Mary Glackin, a career NOAA employee with 22 years of experience in the National Weather Service and 30 in NOAA, became Acting Director of the Service on June 11, 2007, she was aware of a need to improve managerial rigor throughout National Weather Service operations. She promptly communicated to all senior staff the need for adherence to organizational policies, procedures, and the chain of command.

In response to information the TPC Director, William Proenza, may have disregarded direct instructions from his supervisor, Ms. Glackin specifically counseled Mr. Proenza about these matters on June 14, 2007. On June 19, Ms. Glackin, responding to a request of a TPC employee, participated in a conference call with 11 employees at the Hurricane Center, including seven of the nine hurricane specialists.

Despite expressing fear of retaliation for expressing their views, the participants on the call said that they felt muzzled by Mr. Proenza, that he lacked the knowledge of the hurricane program necessary to make informed decisions about the future of the program and hurricane forecasts, and that his actions were generating turmoil, fear, and a loss of cohesiveness at the Center.

When I was briefed about this call, I felt it was essential to look into what appeared to be significant employee complaints, questioning whether they could do their job under Mr. Proenza's leadership. In fact, I felt it would be irresponsible for a senior manager not to get to the bottom of the issue. Concerned about the ramifications of this discontent during the middle of the hurricane season, I decided we needed an immediate, fair, and impartial assessment of these allegations, independent of the National Weather Service. With lives potentially at stake, inaction was not an option.

Dr. Jim Turner, Deputy Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, agreed to lead a team to assess operations at the TPC. The team was given a broad mandate to address management, organizational structure, and operations. On Friday, July 6, Dr. Turner provided preliminary findings. Specifically, the Team advised that, based on their firsthand observations, "the continued presence of Director Proenza at the TPC will interfere with the ability of the assessment team to complete its work." Moreover, it was the "unanimous opinion of the assessment team that Mr. Proenza's actions during the assessment have not only failed to calm his staff, but have actually resulted in a level of anxiety and disruption that threatens the TPC's ability to fulfill its mission to protect the American people."

The Team cited incidents where Mr. Proenza questioned a senior forecaster at his workstation about his interview, approached other staff to ask for their support before they spoke with the Team, and

conducted media interviews on the operations floor while hurricane specialists were attempting to perform their regular duties.

After hearing from the Team, I advised Mr. Proenza on July 9 that he was being placed on leave, based on the Team's determination that his presence threatened the Center's "ability to fulfill its mission to protect the American people." On Friday, July 13, the assessment team presented its final report. It found that "the short-term ability of the TPC to provide accurate and timely information was put at risk due to the TPC director's disruptive conduct and the lack of trust between many staff and the director." More pointedly, the Team determined that "the TPC's ability to achieve its mission was seriously threatened because of the environment which had been created by the director's statements and actions."

Citing actions by Mr. Proenza that intimidated and alienated staff, damaged teamwork, and produced fears of retaliation, the Team concluded that "the negative work environment, exacerbated by the director, has had—and is likely to continue to have—a major deleterious impact on the center's ability to fulfill its mission, if he is allowed to return to his position."

The team recommended: "The current TPC Director should be reassigned and not be allowed to return to his position at the Center. This should be done due to his failure to demonstrate leadership within the TPC rather than due to his public statements." The assessment team also included a number of other recommendations for improving operations at the TPC, the National Weather Service, and NOAA. I have asked my Deputy Under Secretary to provide a written review and response to these recommendations within two weeks time.

Let me say at this point that William Proenza has a long and distinguished career with the National Weather Services. Any decisions I may make with regard to these recommendations will be made on the merits of the Team's assessment of operations at the National Hurricane Center, and not on any other issues or public comments Mr. Proenza may have made.

A copy of the Team's report, along with other relevant documents, has been included with the written testimony I have submitted for the record.

And finally, I would like to note that the official forecasts of the Tropical Prediction Center do not come out of a computer. They do not come out of a single satellite. Hurricane forecasting, at its core, still comes down to a team of specialists coming together to analyze all available data, and using their best expertise and wisdom to make a forecast. The American people need to know that when a storm is bearing down, those forecasters are focused on only one thing, that they feel free to offer their views, and that they are supported at the very highest levels.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Vice Admiral Lautenbacher follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL CONRAD C. LAUTENBACHER, JR.

I am here in response to your request for testimony on issues concerning the Tropical Prediction Center's National Hurricane Center. The Committee has asked me to provide an account of events relating to the hiring of and recent decision to place on leave the Director of the Tropical Prediction Center ("TPC"), Mr. William Proenza.

Before I begin, however, I want to make clear to the Committee and all the residents of coastal states in no uncertain terms that NOAA, the National Weather Service and the TPC are fully prepared for this hurricane season. Our forecasting ability continues to improve and the American people can expect nothing less than the full capabilities of the National Hurricane Center.

The scientists and forecasters at the TPC answer to one of the highest callings in public service—the protection of life and property. They have dedicated their careers to preparing their fellow citizens for the dangers brought on by tropical weather. When a storm is bearing down, they continue to calmly provide accurate and timely forecasts.

It is for these reasons that we want to provide them with all the support they need to do their jobs.

In summer 2006, the then-Director of the TPC, Max Mayfield, informed me of his decision to retire, and D.L. Johnson, the then-Director of the National Weather Service, initiated a search for a replacement. In November, General Johnson, with the concurrence of the Deputy Under Secretary, General (Ret.) Jack Kelly, recommended to me that William Proenza be appointed as Director of the TPC.

Mr. Proenza began employment at the TPC on January 6, 2007. During January to May 2007, Mr. Proenza made a series of statements to the media regarding the TPC's budget and the potential loss of NASA's QuikSCAT research satellite. The statements about the budget were not factually accurate and the statements about the satellite were misleading and potentially detrimental in terms of public confidence in the Center's forecasts. I felt that some of these statements could have been the result of Mr. Proenza's being new to the TPC and not yet up to speed in terms of his new role. To address these concerns, I instructed senior management to work with him throughout the spring and to provide him with the necessary information and training to succeed as TPC Director, including detailed budget information relating to TPC operations.

On June 11, 2007, Mary Glackin, a 30-year career NOAA employee with 22 years of experience in the National Weather Service, became the Acting Director of the National Weather Service. In assuming her duties, Ms. Glackin was made aware of the need to improve managerial rigor throughout National Weather Service operations. Accordingly, at the outset of her tenure, Ms. Glackin communicated to senior staff the need for adherence to organizational policies, procedures, and the chain of command.

With respect to Mr. Proenza, Ms. Glackin was advised that since January, "there [had] been times when [Mr. Proenza] may have disregarded the direct instructions of [his] supervisor, the Director, National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP), or [had] made decisions on [his] own which [he] had no authority to make." For example, Ms. Glackin had learned that Mr. Proenza instructed forecasters to replace the TPC heading with the "National Hurricane Center" label on the March 4 High Seas forecast. Because this action embedded the word "hurricane" in the forecast, it set off a "pan pan" alarm—a non-life threatening distress call—on every ship in the Pacific Ocean. To make sure there was no misunderstanding and to clarify management expectations, Ms. Glackin issued a memorandum on "Operating Procedures/Instructions," dated Thursday June 14, (attached) and met with Mr. Proenza in person in Florida the next day, to discuss its contents.

Ms. Glackin's memo was not a reprimand. After identifying the "pan pan" alarm and other instances over the past five months that had prompted her to prepare the memo, it acknowledged that "[s]ome of this. . .might have resulted from some confusion as to the various roles and responsibilities in the [National Weather Service]." Ms. Glackin, however, wanted to reiterate to him her instructions about adhering to organizational policies, procedures and the chain of command, and that going forward she "expect[ed] that [Mr. Proenza] and [his] staff will follow the directions and the policies and procedures developed by NCEP."

In particular, Ms. Glackin asked Mr. Proenza to consult on a regular basis with his direct supervisor on issues concerning "budget, science, research, and operational or administrative issues" that had "NOAA- or [National Weather Service]-wide implications or public safety consequences." Ms. Glackin expressly stated that she was "available to resolve any disagreements," once the two had discussed the matter fully, and expressed the intention to "work together to ensure accurate predictions and to support the work of [the NCEP], [the National Weather Service], and NOAA."

On the evening of June 18, Ms. Glackin received a request from an employee at the TPC for a conference call. The call took place on Tuesday, June 19, with eleven TPC employees participating. These included seven of the nine TPC Hurricane Specialists; the TPC Union Steward agreed this meeting was requested by the TPC

group and did not constitute a formal meeting requiring official notification to the union.

During that call, Center employees raised several serious concerns about Mr. Proenza's actions, and whether they could do their job under Mr. Proenza's leadership. These concerns are reflected in a memorandum for the record (attached) including:

- They feared Mr. Proenza would take retaliatory action against them if he learned they were voicing their views, some stating they "were scared" of Mr. Proenza and others that they were "deep[ly] concern[ed] that their future was at stake if this meeting got out,"
- They felt "muzzled" by Mr. Proenza, citing as an example the development of priorities for improving hurricane forecasting agreed to by the hurricane specialists, "but not approved by [Mr. Proenza]," and therefore not permitted to go forward to NCEP/NWS,
- They lacked confidence in Mr. Proenza's knowledge of the hurricane program and were concerned that Mr. Proenza would make decisions about its future without the required knowledge or willingness to listen to staff,
- They believed the QuikSCAT issue had been "overblown" and its representation in the media "is not accurate,"
- They questioned his "integrity" and were "outraged" at his misrepresenting the actions and views of his staff in the office and media, and
- They felt Mr. Proenza's actions were generating "turmoil," "anxiety," "fear," and a loss of "cohesiveness" at the Center.

Ms. Glackin and Dr. Uccellini were gravely concerned by what they had heard, and communicated to me their conclusion that immediate action was necessary. Given the fact that seven of the nine TPC Hurricane Center forecasters were expressing these concerns, it was their assessment that if the current situation persisted, the Center would have difficulty fulfilling its life-saving mission. Because of the serious nature of the situation, I consulted with my chain of command and we determined we had no other choice but to take action. Had we failed to act, we would have been derelict in our duties as public servants charged with protecting people's lives.

However, in our judgment, the need for prompt action had to be balanced with making sure we had a clear understanding of the situation and were fair to all concerned. We therefore decided that the right approach was to convene an independent assessment of the Center's management and operations and its ability to meet its mission, and to set a fairly short deadline for completion of this assessment.

Accordingly, on June 26, I requested that Dr. James Turner, NIST's Deputy Director, lead a team to undertake this charge. A copy of my memo to Dr. Turner is attached. On July 2, a memo was distributed to all employees of the Tropical Prediction Center advising them that I had asked for this independent operational assessment (attached). I further stressed that the "candid views and opinions of the entire TPC team are extremely important to this assessment" and encouraged "everyone's engagement, participation, and support of this endeavor without fear of retaliation or criticism." I also advised staff that the Team would be touring the Center and would be available to conduct individual and group interviews.

On Friday, July 6, Dr. Turner and his team provided me with a preliminary assessment and recommendation regarding management of the Center (attached). Specifically, the Team advised me that, based on their first-hand observations, "the continued presence of Director Proenza at the TPC will interfere with the ability of the assessment team to complete its work." Moreover, it was the "unanimous opinion of the assessment team that Mr. Proenza's actions during the assessment have not only failed to calm his staff but have actually resulted in a level of anxiety and disruption that threatens the TPC's ability to fulfill its mission to protect the American people." In a series of documented incidents, Mr. Proenza had questioned a senior forecaster at his work station about his interview, which made the forecaster uncomfortable and upset; he approached other staff and asked for their support before they spoke with the Team; and he held media interviews on the operations floor about the assessment while the hurricane specialists were performing their duties analyzing tropical activity. The team thus recommended that Mr. Proenza be "temporarily removed from active direction of the Center until such time as the assessment is complete and has been reviewed by NOAA management."

On Saturday, July 7, 2007, Ms. Glackin sent me a memo, agreeing with the recommendation of the assessment team, and recommending that Mr. Proenza be placed on leave (attached).

The following Monday morning, July 9, Mr. Proenza was advised that he was being placed on leave, and that the reason for doing so was based on the preliminary determination of the independent assessment team that his presence was interfering with the Team's completing its work, and resulting in a "level of anxiety and disruption that threatens the [Center's] ability to fulfill its mission to protect the American people." A copy of the memo issued to Mr. Proenza is attached to my testimony. A memo was then distributed to Center employees advising them that Mr. Proenza would be on leave until further notice, and that Deputy Director Ed Rappaport would serve as acting Director of the Center during this period (attached).

On July 13, Dr. Turner and the assessment team completed the report. A copy of the report is attached to my testimony. The team found that the TPC is technically equipped to continue to provide accurate and timely information regarding hurricane-related activities. Specifically, the TPC's readiness has been strengthened by the addition of four new hurricane specialists in late 2006 (a two-thirds increase over prior years), the addition of a new hurricane forecast model this year, additional buoys, and a new instrument on the hurricane reconnaissance planes that will provide surface wind data.

At the same time, the Team found that "the short-term ability of the TPC to provide accurate and timely information was put at risk due to the TPC director's disruptive conduct and the lack of trust between many staff and the director." Even more pointedly. "the Team concluded that the TPC's ability to achieve its mission was seriously threatened because of the environment which had been created by the director's statements and actions." The team cited actions by Mr. Proenza that intimidated some staff, alienated others, damaged teamwork, and produced fears of retaliation. In short, the Team found that "[t]he negative work environment, exacerbated by the director, has had—and is likely to continue to have—a major deleterious impact on the Center's ability to fulfill its mission, if he is allowed to return to his position." Drawing on these findings, the Team recommended immediate action with respect to Mr. Proenza, due to his failure of leadership:

> The current TPC Director should be reassigned and not be allowed to return to his position at the Center. This should be done due to his failure to demonstrate leadership within the TPC rather than due to his public statements about [the] QuikSCAT satellite or NOAA leadership. A replacement should be recruited as soon as possible through a nationwide, full and open competition.

I want to note that the report also includes a number of other recommendations for improvement of the TPC, NCEP, NWS and NOAA. These include better management approaches (e.g., establishing "clear, written statements of authority for decision-making throughout the management chain at TPC"), enhanced employee training and leadership development programs (e.g., "[i]nstitut[ing] formal succession planning and leadership programs for developing staff from within"), additional support for identifying and addressing technical needs, tighter linkages with the research and user communities (e.g., establishing a "user group to provide regular input" to the Center), clearer visioning, improved organizational structure in certain areas, stronger integration of the TPC into its parent organization, and constantly improving public education and outreach. I have directed the Deputy Under Secretary, Jack Kelly, to lead a review of the report and provide a response to the Team's recommendations within two weeks' time (attached). Following the same procedures we have used in responding to GAO reports, General Kelly will comment on the report's findings and recommendations and detail the steps to be taken to address the identified concerns.

Let me say at this point that William Proenza has a long and distinguished career with the National Weather Service. Any decisions I may make with regard to these recommendations will be made on the merits of the Team's assessment of operations at the National Hurricane Center and not on any other issues or public comments Mr. Proenza may have made.

And finally, I'd like to note that the official forecasts of the Tropical Prediction Center do not come out of a computer. They do not come from a single satellite. Hurricane forecasting, at its core, still comes down to a team of specialists coming together to analyze all available data and using their best expertise and wisdom to make a forecast. The American people need to know that when a storm is bearing down, those forecasters are focused on only one thing, that they feel free to offer their views and that they are supported at the very highest levels. Again, the scientists and forecasters at the TPC—indeed, employees throughout the National Weather Service and NOAA, including myself—answer to one of the highest callings in public service—the protection of life and property, and we are fully prepared for this hurricane season.

Attachment 1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
1325 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3283
THE DIRECTOR

June 14, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: X. William Proenza
Director, Tropical Prediction Center
National Centers for Environmental Prediction

FROM: Mary M. Glackin
Acting Assistant Administrator
for Weather Services, and
Director, National Weather Service

SUBJECT: Operating Procedures/Instructions

Upon my assignment to this position, I have been examining the current National Weather Service (NWS) management structure to determine the best way to ensure accurate delivery of services. The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of the organizational standards and procedures you should follow. To the extent there were mistakes or confusion regarding roles during the past few months since you assumed responsibilities for your current position, I hope this memorandum clarifies the situation. I will also discuss these issues with Jack Hayes when he begins his tenure.

As the Director of the Tropical Prediction Center (TPC) and as the primary spokesperson for the NWS during hurricane and other tropical events, you are one of the most important expert voices on these matters. However, as a member of the Senior Executive Service, you are expected to understand the importance of following organizational policies and supervisory instructions, and exercise sound judgment in the performance of your duties.

I understand that in these past five months there have been times when you may have disregarded the direct instructions of your supervisor, the Director, National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP), or have made decisions on your own which you had no authority to make. For example, I learned that you instructed your forecasters to replace the "Tropical Prediction Center" label with a "National Hurricane Center" label on the March 4 High Seas worded forecast. Since the word "hurricane" appeared in the forecast, it set off a "pan pan" alarm on every bridge on every ship in the Pacific Ocean region. I also learned that, more recently, you have been signing Standard Form 52s authorizing career promotions and forwarding them directly to Workforce Management for processing, despite a long-standing procedure (of which I understand you were instructed) at NCEP that the Director, NCEP, is the official who authorizes such personnel matters.

Some of this, again, might have resulted from some confusion as to the various roles and responsibilities in the NWS. However, in the future, I will not accept intentional

disregard or refusal to work with one's supervisor any more than you would accept a member of your own staff who would do so. Such conduct does not promote an efficient or effective NWS, and puts in jeopardy our ability to help the public prepare for Hurricane Season and to engender confidence in our tropical weather. Because TPC is part of NCEP, I expect that you and your staff will follow the directions and the policies and procedures developed by NCEP.

I also ask that you consult on a regular basis (weekly or more frequently, if necessary) with the Director, NCEP, to communicate and coordinate tropical prediction budget, science, research, and operational or administrative issues that you or he feel deserves discussion because of their NOAA- or NWS-wide implications or public safety consequences. I am available to resolve any disagreements, but only after you two have discussed the matter fully.

Secondly, I want to make certain that your interactions with the news media are in the best interest of conveying critical and accurate information to the public. There are Departmental and NOAA policies of which you need to be aware, the knowledge of which could have aided your judgment in discussing NOAA budget and policy issues in a public forum. Again, in the past it appears coordination within the NWS management chain would also have given you accurate factual data that would be helpful in public discussions.

I understand that you have just completed an intensive, professionally-led media training program on June 5. That training, and the ensuing contacts with NOAA Public Affairs, should assist you immensely as you focus your current energies on assisting the public's severe storm preparedness. I also remind you to read Department Administrative Order 219-1, "Public Communications," if you have not already done so. You must become familiar with its requirements and adhere to them. If you have any questions about the policy you should contact the NOAA Public Affairs Office. You should also re-read the April 23, 2007, memorandum from the NOAA CFO, Maureen Wylie, regarding communicating budgetary information and the requirements of OMB Circular A-11.

I do not want you to lose sight of your responsibilities to the public. The Director of the Tropical Prediction Center plays an important role in communicating with the public about severe weather, and NOAA is committed to fully supporting you in doing so. I think you understand this role, but your recent statements instead may have caused some unnecessary confusion about NOAA's ability to accurately predict tropical storms. The training, policies, and organizational coordination that I mentioned above should assist you in developing strategies to deliver accurate information to the public and correct any misimpressions that may result from your media coverage.

Your commitment to coordinate your public communication efforts and internal administrative management within the NWS organizational chain will also avoid any unnecessary detrimental effects on our organization, for example: requiring me to spend a disproportionate amount of time to correct any confusion; causing undue concern and misunderstanding among your staff, and; taking valuable time away from your public

role as the NOAA official responsible for instilling confidence in our tropical storm predictions and preparing the public for hurricanes and other tropical events. I am particularly concerned about the latter two effects as you and your staff should be focused on TPC operations and especially hurricane forecasting, during this Hurricane Season.

With the Hurricane Season upon us, we need to work together to ensure accurate predictions and to support the work of NCEP, NWS, and NOAA. It has been my experience that adherence to organizational policies, procedures, and the chain of command will allow us to achieve this goal. I believe you have the requisite knowledge and experience to help NOAA and NWS succeed. I look forward to tapping that experience and working with you at this important time.

cc: Conrad Lautenbacher
John J. Kelly, Jr.
Louis W. Uccellini

Attachment 2

This material is administratively confidential and pre-decisional, and contains information employees have requested be kept confidential and protected out of fear of retaliation by their Supervisor.

On Monday evening, June 18, 2007, a confidential conference call was requested of Mary Glackin, Acting AA, NWS by an employee of the Tropical Predication Center (TPC) which indicated they might be joined by colleagues. The call occurred at noon on Tuesday, June 19, 2007, and was attended by 11 Tropical Prediction Center (TPC) employees, including 7 out of 9 Hurricane Specialists (4 Senior or Lead Hurricane Specialists and 3 Junior Hurricane Specialists). Also in attendance were Mary Glackin, Acting Assistant Administrator for Weather Services and Director, National Weather Service (TPC second level supervisor), Dr. Louis Uccellini, Director, National Centers for Environmental Prediction, NWS (TPC first level supervisor),and Eddie Ribas, Director for Workforce Management, NOAA (servicing Human Resources Director). Included in this group was the TPC NWSEO Union Stewart who agreed that this was a meeting requested by this group, and did not constitute a formal meeting requiring formal notification to NWSEO.

This Memorandum for the Record (MFR) documents this meeting.

At their request, and to protect confidentiality of statements made by the TPC employees, their names will not be used in this MFR.

"A" led the discussion by emphasizing that all of the participants had a deep concern that their future was at stake if this meeting got out and their names got back to Bill Proenza, Director, TPC. The employee was very clear that there was a high fear level among the employees at the TPC concerning Bill's ability and willingness to retaliate.

Mary Glackin assured the group that she wants to make sure that 1) the employees at the TPC have a comfortable work environment that is free of fear and 2) the NWS provide the best service to the American public which requires the public to have confidence in TPC's ability to provide service.

Mary then said she wanted to hear from the employees, as they had requested:

"J" started the discussion by stating that Bill doesn't represent the views of the Hurricane Specialists with respect to interactions with NOAA, the NWS and other components of NCEP especially on the QUIKSCAT issue. The employee also said that all the hurricane specialists have much more collective experience in hurricane forecasting than Bill and that they were concerned that their views were not getting out.

"M" agreed and went on to say that she believed the QUIKSCAT issue is overblown, noting that they questioned Bill's personal integrity and that the staff is "outraged" by his representing the staff as being in support of his position and related actions. They also went on to say that if the satellite fell out of the sky tomorrow, they would still continue with their forecasts and meet their mission.

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"J" then made it clear that Bill is trying to manipulate the staff in other areas. That Bill broke into a technical meeting last Friday, June 15, 2007, after Mary Glackin presented him with a letter and that Bill stated he had already "let it out." Later the staff heard that Bill claimed he shared the letter with the staff and they may have leaked it. The staff was "outraged" at this contention. Several of the staff then commented that he has no sense of integrity and that he is misrepresenting the issues.

Louis Uccellini asked if everyone agreed with "J's" statement, and the other 10 employees said yes.

"V" then provided a perspective from the administrative staff. The employee noted that Bill spent little time in the office, did not get into any topic in depth and pointed to his arbitrary way of going around policy, causing problems with all administrative processes and creating "lots of turmoil" which has never been seen before by the employee until Bill's arrival. They also noted that since their arrival in 1985, they never felt as much anxiety in the Center. This employee recently had to call the Southern Region Headquarters Office (Bill's former organization) and the first word out of the Southern Region employees mouth was, "I have been expecting your call," which this employee perceived as similar issues may have been happening during Bill's tenure as Director, Southern Region, NWS.

"S" noted from the technical support unit that there is no longer any cohesiveness to the unit. Everyone is doing their own thing.

"D" notes that NWSEO members in the Center agree about the integrity issue and that they have no confidence in Bill's integrity. They also felt that the MFR done by one of the TPC employees on the events after the letter was issued to Bill on Friday, June 15, 2007, was accurate.

"M" said that Bill seems to look "prettier" to the people who are the furthest away from him, but looks "horrible" to the Hurricane unit. They also stated that Bill "scares me" and that because of his unethical behavior, they have lost respect in him.

Louis Uccellini asked if everyone on the phone agreed with "J" and "M's" comments.

They all agreed (emphatically).

"A" emphasized the threat and said they felt Bill would put "daggers in their back" if he knew about the meeting (this conference call). They were being "muzzled" by Bill. The example cited was the development of priorities for improving hurricane forecasting which were agreed to by the hurricane specialists but not approved by Bill. Thus they

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were not permitted to go forward to NCEP/NWS. They repeated that they "were scared of Bill'," and were scared about the impact of their career since they had such little time in with the Federal Government. This employee believes the QUIKSCAT issue is overblown and Bill's actions show a lack of integrity. The employee is outraged by this and how it reflects on all of them. Again expresses their fear and anxiety about Bill and the way he will act against all of them.

Eddie Ribas asked if anyone had notified their union steward or any other NWSEO representative of these issues/matters. "D" stated that Bill had total support from NWSEO, especially the President, but they were not sure about the Vice President.

"M" stated they did not want to work in a place where they had to worry. That they loved their job, but wanted to work in a Center where they did not have to check the local newspapers or turn on "CNN" to see "what they were in for that day." When pressed to explain, they clarified the comments to mean what kind of mood Bill would be in and what type of calls they should expect. "M" recently worked a shift where the Center was flooded with media inquiries.

"L" noted that they had been there a long time - longer than any of them and can state that they have had the privilege of working with a number of TPC Directors that all knew the hurricane program. They then stated that Bill does not know the hurricane program and that they were concerned that as the Director, Bill would make decisions about the future of the program without the required knowledge.

"V stated that they had been interacting with administrative personnel in Southern Region, Training Center, and the Finance Office in Kansas City and was surprised that they all seemed to know about Bill's method of operation and how he always tries to position himself by what ever means as the little David against the Goliath. The employee went on to say that they had been warned not to talk with him alone.

"R" stated he had no "personal issues" with Bill. However, he had a "lack of confidence" in Bill's knowledge of any of the ongoing model issues. "R" went on to say that Bill's priorities "seem to be misguided" and that Bill makes decisions that are not thought through.

"J" emphasized that with previous directors one could always count on them to be a resource to the hurricane specialists. "J" then stated that Bill "is not a resource to the hurricane specialists."

"R" spoke of three major concerns. The first was the representation of QUIKSCAT. It's representation in the media "is not accurate". They stated improvements in the hurricane

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program require a vision that includes a next-generation version of QuikSCAT with an advanced modeling program. Second, "R" was very concerned that internal conflicts are being played out in the media. "R" then related that they heard on the radio coming to work the other day a commentator worrying that with all of this turmoil, how could the TPC be ready for this season. Other participants on the call agreed with this sentiment. "R" stated that QUIKSCAT is important but that a "long-term, rather than a short-term solution is needed" and that it was "disheartening" to be working with the research community, primarily NESDIS and NASA and that they ("R") did not feel supported by Bill to come up with a "long-term" solution. "R" also stated that Bill forwards to all TPC staff positive emails received by him (Bill) and consequently felt that the TPC staff was being manipulated. "R" mention that they felt what Bill was doing was not serving as a "Whistleblower" on the QUIKSCAT issue. The third issue raised by "R" dealt with Bill's interaction with staff. They stated that Bill does not proactively consult with his staff – that all interaction is initiated by staff. "R" stated that "we (the TPC staff) have information to share, and he (Bill) does not want it – he is marginalizing it."

"A" stated "given what you (Mary, Louis, and Eddie) understand, where do they go from here."

"D" stated that they felt uncomfortable if their coming forward was the sole basis for taking action against Bill.

"M" expressed concern about a hurricane preparedness event schedule for Wednesday, June 20, 2007, that the media would be speaking about the "wrong things," not preparing for the hurricane season.

"A" stated that there are employees outside of the TPC that they believed also felt manipulated by Bill. They referenced an employee in another line office, "P".

Several people then spoke up about Bill's lack of focus on important issues and his focus on "logo issues" which are a distraction, and that his zeal in personally removing other logos from the hurricane center was "scary and bizarre." He even removed the FIU logo, which someone said would have required him to step on a ladder to do so, even though the TPC is located on their campus and FIU covers all rent for the facility. It was noted that this was a 'waste of time and money",

The meeting then spun down with several random comments about their fear of Bill, about not wanting to put on the radio when coming to work in the morning and several expressing fear about even coming to work in the morning, with additional comments about his lack of integrity in the way he deals with all issues. There were also references

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to several people in the group from TPC getting calls from SR personnel who stated that this was the way Bill operated in Southern Region Headquarters, that he operated the office the same way against other components of the NWS and NOAA; and that they were fearful too.

Mary Glackin and Eddie Ribas then interceded to assure the people that they would be protected and that we all valued their input into this call and that we would not divulge any of this information in a way that would make them vulnerable to Bill's retaliation, a concern expressed by staff at the beginning of the call. Louis Uccellini then noted that he had the utmost admiration for the way the TPC handled team approaches in the past (citing the synergy plan with OPC, HPC, and AR), the way the hurricane unit handled the 2004, 2005, 2006 seasons with incredible professionalism and that the way they handled themselves in this call only added to his admiration.

Call was ended at approximately 12:55 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Mary Glackin 6/21/07
Mary Glackin
Acting Assistant Administrator
for Weather Services and Director,
National Weather Service

Louis W. Uccellini 6/21/07
Dr. Louis Uccellini
Director for National Centers for
Environmental Prediction, NWS

6/21/2007
Eduardo(Eddie) J. Ribas
Director for Workforce Management,
NOAA

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Respectively submitted,

Mary Glackin 6/21/07

Mary Glackin
Acting Assistant Administrator
for Weather Services and Director,
National Weather Service

Dr. Louis Uccellini
Director for National Centers for
Environmental Prediction, NWS

6/21/2007

Eduardo(Eddie) J. Ribas
Director for Workforce Management,
NOAA

Attachment 3

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary for
Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

JUN 26 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. James M. Turner
Deputy Director
National Institute of Standards and Technology

FROM: Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy, (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere

SUBJECT: Operational Assessment of Tropical Prediction Center

Thank you for agreeing to lead a team to assess the operations of the Tropical Prediction Center and the Center's ability to assure the delivery of accurate and timely hurricane forecasts to the American public. The Tropical Prediction Center is charged with providing these forecasts for the Atlantic as well as the East Pacific Ocean basins with the goal of saving lives and property.

I request that your team address these questions and report your findings and recommendations to me as soon as possible. Attached is a more detailed explanation of the scope and logistics of this assignment to which we have agreed.

Attachment

THE ADMINISTRATOR

Scope of Operational Assessment

Scope:

The Scope of this operational assessment is to examine the management and operations of the Tropical Prediction Center (TPC) to ensure that the TPC is positioned to provide accurate and timely information to the public and relevant local, state, and federal authorities about hurricane-related activities and events. Specifically, this study will assess: (1) the ability of the TPC to continue to provide accurate and timely information, (2) whether the management and organizational structure facilitates TPC achieving its mission and (3) the extent to which lessons learned from recent hurricanes, including whether the 2005 Gulf Coast events were incorporated.

Composition:

The Study Group will be composed of a Chair and another member from the National Institute of Standards and Technology, a senior manager from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with knowledge of operational issues, an administrative assistant from NOAA, and a representative from the Department of Commerce's Office of the General Counsel, as well as any other members deemed necessary and appropriate by the Chair.

Operating Procedures:

The Study Group will report its findings in writing to the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere. The target date for a final report is July 20, 2007. Interim updates will be provided weekly or more often as requested. To complete the assessment within the timeframe noted, members may need to be relieved temporarily of their official duties.

The Group will operate on the basis of consensus. Logistical and clerical support will be provided through NOAA at a site away from, but convenient to, the TPC premises. The Group will make appropriate arrangements to schedule and conduct the discussions. Costs for travel expenses will be borne by each member's parent organization. Public and congressional inquiries will be directed to the appropriate NOAA Office of Public Affairs or Legislative Affairs for response.

The Group will have access to all TPC staff for discussions, who will be allowed to speak to the Group during non-duty hours if they so choose. An opening discussion with the Director, TPC, is essential, as well as a preliminary meeting with all employees at the TPC. The discussions will be in accordance with any relevant collective bargaining agreement and within the stated scope of the study. No guarantees of confidentiality may be made to any TPC employee or manager, but all employees will be assured that NOAA and the Department will do everything necessary to protect employees from retaliation or retribution stemming from their participation in the assessment. Key National Weather Service (NWS) managers and staff will also be available. The Group will be given access to NWS and TPC documents that are relevant to the assessment. The Group may

also obtain relevant information from people outside of NOAA (*e.g.*, state and local emergency coordinators, etc.) if necessary and directly related to issues arising during this operational assessment.

The work of the Group will be considered as completed when the Report of Findings is accepted by the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere.

Attachment 4

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

JUN 29 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: Employees of the Tropical Prediction Center

FROM: Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy, (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere

SUBJECT: Operational Assessment of Tropical Prediction Center

The Tropical Prediction Center's (TPC) success in providing accurate and timely hurricane forecasts to the American public is the result of your dedication and hard work. TPC has a long history of providing these forecasts and I appreciate the role all of you have played in building the Center's capabilities.

I have become aware of concerns about TPC's ability to meet its mission. I want to ensure the Center's continued readiness for not only this season but future seasons.

Therefore I have asked for an independent assessment of the Center's overall capabilities. Attached to this memo is a copy of their charge which includes an expectation that they will give me a report no later than Friday, July 20, 2007. The candid views and opinions of the entire TPC team are extremely important to this assessment and I encourage everyone's engagement, participation, and support of this endeavor without fear of retaliation or criticism.

The assessment team will be led by Dr. Jim Turner, Deputy Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), one of our sister bureaus in the Department of Commerce. Dr. Turner will be joined by Mat Heyman the NIST Chief of Staff, Kathy Kelly from the National Environmental Satellite and Data Information Service (NESDIS), who runs a 24 X 7 satellite operations center, and John Guenther, an attorney with the Department of Commerce. The team will also have a staff assistant supporting them. The team is to tour TPC and you may have already interacted with them this morning.

At the team's request, they were briefed on NOAA and NWS organizational matters and they have asked the NWS headquarters staff questions that will assist them in conducting the onsite assessment. The team will be available to conduct individual and group interviews. This is your opportunity to express your views, concerns, comments and suggestions to the team.

Finally, I want to reiterate how critical your forecasts are to the protection of life and property. I remain committed to providing a properly resourced, effective working environment to support the successful accomplishment of your mission.

THE ADMINISTRATOR

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Attachment 5

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899-
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

July 6, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, (USN ret.)
Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and
Atmosphere & NOAA Administrator

FROM: James Turner
Deputy Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology

SUBJECT: Recommendation regarding management of the Tropical Hurricane Center

The purpose of this memorandum is to confirm, in writing, the recommendation communicated to you earlier today by the Tropical Prediction Center (TPC or Center) Assessment Team. It is the preliminary assessment of the team that the continued presence of Director Proenza at the TPC will interfere with the ability of the Assessment Team to complete its work Further, it is the unanimous opinion of the Assessment Team that Mr. Proenza's actions during the assessment have not only failed to calm his staff but have actually resulted in a level of anxiety and disruption that threatens the TPC's ability to fulfill its mission to protect the American people. For this reason, we recommend that Director Proenza be temporarily removed from active direction of the Center until such time as the assessment is complete and has been reviewed by NOAA management.

NIST

Attachment 6

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Office of the Under Secretary for
Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230
National Weather Service

JUL 7 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere

FROM: Mary M. Glackin
Acting Director, National Weather Service

SUBJECT: Tropical Prediction Center Administrative Changes

Per the recommendation of the Tropical Prediction Center Assessment Team received today, I have identified the following three options:

1. Temporarily detail Mr. Proenza to an unspecified set of duties.
2. Require Mr. Proenza to work from home.
3. Place Mr. Proenza on Administrative Leave in pay status for the duration of the Organizational Assessment.

After consultation with my management team, I recommend option 3, place Mr. Proenza on Administrative Leave. The duration of the leave should be effective immediately through the completion of the Organizational Assessment. Dr. Edward Rappaport, deputy director of the Tropical Prediction Center would be acting director for this time period.

7/7
Concur

Let's Discuss

Attachment 7

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

JUL 7 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: X. William Proenza
Director, Tropical Prediction Center
National Centers for Environmental Prediction

FROM: Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere

SUBJECT: Administrative Leave

This purpose of this memorandum is to advise you that effective immediately you are being placed in an administrative leave status for a period not to exceed August 9, 2007. During this timeframe, you will remain in pay status and are not to report to the Tropical Prediction Center (TPC) unless authorized to do so beforehand by Dr. Louis W. Uccellini, Director for National Centers for Environmental Prediction.

This action is in response to the Assessment Team's preliminary determination that your continued presence will interfere with the ability of the Team to complete its work, and that your actions during the assessment have not only failed to calm your staff, but have actually resulted in a level of anxiety and disruption that threatens the TPC's ability to fulfill its mission to protect the American people.

While you are in this administrative leave status, you are not to contact TPC staff. Additionally, you must make yourself available to the Assessment Team should they need to discuss any matters with you relating to their undertaking.

I appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

THE ADMINISTRATOR

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Attachment 8

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

JUL 7 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: Employees, Tropical Prediction Center
National Centers for Environmental Prediction

FROM: Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere

SUBJECT: Tropical Prediction Center Administrative Changes

As you know, an Assessment Team headed by a prominent NIST scientist has undertaken, at my request, a review of the operations of the TPC. In response to the Assessment Team's preliminary determination that current conditions at the TPC pose an obstacle to the team's completion of its work, as well as the Team's concern that, as expressed by many of you, there currently exists a level of anxiety and disruption that threatens the TPC's ability to fulfill its mission to protect the American people, I have taken the following actions:

- The Director will be on leave until further notice, which means that he will not be undertaking any official duties or performing any function in your chain of command.
- Dr. Edward Rappaport, current Deputy Director of the TPC, will serve as acting Director of the TPC during this period.
- Mr. David Caldwell, Chief Operations Officer, National Centers for Environmental Prediction, will report to the TPC on July 9 to provide additional operational support.

Thank you for your continued support and patience during this time. Your dedication to the provision of high quality hurricane forecasts and tropical analysis and forecasts is much appreciated by NOAA and the Nation.

Cc:
W – M. Glackin
W/NCEP – L. Uccellini

THE ADMINISTRATOR

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Attachment 9

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899-0001

JUL 13 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: CONRAD C. LAUTENBACHER, JR.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere

FROM: Dr. James M. Turner
Deputy Director
National Institute of Standards and Technology

SUBJECT: Report from the Tropical Prediction Center Assessment Team

Attached is the Report on the assessment of the Tropical Prediction Center, in Miami, Florida.

NIST

Introduction

On June 26, 2007, Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher (U.S. Navy ret.), Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, requested Dr. James M. Turner, Deputy Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology, to lead an independent team to assess the operations of the Tropical Prediction Center (TPC), commonly referred to as the National Hurricane Center, and the center's ability to deliver accurate and timely hurricane forecasts to the American public. In order to assess the operations of the TPC, the team was asked to look at the following three areas:

(1) The ability of the TPC to continue to provide accurate and timely information,
(2) Whether the management and organizational structure facilitates TPC achieving its mission and,
(3) The extent to which lessons learned from recent hurricanes, including the 2005 Gulf Coast events have been incorporated.

In addition to the team leader, the team included Kathleen A. Kelly, senior manager from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Matthew Heyman, the chief of staff of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), John K. Guenther, a senior counsel from the Department of Commerce's Office of General Counsel, as well as Alexis T. Gutiérrez, NOAA Fisheries.

The team began its work by meeting with several members of NOAA's National Weather Service's senior leadership to gain an understanding of the National Weather Service, the National Centers for Environmental Prediction, and the TPC. After several days of conducting background interviews, the team traveled to Miami, Florida, on July 2 and 3, 2007 to meet with the staff of the center. The team developed a standardized set of questions used in each interview at the center. Each interviewee was presented with a copy of the questions at the beginning of the interview. To ensure accuracy, at the end of each interview, interviewees were subsequently provided an opportunity to confirm the team's understanding of their responses.

On Monday, July 9, 2007, the team returned for two days to Miami to meet with additional TPC staff members. In total, the team met with 31 out of the 46-member TPC staff, including its senior managers.

After returning to Washington, D.C., the team met to reach consensus on their findings and recommendations. These findings and recommendations were then forwarded to Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher for his review and deliberation.

Findings

Our assessment considered both the TPC's technical capabilities and its working environment. The team's findings addressed its three charges:

1. The ability of the TPC to continue to provide accurate and timely information regarding hurricane-related activities

Across the board, staff members of the TPC are highly dedicated to achieving the mission of saving lives and protecting property.

Even in the midst of recent controversy at the center, staff expressed vigorous commitment to, and belief in, the organization and its mission. At the same time, staff strongly expressed the need for a more settled work environment and for strong, informed, interactive, and supportive management.

From a strictly technical standpoint, the TPC is equipped to continue to provide accurate and timely information.

This finding is bolstered by the most recent statements of TPC Director Bill Proenza (referred to as the director throughout this document) and by senior hurricane forecast staff.

> "I know that we agree that the National Hurricane Center, with our capabilities, this season's new tools and graphics, coupled with the tremendous preparedness effort we have put forth this year, ***has never been more ready to serve the American people in a hurricane season.***" Bill Proenza, memo to TPC staff, July 7, 2007

The addition of four new hurricane specialists in late 2006 – a two-thirds increase over prior years – strengthens the center's readiness.

So does the addition of a new hurricane forecast model introduced this year, additional buoys, and a new instrument (SFMR) on the Air Force hurricane reconnaissance planes that will provide data on surface winds.

The short-term ability of the TPC to provide accurate and timely information was put at risk due to the TPC director's disruptive conduct and the lack of trust between many staff and the director.

After our first visit on July 2-3, the team concluded that the TPC's ability to achieve its mission was seriously threatened because of the environment which had been created by the director's statements and actions. The director's actions intimidated some staff and alienated others. Teamwork, essential to the center's hurricane forecasting capabilities, was damaged severely. Some staff were concerned about retaliation for voicing their views.

The team witnessed first-hand the impact of the director's conduct during the first visit, leading to our recommendation that he be removed temporarily from active direction of the center until the assessment was complete and reviewed by NOAA management.

Mistrust was caused by:

Statements by the director about the limited lifetime of the QuikSCAT satellite and the resulting impact on forecasts – made without context or caveat – raised public doubt about the center's ability to perform its mission and distracted center staff from doing their jobs.

> These statements confused and diluted the preparedness message to the public and created an atmosphere which introduced doubt about the accuracy of upcoming forecasts. They also raised concerns among the hurricane specialists that the director was jeopardizing support for other, more valuable, observation sources—notably hurricane reconnaissance aircraft.

Many staff reported that the director lacked integrity in his conduct with TPC employees; they said he intentionally misrepresented their technical views.

> Several members of the staff noted that the director rebuffed their attempts to correct or to contextualize his assertions with respect to items ranging from QuikSCAT to the budget -- and that he repeated certain claims even after he was corrected by staff. For example, one senior hurricane specialist noted that the director repeatedly quoted him out of context about the potential impact of QuikSCAT's loss even after the director was told that he was in error.

Statements and actions by the director led many staff to question his technical and managerial capabilities, motives, and leadership. This caused divisions among the staff and between the director and some staff.

> For example, one specialist reported that the director disrupted his ability to track tropical storms. "We had Barbara and Barry. He kept bringing the media over [onto the operations floor] to show QuikSCAT, while I am trying to put out a forecast. It was hard to get the job done."

> Separately, the assessment team witnessed similar behavior. In the team's initial meeting with the director, he asserted that he wanted the assessment "to be least disruptive as possible to our operations" and "to be low-key." He told the team that he did not "want anyone going to the media otherwise that will engage a lot of explanation on our part to them." Nevertheless, the next day, he held media interviews on the forecast operations floor about the assessment while hurricane specialists were performing their duties analyzing tropical activity.

The negative work environment, exacerbated by the director, has had—and is likely to continue to have—a major deleterious impact on the center's ability to fulfill its mission, if he is allowed to return to his position.

Even while the team was gathering information, the director's actions not only failed to calm his staff but resulted in a level of anxiety and disruption that threatened the TPC's ability to fulfill its mission. In one instance reported to the team, the director visited a senior hurricane forecaster at his work station to question him about his interview. This visibly upset the forecaster, who later raised it with the team. He indicated that he was

made uncomfortable by the director's questions and by the visit itself because it was out of the ordinary.

The director also approached other staff, including a senior manager, and asked for support before they spoke with the assessment team. This continued until the team advised the director to cease having those discussions.

By the same token, simply replacing the director will not resolve the center's workplace issues. If staff morale and long-standing organizational issues are not addressed, they will hinder the center's longer-term ability to accomplish its mission.

In the longer term, the TPC faces some potential degradation of its capabilities if current data about wind speed and direction (wind vectors) over the oceans are no longer available due to the loss of QuikSCAT before similar or better data are available through a yet-to-be designed alternative instrument.

- The QuikSCAT satellite is on its redundant transmitter as of July 2006; its lifetime is unknown, although the identical, primary transmitter lasted 7 years.
- After another ocean surface wind vector instrument was dropped from plans for the NPOESS satellite due to concerns about its likely effectiveness and satellite program cost overruns, in 2006 NOAA began assessing requirements for a replacement instrument.
- Although very limited efforts have been made to quantify the implications of the eventual loss of information from QuikSCAT, quantitative data about the likely impact of the loss (and the relative contributions of data from other sources) will be generated in a large-scale analysis recently launched by NOAA.
- ASCAT, a European satellite, just began providing wind vector data to the TPC in early July 2007. An assessment of the usefulness of these data will be made well after the 2007 hurricane season when the data can be analyzed.
- Senior hurricane specialists emphasized the need to have a thorough assessment of the impact of QuikSCAT and to ensure that future instrumentation provides more advanced -- rather than simply equal -- capabilities.
- The NOAA administrator and the TPC director in a press conference on May 22 described replacement efforts and expressed satisfaction with the approach.
    - *"I am encouraged in those conversations that we have had, and discussions we have had, that the nation will be moving ahead very constructively in coming up with design next-generation QuikSCAT to replace the current, which is still operational QuikSCAT that we have at this time."[sic] Bill Proenza, May 22, 2007, NOAA news conference*

In the long term, the TPC's ability to improve hurricane intensity forecasts can be advanced primarily through more research within the federal and academic communities.

It is widely agreed that hurricane track forecasts have improved steadily over the past two decades but that intensity forecasts have improved only minimally and are a top research priority.

A NOAA scientific advisory board working group reported in October 2006 on research directions and needs in order to improve hurricane intensity forecasts. (Others, including

the National Science Board in a January 2007 study and the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorology in February 2007, cited the need for additional research on hurricane intensity.)

NOAA provided an initial status report on implementing this group's recommendations in March 2007 and then again in May 2007.

NOAA decided in May 2007 to form a new group encompassing all of its hurricane research activities to generate and track plans for improving intensity forecasts and the understanding of hurricane forces generally. That Hurricane Project Team is now organizing, and will have high-level NOAA representation.

The Joint Hurricane Testbed (JHT) managed by the TPC is and should be part of NOAA's hurricane research efforts, especially with its emphasis on applying research to generation of the hurricane forecasts.

> Funds for the JHT were reduced in FY 2007 by $0.26 million, down from the FY 2006 allocation of $1.39 million and applied to improving hurricane models. That decision was made by a U.S. Weather Research Program group made up of NOAA senior research managers that annually allocates funding for weather research.
>
> After the TPC director raised this issue with NOAA senior management, this group was asked to review their initial recommendations for funding of projects—and they reaffirmed their decision that funding for other research projects was of higher priority.

2. Whether the management and organizational structure facilitates TPC achieving its mission

The TPC's structure generally permits it to achieve its mission, although some improvements are needed.

The center director has four distinct, major responsibilities – helping to oversee storm forecasts, communicating those forecasts to the public through the news media, communicating the importance of preparedness to local, state, and federal emergency management officials and to the public, and establishing the priorities and managing the operations of the TPC. These multiple responsibilities place enormous pressures on the director and can cause burnout and inattention to one or more of these responsibilities.

The hurricane specialists report directly to the TPC deputy director. This results in an imbalance in management; the Tropical Analysis Forecast Branch (TAF B) and the Technical Support Branch each have a direct supervisor who leads those groups and reports to the deputy director.

The TPC staff – especially within TAF B -- does not universally believe that its expertise is respected and called upon as often as it should be by the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) or the National Weather Service (NWS). These employees do not believe that NCEP is supportive enough of the center's needs.

The lack of effective supervisory oversight from NOAA, NWS, NCEP, and TPC management has contributed significantly to long-standing problems at the center, as well as the disruption over the past 6 months.

This extends to personnel selection (including the rushed appointment of the current TPC director), performance and conduct management, budgeting, communications, and organizational development, planning, and change.

Communication among TPC units and staff, and between TPC and other NCEP units, and NWS, is inadequate and is a major contributor to the morale and organizational issues mentioned earlier.

The branches at the TPC operate in some respects as separate units which only come together as a cohesive unit during a storm. Units—and to some extent, individuals—within the TPC are, in a variety of respects, compartmentalized. In itself, this contributes substantially to morale issues. These existed at the TPC prior to the current director's coming onboard and have been exacerbated since his arrival. Teamwork and morale issues are especially notable between the hurricane forecasters and TAF B; a number of TAF B staff reported that they do not feel as if they are on equal standing and they are not receiving equitable resources and attention. After a preliminary review, the assessment team was unable to determine if reality matched this perception. But, as is often the case, perception becomes reality.

Information flow among staff and supervisors about what and how decisions are made – whether at TPC, NCEP, NWS, or NOAA – is lacking on some fundamental matters. These include how priorities and budgets are set, and how training decisions are made. (See below). This has resulted in some staff feeling that they do not have an opportunity for input on matters ranging from whether to adopt new approaches for presenting forecasts to ergonomic considerations at the forecasters' desks. They also include issues of basic decision making by supervisors; a number of staff expressed concerns about indecisiveness by managers and confusion about approval processes and managers' authority within the decision making chain of command.

The TPC and its staff are not taking full advantage of opportunities for improvement, not only in developing forecasts, but also in communicating those forecasts and being fully responsive to partners and customers.

The current director has emphasized some of those opportunities, including the introduction of improved graphical tropical weather outlook after a trial period. Among the staff, there are differences of opinion about whether that trial period is long enough to be used with a high degree of confidence. The broader issue – what trial steps and periods are appropriate before a new forecast-related product or service is "rolled out" – also applies to other new ideas.

Tighter linkages with the research community, within and outside NOAA, can provide benefits both to the TPC forecasters and to researchers.

There has been interaction with other NCEP centers and the NOAA Hurricane Research Division (HRD), both via peer-to-peer contacts and participation in joint planning efforts and conferences. But by and large, awareness about these interactions among TPC staff is limited to the actual participants. Tighter, coordinated linkages would improve the work of each organization.

The vast majority of TPC staff interviewed understands their responsibilities.

But since the current TPC director assumed his position, there has been more frustration among managers and administrative staff throughout the organization about lack of delegation of responsibilities—both during normal operations and when the director is not in the office. Empowerment of officials to act in the absence of the director is unclear.

Many employees are not aware of basic administrative policies and procedures – including approval for budget-related needs, such as training, travel and research. In some instances, routine administrative procedures are not followed.

For the most part, staff interviewed by the team lack any understanding of how priorities for projects and budgets are determined and how decisions are made, even when those decisions impact their work directly. This is especially true of the TAF B staff. This is true in spite of the fact that the assessment team found much of this information readily available.

This has resulted in some confusion and a sense of uncertainty–and in some cases, resentment-- about career development possibilities. This appears to be the case despite information provided to the team about communications to all staff about training opportunities. In fact, over the past several years, more training funds have been available than have been requested by staff.

3) The extent to which lessons learned from recent hurricanes, including the 2005 Gulf Coast events, have been incorporated (source document: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/assessments/pdfs/Katrina.pdf)

To strengthen ties with Weather Forecast Offices, in July 2006, TPC began to notify local Weather Forecast Offices immediately when storm surge forecasts were ready.

To better communicate storm surge predictions, a disclaimer was applied to storm surge graphics in April 2007 which clearly indicated a measure of uncertainty. TPC also provided links to a web site where the viewer could get additional information.

In addition, the following were noted as best practices:

TPC has increased its emphasis on outreach in order to develop stronger ties with state and local emergency management officials.

The TPC directors have expanded outreach and liaison. The center now offers direct contact with governors in affected states to ensure that the forecast is properly conveyed at the highest state levels.

In 2006, TPC began offering three, one-week hurricane program training courses for partners in emergency management. Those courses were held at the TPC in 2006 and 2007.

The following remains as an outstanding research challenge:

Limited progress has been made in improving forecasters' ability to predict rapid intensification due to the technical magnitude of the challenge.

Recommendations

Immediate actions

The current TPC director should be reassigned and not be allowed to return to his position at the center. This should be done due to his failure to demonstrate leadership within the TPC rather than due to his public statements about QuikSCAT satellite or NOAA leadership. A replacement should be recruited as soon as possible through a nation-wide, full and open competition.

A replacement director who demonstrates the following characteristics should be sought:

- Strong hurricane forecasting knowledge and experience
- Strong communications skills
- Strong *management* and *leadership* skills

The TPC deputy director's capabilities and activities should complement those of the director, recognizing that it is difficult to recruit a director with superior capabilities in all three areas.

Morale problems and divisions among the staff must be addressed as a high priority for the good of the center and to ensure that the organization can perform its mission.

With strong support from all levels of NOAA, the TPC director needs to improve management of and morale within the center, specifically to ensure:

- Management responsiveness
  - The director needs to demand management excellence from supervisors, and to hold those supervisors accountable, requiring a heavy emphasis on performance management for supervisors and employees alike.
- Teamwork
  - Clear divisions among the staff must be addressed. In the short-term, there are ample opportunities to address "low-hanging fruit" that could immediately improve the workplace environment. This can be achieved through greater collaboration, empowering the staff, and an emphasis on teamwork.
  - Morale problems and divisions among the staff must be addressed as a high priority for the good of the center and to ensure that the organization can perform its mission. These include differences among: long-time versus newer employees; hurricane specialists versus tropical forecasters; technical support staff versus forecasters.
- Continuous improvement
  - It is critical that the TPC foster an environment where new ideas, continuous improvement, and change is entertained, encouraged, supported and funded.
  - The center must constantly look for ways to use today's and tomorrow's tools to communicate with and to educate emergency management officials, private sector providers of storm-related information,

stakeholders, and the public. This can and must be done in a collaborative environment with management's strong encouragement.

- Employee continuous education and development
  - NWS/NCEP must find a way to enable leadership training for TPC employees who are interested in gaining those skills.
  - NOAA, NCEP, and TPC policies, procedures, and available funding for training staff and attendance at professional conferences should be made clear to all staff and made part of individual development plans for each employee; these plans should be tracked and discussed during performance reviews.

The director should make maximum use of organizational development expertise available in the Department and the private sector to accomplish these tasks.

NCEP, NWS, and NOAA should increase their focus on the critical technical needs in hurricane forecasting, including improved ocean surface vector wind data, intensity understanding and forecasting, and modeling.

NOAA is forming a new group to focus on and improve coordination of hurricane-related research and operations. This group should be made operational expeditiously.

Satellite-based instrumentation is expensive and subject to long planning horizons; the value of active observation instruments, like the instrument aboard QuikSCAT, should be quantified in the near future. Planning for a more capable replacement for the QuikSCAT satellite instrumentation should proceed apace.

NCEP's recently launched assessment to quantify the relative contributions of QuikSCAT-generated data on hurricane-related analysis and forecasts should be given high priority as NOAA plans for an improved, replacement satellite-based instrument.

Organizational and communication improvements:

NOAA leadership at all levels must require the highest level of conduct and performance from its employees and its managers. Supervisors must know that they will be supported in the management of their operations and held accountable for failure to manage effectively.

Make the following organizational changes:

- Create a Hurricane Forecast Branch chief (separate and distinct from the center deputy director).
- Make the three branches (hurricane, tropical analysis forecast, and technical support) direct reports to the same TPC supervisor.
- Consider moving the Science Operations Officer (SOO) and storm surge activities into a separate unit reporting to the office of the director.

Establish clear, written statements of authority for decision making throughout the management chain at TPC—and communicate them to all employees.

Develop the methods and means to ensure that the products and services provided by the TPC are meeting the needs of users. Establish a user group to provide regular input on the TPC's priorities and proposed new or revised products.

This group would serve as a useful, ready-made sounding board that would aid the TPC in focusing on improved forecasting as well as improved communication of forecasts and the need for emergency preparedness.

TPC should develop a vision for the future, clearly identifying its priorities and how it plans to get there.

This vision and these plans should cascade from NOAA/NWS/NCEP strategic plans. All TPC staff should be given the opportunity to participate in this planning.

Institute formal succession planning and leadership programs for developing staff from within.

It is critical that the TPC and other centers of excellence within NCEP--where skills are so specialized--grow leaders via development programs. Such training opportunities are available within NOAA and the Department.

NWS/NCEP needs to foster an environment in which its centers, including the TPC, feel that they are part of the process and part of one organization.

NOAA must communicate aggressively, in plain language, key facts and rebut erroneous information about its hurricane program to stakeholders and to the public, including:

- Descriptions of the full array of techniques and tools that go into hurricane forecasting—including the strengths and limitations of satellite observations, aircraft, buoys, and other instruments as well as models and the forecasters themselves. For example, some in the public believe incorrectly that reconnaissance planes provide data akin to but less valuable than that provided by QuikSCAT.
- Descriptions of NOAA's key challenges in improving hurricane forecasts and its plan for meeting those challenges -- including realities about uncertainties in forecasts -- especially in terms of intensity.
- Descriptions of recent and planned improvements.

This Report was prepared by the following members of the Tropical Prediction Center Assessment Team.

7/13/07

Dr. James M. Turner — Date
Deputy Director
National Institute of Standards and Technology

7/13/07

Kathleen A. Kelly — Date
Director
Office of Satellite Operations
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

7/13/07

Matthew Heyman — Date
Chief of Staff
National Institute of Standards and Technology

7/13/07

John K. Guenther — Date
Senior Counsel
Office of the General Counsel for Admin.
Employment & Labor Law Division

7/13/07

Alexis Gutierrez — Date
Foreign Affairs Specialist
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Attachment 10

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

July 18, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: John J. Kelly, Jr.
BGEN, U.S. Air Force (Ret.)
Deputy Under Secretary for
Oceans and Atmosphere

FROM: Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere

SUBJECT: *Report from the Tropical Prediction Center Assessment Team* and Development of Responses and Action Plan

Please find attached the *Report from the Tropical Prediction Center Assessment Team.*

I task you to lead a review of the report and provide me with responses to the team's recommendations as well as an Action Plan within 14 calendar days (by July 31, 2007).

Attachment

Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., Navy (Ret.)
NOAA Administrator

A native of Philadelphia, Pa., retired **Navy Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher**, Ph.D., is serving as the undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere. He was appointed Dec. 19, 2001. Along with this title comes the added distinction of serving as the eighth administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He holds an M.S. and Ph.D. from Harvard University in applied mathematics.

Lautenbacher oversees the day-to-day functions of NOAA, as well as laying out its strategic and operational future. The agency manages an annual budget of $4 billion. The agency includes, and is comprised of, the National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Services; National Marine Fisheries Service; National Ocean Service; National Weather Service; Oceanic and Atmospheric Research; Marine and Aviation Operations; and the NOAA Corps, the nation's seventh uniformed service. He directed an extensive review and reorganization of the NOAA corporate structure to meet the environmental challenges of the 21st century.

As the NOAA administrator, Lautenbacher spearheaded the first-ever Earth Observation Summit, which hosted ministerial-level representation from several dozen of the world's nations in Washington July 2003. Through subsequent international summits and working groups, he worked to encourage world scientific and policy leaders to work toward a common goal of building a sustained Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) that would collect and disseminate data, information and models to stakeholders and decision makers for the benefit of all nations individually and the world community collectively. The effort culminated in an agreement for a 10-year implementation plan for GEOSS reached by the 55 member countries of the Group on Earth Observations at the Third Observation Summit held in Brussels February 2005.

He also has headed numerous delegations at international governmental summits and conferences around the world, including the U.S. delegation to 2002 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Ocean Ministerial Meeting in Korea, and 2002 and 2003 meetings of the World Meteorological Organization and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in Switzerland and France, as well as leading the Commerce delegation to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa.

Before joining NOAA, Lautenbacher formed his own management consultant business, and worked principally for Technology, Strategies & Alliances Inc. He was president and CEO of the Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education (CORE). This not-for-profit organization has a membership of 76 institutions of higher learning and a mission to increase basic knowledge and public support across the spectrum of ocean sciences.

Lautenbacher is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy (Class of 1964), and has won accolades for his performance in a broad range of operational, command and staff positions both ashore and afloat. He retired after 40 years of service in the Navy. His military career was marked by skilled fiscal management and significant improvements in operations through performance-based evaluations of processes.

During his time in the Navy, he was selected as a Federal Executive Fellow and served at the Brookings Institution. He served as a guest lecturer on numerous occasions at the Naval War College, the Army War College, the Air War College, The Fletcher School of Diplomacy, and the components of the National Defense University.

His Navy experience includes tours as Commanding Officer of USS HEWITT (DD-966), Commander Naval Station Norfolk; Commander of Cruiser-Destroyer Group Five with additional duties as Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Riyadh during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, where he was in charge of Navy planning and participation in the air campaign. As Commander U.S. Third Fleet, he introduced joint training to the Pacific with the initiation of the first West Coast Joint Task Force Training Exercises (JTFEXs).

A leader in the introduction of cutting-edge information technology, he pioneered the use of information technology to mount large-scale operations using sea-based command and control. As Assistant for Strategy with the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel, and Program Planning Branch Head in the Navy Program Planning Directorate, he continued to hone his analytic skills resulting in designation as a specialist both in Operations Analysis and Financial Management. During his final tour of duty, he served as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Resources, Warfare Requirements and Assessments) in charge of Navy programs and budget.

Lautenbacher lives in Northern Virginia with his wife Susan who is a life-long high school and middle school science teacher.

Chairman LAMPSON. Thank you, Admiral. Dr. Turner, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF DR. JAMES TURNER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY

Dr. TURNER. Thank you, sir. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittees, I am providing information to you today pursuant to the formal request I received in writing from the Chairman.

I am happy to provide a brief summary statement about the work at the Tropical Prediction Center of the independent assessment team. Our team was composed of Matthew Heyman, National Institute of Standards and Technology, John Gunther, Department of Commerce, Kathy Kelly and Alexis Gutierrez, both of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.

We were charged to do the assessment. When we were charged to do the assessment, we asked for a written scope. We were asked to assess: One, the ability of the Tropical Prediction Center to continue to provide accurate and timely information; two, whether the management and organization structure facilitates TPC achieving its mission; and three, the extent to which lessons learned from recent hurricanes, including whether the 2005 Gulf Coast events have been incorporated.

Please note that these are management issues. The assessment was not intended to be a technical referendum on the efficacy of the QuikSCAT satellite. Discussion of QuikSCAT was only pertinent to us, insofar as it impacted the three areas the Team was asked to assess. So that we would be clear on what our mission was, we also asked that our work be considered independent. We zealously guarded that independence, and that independence was scrupulously respected by NOAA management.

Our process involved visiting the Center twice, touring the facilities, and being available to all employees, including the Director, who wanted to speak with us. We made ourselves available to the employees at times that would not interfere with their work schedule. In all, 31 of the 46 Center employees voluntarily came forward to answer the prepared questions we had. Each employee was also offered the opportunity to comment on any areas they felt pertinent to our scope, which were not addressed in our questions.

Every employee we interviewed was provided with a written draft summary of what we thought we heard as their responses. The employees were free to correct the draft if errors were detected. Using the interviews, as well as our personal observations and firsthand experience at the Center, we developed a set of findings to address our charge. Where we thought pertinent, we provided recommendations.

The report was delivered to Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher on July 13, 2007. At this point, sir, would you like for me to provide a brief summary of the findings and recommendations?

Chairman LAMPSON. Yes, sir. Please.

Dr. TURNER. First, we divided the findings up according to the three areas we were charged to address. First, the ability of the TPC to continue to provide accurate and timely information regarding hurricane-related activities. Across the board, staff members of

the TPC are highly dedicated to achieving the mission of saving lives and protecting property.

We also looked at the technical capability, as well as the work environment. And from a strictly technical standpoint, the TPC is equipped to continue to provide accurate and timely information. However, the short-term ability of the TPC to provide accurate and timely information was put at risk due to the Director's disruptive conduct, and the lack of trust between many staff and the Director. The negative work environment, exacerbated by the Director, has had and is likely to continue to have a major deleterious impact on the Center's ability to fulfill its mission, if he is allowed to return to this position.

By the same token, simply replacing the Director will not resolve the Center's workplace issues. If staff morale and longstanding organizational issues are not addressed, they will hinder the Center's ability to accomplish its mission. In the longer-term, the TPC faces some potential degradation of its capabilities, if current data about wind speed and direction, wind vectors over the oceans, are no longer available due to the loss of QuikSCAT, before similar or better data are available, through a yet to be designed alternative instrument.

The second charge, whether the management and organizational structure facilitates their achieving their mission. The lack of effective supervisory oversight from NOAA, the National Weather Service, NCEP, and TPC management, has contributed significantly to longstanding problems at the Center, as well as the disruption over the last six months.

And finally, to whether lessons learned were incorporated, we used as our source document the Service Assessment from Katrina. We found that the lessons learned were, in fact, incorporated, that there were several best practices identified, and that there were research challenges remaining, the primary one of which was the forecast of intensity.

Among our recommendations, the current TPC Director should be reassigned, and not be allowed to return to his position at the Center. This should be done due to his failure to demonstrate leadership within the TPC, rather than due to his public statements about the QuikSCAT satellite, or NOAA leadership. A replacement should be recruited as soon as possible, through a nationwide full and open competition. Morale problems and division among staff must be addressed as a high priority, for the good of the Center, and to ensure that the organization can perform its mission.

NCEP, the National Weather Service, and NOAA should increase their focus on the critical technical needs in hurricane forecasting, including improved Earth ocean surface vector wind data, intensity, understanding and forecasting, and modeling. NOAA leadership at all levels must require the highest level of conduct and performance from its employees and its managers. Supervisors must know that they will be supported in the management of their operations, and held accountable for failure to manage effectively.

NOAA must communicate aggressively, in plain language, key facts, and rebut erroneous information about its hurricane to stakeholders, the public, and then, we have a number of things after that.

DISCUSSION

NOAA'S REACTION TO THE PROBLEMS WITH DIRECTOR PROENZA

Chairman LAMPSON. That is fine. We may get to some of those during our questioning, and I appreciate your testimony. We, at this time, will go into our rounds of questioning, and I will yield myself five minutes.

Admiral Lautenbacher, when did you learn of the complaints from the Center?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. I learned about the complaints on June the 19th, in a phone call from Mary Glackin, who is the Acting Director of the Weather Service.

Chairman LAMPSON. Was it the day before you came to visit me? Well, actually, the day before you came to visit me, Mr. Proenza and the Center must have been pretty much on your mind, for on June 26, you sent a note over to the head of NIST, asking that Dr. Turner be loaned to NOAA to head up a review team.

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. When I came to see you, we were very concerned about the personnel issue at the Hurricane Center, and were working on ways to deal with it.

Chairman LAMPSON. Was the communication that you sent on that day the first communication between NOAA and NIST regarding who might be detailed to such a team?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. The first communication, I think was, I signed on June 26, and that is the first one that I am aware of at this point, that we, in order to set in motion the kinds of procedures and process that was necessary, we needed to ensure that we had the right documents, the right charge, that the Team agreed with it, people were involved, so that was the beginning of the process.

Chairman LAMPSON. On that same day, you produced a brief outline of what you wanted the Team to review. When was the first draft of that produced, and by whom?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. I don't recall. I can try to take that for the record. It was certainly one of my staff.

Chairman LAMPSON. On June 26 also, you received legal authority to take managerial actions against Mr. Proenza. Do you remember receiving that authority?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. Yes, I do. The background on that is that the Secretary of Commerce holds the authority to reassign and transfer members of the level of employment at which Mr. Proenza is at. I can't overemphasize the extraordinary concerns that I felt from what Mary Glackin had relayed to me, and when I expressed that to the Department, they felt that we needed to have a way to ensure that if there were some immediate problems, that we would have some way to deal with them. It was clearly a backup mechanism to ensure that we would not undermine the ability of that team to function to forecast hurricanes.

Chairman LAMPSON. And so, while you were working to put together the team that will get to the bottom of the situation at the Center, you were also securing the authority to get rid of or reassign Proenza. And yesterday, the staff were told by the head of the review team, that they were going into their review of the Hurri-

cane Center with no preconceived notions. That doesn't seem that you shared that attitude. When did you first meet with the review team?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. I have always been interested in a fair and impartial review of what was going on at the Hurricane Center, and I would ask you, you can ask Dr. Turner about his feeling of independence or not, but that was where I was going. I have never been, I have never publicly stated or been involved in any issues other than trying to make the situation such that Mr. Proenza could succeed in his task as the head of the Hurricane Center. As I said, it was purely a backup to ensure that if there were some situation that came up, that we could move quickly, and not undermine the capability of the Center.

Chairman LAMPSON. Did you tell them that you had sought the authority to transfer or reassign Mr. Proenza?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. I don't recall whether I told them that or not.

Chairman LAMPSON. What did you tell them about him? What was your charge to them?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. My charge to them is in the document that we provided, which indicates the three tasks that we asked them, and my personal conversations, as far as I can recall, were in line with the written document that we had provided, and the charge that we gave to the Team.

Chairman LAMPSON. I am going to yield back my time, and yield time now to Chairman Miller.

THE PROENZA PLAN

Chairman MILLER. Good afternoon. Admiral Lautenbacher, you said that you first heard of any problems at the Center on June 19.

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. Yes, sir.

Chairman MILLER. Okay. There was an April 21 mail[2] that spoke of a five-step Proenza plan, and it said that you had asked for that. What is the Proenza plan, what were the five steps? What was the purpose of it? What was that all about?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. That is a euphemism for us trying to help Bill to accommodate to his new position. We had asked and talked about, and I can't expressly remember who had what idea, but we felt the following, that first of all, he is in a new position, and for any employee, and certainly at the SES level, there is a requirement that you have a performance plan, so that their progress and their expectations of the management can be outlined and agreed to by the employee.

I wanted to make sure, first of all, confirmation from the chain of command that that was in place, because he had just come into a new position from an older position, and that needed to be done. The next step was that it was time for a mid-year review. You are required to consult with your employees, and to have a face to face meeting, in terms of telling them how they have done, where they are going, and you know, advocating what needs to be done with them. Those were two.

[2] Inserted in the record on pp. 19–22.

Three was, given some of the misleading statements that had been in the press, that we asked him to, I wanted the chain of command to provide some ethics training. And four was to, and these are not, there is no five step program. This was designed to give him the material and tools in order to make him a more effective Director. Fourth was the information and direct connection with our budget activities, so that he would have full and free access, and the information on how much was being spent on various issues, and particularly, his part of the world. And then, five was media training. He is responsible for his statements in public, and is, quite frankly, the most visible spokesman of NOAA, and it is very important that he do that job well.

So, those were the five kinds of steps. They were designed to provide for him the tools to make him successful in the job.

Chairman MILLER. Why did you ask legal to look at it? The email says Eddie said he wanted to get legal to look it over.

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. Because I asked the HR folks, I wanted to make sure, I am very deferential to protecting the rights, as a career person myself, I am very deferential to protecting the rights of career employees, making sure that we do not, management does not overstep the bounds of what is proper, right and proper, in order to supervise and maintain adequate control and management of all employees, so it was a check to make sure that we were not overstepping any potential bounds.

NOAA DOCUMENTS

Chairman MILLER. There have been no subpoena issues by this committee. We have described to NOAA what kinds of documents we want provided. We got 700 pages of documents last night. Excuse me, 284. You have mentioned legal here. Of course, none of this is subject to a subpoena, but has NOAA provided all the documents that meet the description that we provided you, of the documents that we want? Have any been withheld on any claim of lawyer-client privilege or executive privilege, or decisional process privilege, or Privacy Act privilege, or any other basis?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. None of that for the documents we provided, and I am certainly going to state, and that your staff knows, we have not provided, we have not completed the document search. We are working as quickly as we can to provide all of the information you need. We want to cooperate with your need to review everything, and we are continuing to work on that as fast as we can.

Chairman MILLER. Okay. And we will continue to get documents from you, then.

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. Yes, sir. You will continue to get documents from us.

THE MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Chairman MILLER. Fine. The way that this management assessment was described, or as Mr. Proenza learned of it, was that he got a call, as they were arriving, from you. So, that was the first he learned of it, that other employees at that Center knew about it, knew the Team was coming, but for him, they showed up at his door, and that seems to be, apparently was intentional, a plan.

It sounds more like law enforcement serving a search warrant than a management assessment. Why was it done in that way?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. That was not the intention at all. The issue was to try to protect the rights of both Mr. Proenza and the employees. I am not aware of who knew or didn't know before whatever, but I know that arrangements were made logistically to ensure that someone knew that there would be some people coming, so that there would be someone to——

Chairman MILLER. But was there a decision, a conscious decision that Mr. Proenza would not know that there was a management assessment team on the way?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. There was a conscious decision to try to make this as, let us see, what is the right term here, we wanted to assess the situation as it was. We were very concerned, I was concerned, based on what I heard from Mary Glackin about reprisals, and the employees' concerns, so the issue was to try to, to the best that we could, and this isn't some big secret operation, this is just to try to do it as a snapshot of the way this, the way the operation functions, and to do it in a way that didn't alarm either Mr. Proenza or the employees. That was the intent.

Chairman MILLER. Have you sent in management teams in similar circumstances, and not told the head of the office that they were arriving until they were at his doorstep?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. I have not done that, have not had the need to do that in my term as the head of NOAA. I have done it a number of times in my Navy career, and it is a normal process to have reviews that are done as daily business is occurring, in order to not to disrupt the command, which is another issue. We didn't want them to spend a lot of time trying to prepare, and create a great deal of, perhaps, consternation, and as I said, concern about the reaction the employees would have if Mr. Proenza and they were trying to prepare for some, and again, it was an assessment, a snapshot assessment. It was not designed in any other way, except to uncover the facts.

Chairman MILLER. Okay. I have more questions, but there will be an additional round. Mr. Inglis for five minutes.

COURSE OF ACTION TAKEN WITH DIRECTOR PROENZA

Mr. INGLIS. Admiral, Chairman Lampson was concerned in his questions about why it was that you didn't mention it, the pending action involving the Team going in to see Mr. Proenza, at the time that you met with him, Chairman Lampson. Is that, in retrospect, a good decision on your part, or——

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. I believe so, because at the time, we had not completed the full discussion and deliberation process to make a final decision on exactly how it would be conducted, try to ensure protections if we were to do it, and exactly when we would do it, and what the results, the plan had not been formulated at that point, when I saw the Chairman.

Mr. INGLIS. Now, suppose, my take on that if it is a personnel matter, it is really not ripe for discussion. Is that right? I mean, in other words, we don't exactly discuss, you wouldn't naturally, you wouldn't take it upon yourself to discuss personnel matters that aren't yet decided.

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. I would not do that as a normal course of action. I did advise the Committee, and called, personally called a number of people on Monday to tell them of what the issue was, and how we were going to try to deal with it, because I am very respectful that this committee needs to understand what is going on at an area as sensitive as the Hurricane Center.

Mr. INGLIS. And you could have simply terminated Mr. Proenza. Is that correct?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. There is a misunderstanding here about the authority. I don't have any authority that is not granted in the normal personnel regulations, that comes from the laws that Congress provides, and as are distributed to us from the Office of Personnel Management. There is a very clear procedure that one must go through, and I would never, in my wildest imagination, think of violating any due process and procedures in providing all the rights that accompany that. So, I was not interested in anything to do with dismissal or removal at that point.

Mr. INGLIS. But sending in a team, was that required? Were you required to send in an assessment team, or could you have taken more direct action if you wanted to, against Mr. Proenza?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. If I had wanted to, I could have taken more direct action. I did not feel it was appropriate to take more direct action, or I could have instituted more direct action, and more respectfully. And remember that Mary actually recommended that more direct action be taken. I wanted to ensure that everybody's rights were protected, Mr. Proenza's, as well as the employees that work for him.

Mr. INGLIS. And Dr. Turner, in retrospect, would you think it is the right decision to go without notice? Chairman Miller mentioned that concern, that it was without notice to Mr. Proenza that you all showed up. Is that, in retrospect, the right thing to do, you think, or——

Dr. TURNER. I just find it very difficult to answer, because it is a hypothetical, and I have not thought about that, and I don't know. There may have been some other situations and circumstances that I was not aware of, and so, I would certainly not, you know, based on what I knew, I would certainly not be in a position to second guess decisions made by the Admiral or anyone else.

Mr. INGLIS. Yeah. Well, it seemed to me that actually, you would want to go in quickly and without notice. And I know that Chairman Miller seems to think that is untoward, or appears to think it is untoward. I would think that is exactly what is indicated in the circumstances, because otherwise, you put everybody on notice, they are going to go around getting their stories together. They are going to spend time of the agency developing arguments, rather than keeping on doing their work, and let us just come in here and check and see what is happening here. So, it seems to me a rather reasonable decision.

Also, I am almost out of time, but it appears to me, Admiral, you have had a lot of experience in the Navy, and I would assume that the teacher analogy you may have heard, that I used out in the hallway with some teachers, that the great, that the person that is best at being the elementary school principal may not be the

same person that performs well at the district office, and vice versa.

I suppose that has been your experience, and I hope that somehow, we leave here having delved, unfortunately, rather publicly, into a personnel matter that may damage the reputation of Mr. Proenza in the end, but he could be restored as somebody that can perform well in a number of circumstances, and maybe just didn't fit in this. Is that how you think this might, this footnote in history be written?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. Obviously, I can't describe what actions I am going to take, because I haven't gotten the recommendations that I have asked for from my deputy. But my track record, and you can ask many people, has been always to try to ensure that people are in the right billets, that they are given the opportunities to perform at their highest level. I believe in the inherent dignity and rights of every individual, and I have always worked to try to put people in the right jobs, and to ensure their success, and I will continue to do that.

Mr. INGLIS. Thank you, Admiral.

Chairman MILLER. Mr. Diaz-Balart.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Admiral, how are you, sir?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. I am fine. Thank you, sir.

WITNESS BACKGROUND

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Admiral, just for my information, you know, we call you Admiral, but, because you were an Admiral, and obviously, you still have the title. How long were you in the Navy?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. I was in the Navy for 40 years.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Forty years. That is kind of a small mom and pop operation, right? The Navy, you didn't have to supervise a lot of people then, did you?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. I have had experience at all levels in supervising, small groups to very large groups.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you for your service to the country, that you continue to do. Mr. Turner, Dr. Turner, I was also, by the way, it is just when I was looking at your resume, sir, it is pretty impressive. I just think it is good for us to hear this. I might embarrass you, because I know you are, but I just, you know, when you have got people of this caliber in front of you, I think it is important to say this is a man who has received the U.S. Government Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Service, three times received the U.S. Department of Energy Exceptional Service Award, earned the Secretary of Energy Gold Award, and the National Nuclear Security Administration's Gold Medal.

It is a privilege to be in your presence, sir, and to both of your presence.

Dr. TURNER. Thank you very much, sir.

RESPONSIBILITIES AS A SUPERVISOR

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. You know, we have something here that is kind of almost, I guess, without precedent. I don't know how many times, I have never, I have only been in Congress for a few years.

It is only my third term, but I don't—Dr. Turner or Admiral, have you all ever been in a position where half of the staff publicly manifests itself against a supervisor, publicly, and even with the press? Is that something normal? Again, as a rookie, I am, you know, I just, is that something that happens a lot in the Federal Government?

Dr. TURNER. I have had about 30 years in the Federal Government, and I have not run into that type of situation, where there has been a public outcry such as that.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Dr. Turner, in your years of being a supervisor, if however something like that would have happened, would you have thought it would have been responsible to not act and try to find out what is going on, and kind of ignore the situation, and not try to come up with a way to try to figure out what is wrong, or you know, what is going on?

Dr. TURNER. Yes, sir. I think it is part of the responsibility of a supervisor, and also, I think in some cases similar to this, the difficulty is getting employees to speak on the record. That often is difficult, because one cannot act unless they go on record, because it is not fair to the person being accused, and it is also not fair to the person who ultimately has to make a decision. And it is not fair to the employees expecting something to happen, but they need to go on record, and I think these people went on record, and I think, again——

ADMIRAL LAUTENBACHER'S ACTIONS

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. That is pretty clear. Admiral, let me—if I sound critical, I just learned now that you could have, once you got the information from Acting Secretary Glackin, you could have, on your own, acted to, you know, move Mr. Proenza. And yet, what you did instead is you created this, you asked people to go in and look at what is going on. Would it not be, frankly, a fair criticism saying that, knowing of the importance of the Hurricane Center, that we are now in the middle of a hurricane season, that you frankly were not aggressive enough, and didn't act quick enough, because of what is at stake here? I mean, isn't that a fair criticism, to say that maybe you were not aggressive and quick enough?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. That is a fair criticism, and I have thought long and hard about that, too, and tried to find the right compromise to ensure rights were protected, and that we were doing the right thing for the American people. It is a very difficult decision.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. And within that decision, Admiral, so you were aware of the importance of the Hurricane Center, and the fact that we are in a hurricane season, and yet, you still thought that you would be a little bit slower, and I guess a little bit more deliberative, and you actually got this group of individuals, I already mentioned some of the awards that Dr. Turner has earned. So, you obviously found a pretty qualified group of individuals, and you did not just act, you actually, what, you wanted to make sure that Mr. Proenza and the individuals, the highly qualified scientists and others at the Hurricane Center, had the ability to really, what, air it out without fear of retribution? Is that what you did, even though, knowing that you would have had to slow down in order

to do that? Even though we are in the middle of a hurricane season?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. I did, and I felt that if there were any indications, first of all, I watched the weather situation very closely, because I was not going to do this in a period when we had serious tropical activity, and needed to have full efforts placed on the hurricane forecasting, so that was part of the decision as well.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, Admiral. So again, and I am, you know, I am not being critical, but I just want to make sure that it is very clear that you could have done it quicker. You could have done it without Dr. Turner and other career service, frankly, heroes to our nation, looking at this, but you didn't, even though we are in the hurricane season, and I guess what, and I just want to make sure I understand this, because you just wanted to make sure that it was done right, not necessarily done as quickly as possible, but done right, and even knowing that that, in itself, you could have been accused, you could be accused, I mean, I guess someone might say that I am, of not doing it as quick as you could have done, knowing the fact that it is not usual for people in the Federal Government, half the employees, to publicly say we want this individual to go?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. That is correct.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, Admiral. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MILLER. Thank you. Mr. Klein for five minutes.

MORE ON QUIKSCAT

Mr. KLEIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Admiral, and thank you, Dr. Turner for your service. We appreciate it.

I am not going to spend my time on the personnel issues, other than just to say that the reason probably that this is going on right now is because there are probably some statements made, when Mr. Proenza brought forth his comments on QuikSCAT from NOAA. There is probably some personnel management issues within, that certainly have left some smoking guns out there for people to make these situations.

I have heard what you all said today. I appreciate the process you went through. It probably stirred some things up down there, and maybe that was the right thing to do, to get to the bottom of it. I agree this is the middle of the hurricane season. Those of us who live in Florida and other places around the country, we are as concerned, and I appreciate your closing statement there, about the responsibilities that NOAA and the Hurricane Center and the personnel take extremely seriously, and I appreciate that, because I don't question any of that.

I am going to go back to QuikSCAT, and go back to the equipment and the tools and those kinds of things. I am fairly convinced that there is some relevance to QuikSCAT, based on what I have heard up to this point, whether it is marine activities, or whether it is some level of evaluation tool that is used by the forecasters. When I went down to the Hurricane Center, they specifically told me that it has some relevance. Whether it is 15 percent, or some

contribution, I think we all agree that the more tools, and the more information on the table, the better the analysis can be.

And the question that I asked, you know, your organization early on, when I started raising some issues about this, is what is the backup, which I now believe is, you know, being thoroughly evaluated. I was concerned it wasn't for as long as it should have been, and I hope that we have all learned that process since then, that we should be in a better position, and continue to move along, and I want to encourage that, so that we, if this thing does fail, whenever it fails, that we really have all the tools in place.

We have had some other testimony today about this, and just give me your sense of, your professional sense of if it does fail, you know, how far off are we, in terms of you are recognizing yes, we have most of what we need, but how far off are we, and are you satisfied that between the various tracking tools we have, that we are going to be in a sufficient position?

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. Yes, thank you, and I appreciate your comments. First of all, let me caveat. I am trained as a scientist, and I consider myself a scientist, but in this role, I am a manager, so I take the advice of my practicing scientists, and so, that is what you are hearing, that temporized through my interpretation as a scientist.

But I view the QuikSCAT as a very important instrument, because it brings the surface vector wind field. I won't say it is the Holy Grail of forecasting, but it is a really nice thing to have. As a fluid dynamicist, I would like to have, that is an important variable.

We had planned, obviously, for many years before QuikSCAT was determined to be so effective, which happened in the last year or two, that we got into that, to use conical microwave imaging and sounding to provide those variables, those fields. So, we are at the cutting edge, kind of, of instrumentation to provide this surface vector wind field. We have been using the QuikSCAT information, that is an experimental satellite, that had been built by NASA. It has been working fine, and we expect it to keep working. I will keep my fingers crossed, but—and so, I view that, for this season, we are in good shape.

We have put on, in our partnership with Europe, we have EUMETSAT, a polar orbiting satellite that has something called ASCAT on it, which is a scatterometer, an active instrument. It is, on specs, not quite as good as the QuikSCAT scatterometer, but that now is operating, and is in place, and it will be here until 2020 continuously. I have directed, and I am sure you are aware of that, that that be taken into account and looked at, and put into the models, to see how much of a difference that would make in a model, and remember, we are talking about a model, not necessarily, remember, forecasts are made by forecasters, not by computers. It is still an art, in a sense.

And so, that system is in place, but in addition to that, we continue to put in place one improvement after another. This year, we are putting seven new hurricane buoys in place. It will be a ground truth on the surface of the ocean. Never had that before. We have more accurate wind measurement instruments going on our Hurricane Hunter aircraft, which are very important for landfalling hur-

ricanes, which is very important. In fact, remember, the scatterometer is most useful for hurricanes that are away from land, and for tropical storms, basically, not landfalling hurricanes, because of the speed limitation on QuikSCAT.

So, there is a number of issues. I can keep going on, but I am afraid that I am going——

Mr. KLEIN. That is okay, and I am aware of where I am going with this.

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. It is not part of what this hearing is.

NEXT GENERATION FORECASTING TOOLS

Mr. KLEIN. Where I am going with this, and this is part of where I am interested in, and I think Members of Congress are, is whether we have the adequate tools in place, and you know, there is a history that, I am a new Member of Congress, but there is a history, apparently, the last number of years, of a lot of money that was put down the drain, in a technology that has not gotten us where we wanted to be, and that was sort of going to be the next generation of where we are going with some of the, you know, equipment.

So, I want to be supportive. I know Members want to be supportive of giving you the tools, including research, so I am interested in knowing, on the research side, you know, what connects we need, where do we need to be helpful, but at the same time, there has got to be a good, frank, honest, and open relationship with the Congress and the American people, to make sure that, you know, we have the backing of the taxpayers, to know we are doing the right thing.

But we have to have this, and it is very important that whether it is QuikSCAT or anything else, I don't want to hear a month ago oh well, it is very important, very important, and all of a sudden, with Mr. Proenza's situation in the middle of this, it is not important, it is not important, it is not important. And then, I hear some backtracking from some folks. That is the credibility gap that has developed out of this whole dynamic, which I think needs to be flushed out and gotten off the table, and we need to move on.

Admiral LAUTENBACHER. Can I make just two comments, and I know Dr. Turner is interested? First of all, I know it was just a euphemism, but I do not believe money has been poured down a rat hole on the satellite programs. What we have is a problem where the technical difficulties involved in creating the next generation of instruments took more time and more money than anybody ever anticipated to deliver, so we have had to reduce some of the risk on that, so that we have the schedule, and they can be delivered. That has been. That is back on track. So, that is good.

Now, QuikSCAT is a potential filler of this surface vector wind field, we have pushed money in the direction. We have a study going. We are trying to look at a replacement for QuikSCAT based on the renewed, or I would say, probably new interest that it is the only, or it is the best replacement for that field, as a matter of priority. And we are working on that with a study, and we will make decisions as quickly as we can make them responsibly, and come to you as the Oversight Committee, and say this is the right place to invest money.

Mr. KLEIN. Thank you.

Chairman MILLER. Dr. Turner, you can respond to that. We are getting close to the end, but go ahead, Dr. Turner.

Dr. TURNER. Yes, sir. I think the discussion about QuikSCAT has two dimensions, and certainly, one dimension that has been discussed quite a bit here, and that is the scientific dimension, and certainly, dialogue and discussion about the science and so forth of QuikSCAT and its replacement, are certainly ripe fields for people to talk about.

I think what concerned us in our assessment was the misrepresentation that Mr. Proenza made about the, about what his staff was telling him about QuikSCAT and its importance to them and their forecasting. We were told on several occasions that his staff corrected his statements, told him why they thought that they were being taken out of context, and he continued to misrepresent their views, and I think that is the part that made them lose confidence in his integrity.

Mr. KLEIN. Mr. Chairman. Just for the record, and I know my time is up, for the record, I did go down to the National Hurricane Center, as I said before. I asked two specific forecasters, veteran forecasters, specifically about the statements that Mr. Proenza was making, and they validated them independently. It was just a private conversation, but I was interested, and just they showed me, and they said yeah, this is true, and this is what the value is. So, I don't know what has been said since then, but it was a firsthand expression to me, and I know that was there. Now, what has happened since then, and different people can have different opinions, but I want to put that on the record.

Chairman MILLER. Dr. Turner, you can complete your statement.

Dr. TURNER. It is fine.

Chairman MILLER. Okay. All right. I know that there are further questions that I have, but we have spent the better part of the day in this hearing. We have more documents to receive. Mr. Diaz-Balart.

ADDITIONAL WITNESSES WOULD HAVE BEEN USEFUL

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. And thank you, and Mr. Chairman, you have been very generous, and also, I will be quick, but I do think it is one of the things that I wish in hindsight, well, even though we asked for it, it would have been helpful, in order to clarify some of these questions, to get others to testify. None of those people that Congressman Klein and I spoke to on all sides of these issues were frankly invited to be up here, and I think that is frankly a little bit of a disservice, but again, I am not here to point a finger. I just want to make that point, that I think it would have been a more helpful, since we are, unfortunately, I guess, going to continue to try again to push personnel issues as Members of Congress. If we are going to do that, at least it would have been nice to have all of the people involved, and not just some.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MILLER. Well, under our rules, the Minority is allowed to bring witnesses, and have. I think Dr. Turner is a witness of the Minority.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Yes, Mr. Chairman. We brought him. We, again——

Chairman MILLER. We will continue to——

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. He would have been good to have——

Chairman MILLER. It is almost certain that we will have another hearing on this topic, since we still do not have all of the documents. And that is, let me take back the implication that that was a criticism. I know we have asked, with a very short time, for documents. We do need the documents. We do need to look at this. Now, the Minority has said that for us to look at this is simply a personnel issue, but for you to look at was the Lord's own work, that you had to look at it, you had to make sure that the National Hurricane Center, the Hurricane Center was doing its work.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. That is their job.

Chairman MILLER. Well, agreed. It is also our job in exercising oversight to know what goes on. And they are, I began this hearing, and I know that Mr. Lampson wishes to make a final remark as well. I began this hearing saying I did not know what had happened at that hearing. Mr. Inglis has used the phrase, the Majority's theory of the case. This isn't a case, I don't have a theory. I want to know what has happened.

This exploded into national attention a couple weeks ago. I think we all found out about it at the same time. I think we all see this as important. It is important. It is important to our role as Members of the Committee that has oversight jurisdiction of NOAA, of the Hurricane Center, to find out what is going on. And there is a lot more that I want to know.

There will be other witnesses. As I pointed out earlier this week, in a hearing of these two subcommittees, I don't want to hear complaints at the hearing about the procedures that we are using when there has been ample opportunity, leading up to the hearing, to talk about it. If there are witnesses that the Minority wishes to call, let us know about it. Our staffs are in constant contact. The Members know how to talk to each other as well.

Members can get the cell phone numbers of other Members. My home telephone number in Raleigh is in the phonebook. I am visible on the floor, we can find each other, and to hear about, hear complaints of the procedures of the Committee, about who we have called or not called at the hearing, does make me wonder if the purpose of the complaints is simply to distract attention from the subject of the hearing.

There are still questions that I have. The Minority has drawn out, in its questioning, the question about whether Mr. Proenza would retaliate against anyone, and that is why this management team needed to show up unannounced, which I am sure felt, to all the employees there, like law enforcement serving a search warrant. I do not think that is an ordinary procedure. The ordinary way that a management team comes in to look at how an office, a center is being run.

MORE ON STATE OF HURRICANE FORECASTING

There has been disputed question here about how well we are integrating the best science into our forecasting. I have heard, like Mr. Klein, not in anticipation of this hearing, not with somebody,

from someone with any axe to grind, but someone with expertise in atmospheric research, in meteorological research, who has told me that the forecasting by the Hurricane Center is not what it should be. It is not what we should expect with where science is today, and particularly, as others have pointed out since I raised the issue, intensification, intensity of hurricanes, forecasting intensity is not what it should be.

I have also heard inland flooding, forecasts of inland flooding is far short of what it should be. Virtually all the lives lost in my state from hurricanes in the last few years have been from inland flooding. If we can be much better at that, as I have been told we can be, we should be, and I want to make sure yes, there are some parallels here to the case of Moose Cobb, the Inspector General at NASA.

When an important agency of government appears to melt down, it is appropriate for us to look at what has happened. Was it the case that there was resistance at the Center to changes that needed to happen to improve the science, to do a better job of forecasting? Is that what happened?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Would the gentleman yield?

Chairman MILLER. Well, in a moment, I will.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, sir.

Chairman MILLER. In a moment.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you.

Chairman MILLER. We welcome, we depend upon critics within government to tell us what is going on. Our job of oversight depends upon people within the government, employees speaking freely to us, to tell us what questions to raise. There is no question that Mr. Proenza was a critic, was willing to speak his mind, was willing to stand up to superiors in this department, in NOAA, in the Weather Service.

We certainly—it is certainly appropriate to look at whether that is part of what happened here. Was this genuinely a revolt by those below him, or was this something provoked by those above him in the hierarchy? Those are all the questions that I still have, that this hearing has not answered, and we still have a good many more documents to be provided.

I know Mr. Lampson wishes to be recognized, so let me recognize Mr. Diaz-Balart first, and then, Mr. Lampson.

ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, again. You are very kind to recognize me.

You know, I don't disagree with a lot of your questions, and I think the issue, as to whether we are getting the best forecasting available is something that this committee needs to look at, and needs to continue to look at. Obviously, I question whether we should be dealing in the personnel issue, but if we are going to, and that is okay, because you are Chair of the Subcommittee, so you can do what you would like.

It would just seem to me, Mr. Chairman, that there are some things that shouldn't be partisan. For example, if we are going to be looking at what happened in this particular case, it would seem

to me that the Majority would want to get as many witnesses on all sides.

Chairman MILLER. Would the gentleman yield on that?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Of course, sir.

Chairman MILLER. Will you have any objection to our bringing employees of the National Hurricane Center here?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Absolutely not. I don't think——

Chairman MILLER. Or taking our committee there to, or to take our committee there to have a field hearing?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. If I may, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MILLER. It is your time.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you. You know, I am not one to object to what the Majority wants to do. My statement.

Chairman MILLER. Then we will assume that there won't be an objection.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Well, my statement would be, though, however, twofold, that we should clearly not do anything that is going to jeopardize the ability of the forecasters in the heart of a hurricane season to do their job. I think we are already doing that as it is, and I think it would be highly irresponsible, borderline negligence for us to continue to ask, not NOAA, continue to ask the Hurricane Center people to, you know, spend their time doing things that are not just looking for hurricanes, number one. After the hurricane season is over, I think we should spend as much time, that would be a privilege and an honor to have you all in Miami, and I think you would be highly impressed.

I just do want to mention, though, that, and again, you know, I am not crying over spilled milk, but we brought this up, but this was brought up, that we only had, I understand how the rules work, we had one, to have one witness. It would seem to me that this should not be partisan, that if the Majority wants to learn the facts, it shouldn't have to be a Minority witness. It should be the witnesses that are available, to find out what the facts are, and it is just, frankly, a little disheartening that such, and I, look, it may be a little personal, and please bear with me.

The men and women in the Hurricane Center are incredible professionals, incredible professionals. You don't know them personally like I do. And when those people speak out, and then, this committee has a hearing to find out why they spoke out, and what happened, and they are not invited, it is frankly sad. It really is sad, and again, we had one witness, we got it. It would have been nice for the Majority to at least have the intention of, if you were trying to find out what is happening, you had Mr. Proenza. He is a great guy. I am glad he was here. How is it possible to not call, I am confused, how is it possible to not call some of those 20 plus people to have them up here?

Chairman MILLER. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Yes, sir. Of course.

Chairman MILLER. Do you know that we did call the staff, and that we did speak?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. No, actually not at the Hurricane Center.

Chairman MILLER. And called them as——

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Not at the Hurricane Center. And we——

Chairman LAMPSON. Well, it is, as Mr. Diaz-Balart, as you have pointed out, it is the middle of the hurricane season now.

Chairman MILLER. Generally, the Chair welcomes Mr. Diaz-Balart's suggestion that this committee have a field hearing in Miami, and say December or January.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Chairman, you are a wise man.

Chairman MILLER. The Chair welcomes bipartisan contributions such as that. And Mr. Lampson.

Chairman LAMPSON. I think that I got my question answered about support for the hearing, and your support for having the right people come up here. That is there or here. Doesn't matter, but the point is we——

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. After the hurricane season, right, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman LAMPSON. We need to have those things. I would like to just mention, in my part of closing, that we did ask for some specific staff, high ranking assistants to Admiral Lautenbacher, to attend today. And granted, it was not done by letter. There was an understanding when staff asked, I think that is an inappropriate request. In the future, we would like for that certainly to be honored. We don't, again, don't think that it is inappropriate to do so, in matter.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back my time, and I thank the panel for being here.

Chairman MILLER. I also thank the panel for being here, and I appreciate what I expect to be continued cooperation with the Committee on this issue. I thank everyone for being here, and with that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:06 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

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