

**FEMA'S URBAN SEARCH AND  
RESCUE PROGRAM IN HAITI:  
HOW TO APPLY LESSONS  
LEARNED AT HOME**

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(111-85)

**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON

TRANSPORTATION AND

INFRASTRUCTURE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

February 3, 2010

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## CONTENTS

	Page
Summary of Subject Matter .....	vi
TESTIMONY	
Bettenhausen, Honorable Matthew, Secretary of the California Emergency Management Agency, National Emergency Management Association .....	5
Carwile, William, Assistant Administrator for Response and Recovery, Federal Emergency Management Agency .....	5
Cover, Steven, Fire Chief, Virginia Beach Fire Department, Sponsoring Agency Chief, Virginia Task Force 2 .....	24
Downey, Dave, Division Chief, Training and Safety Division, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department, Task Force Leader, Florida Task Force 1 .....	24
Endrikat, Fred, Special Operations Chief, City of Philadelphia Fire Department, Task Force Leader, Pennsylvania Task Force 1 .....	24
Kramer, Mark, Assistant Chief/Operations, Orange County Fire Authority, Sponsoring Agency Chief, California Task Force 5 .....	24
PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS	
Carnahan, Hon. Russ, of Missouri .....	50
Norton, Hon. Eleanor Holmes, of the District of Columbia .....	51
Oberstar, Hon. James L., of Minnesota .....	53
PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED BY WITNESSES	
Bettenhausen, Honorable Matthew .....	57
Carwile, William .....	68
Cover, Steven .....	79
Downey, Dave .....	87
Endrikat, Fred .....	99
Kramer, Mark .....	119
SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD	
Bettenhausen, Honorable Matthew, Secretary of the California Emergency Management Agency, National Emergency Management Association, responses to questions from the Subcommittee .....	66
Carwile, William, Assistant Administrator for Response and Recovery, Federal Emergency Management Agency, responses to questions from Rep. Norton, a Representative in Congress from the District of Columbia .....	74
Cover, Steven, Fire Chief, Virginia Beach Fire Department, Sponsoring Agency Chief, Virginia Task Force 2, responses to questions from Rep. Norton, a Representative in Congress from the District of Columbia .....	84
Downey, Dave, Division Chief, Training and Safety Division, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department, Task Force Leader, Florida Task Force 1, responses to questions from the Subcommittee .....	97
Edwards, Hon. Donna F., a Representative from the State of Maryland, certification form .....	20
Endrikat, Fred, Special Operations Chief, City of Philadelphia Fire Department, Task Force Leader, Pennsylvania Task Force 1, responses to questions from the Subcommittee .....	115
Kramer, Mark, Assistant Chief/Operations, Orange County Fire Authority, Sponsoring Agency Chief, California Task Force 5, responses to questions from Rep. Norton, a Representative in Congress from the District of Columbia .....	126



**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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February 2, 2010

**SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER**

**TO:** Members of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management

**FROM:** Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Staff

**SUBJECT:** Hearing on “FEMA’s Urban Search and Rescue Program in Haiti: How to Apply Lessons Learned at Home”

**PURPOSE OF THE HEARING**

The Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management will meet on Wednesday, February 3, 2010, at 2:00 p.m., in room 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building to examine the National Urban Search and Rescue System (US&R) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the lessons to be learned from recent deployments to Haiti, and pending legislation to reauthorize the US&R.

**BACKGROUND**

FEMA’s US&R is composed of 28 task forces located in 19 States throughout the continental United States. The task forces were created and are used by FEMA under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act).<sup>1</sup> These task forces in their standard configuration consist of 70 State and local first responders, and include firefighters, rescue specialists, medical professional, engineers, emergency managers, and canine specialists.<sup>2</sup> Each task force also includes four canines and a specialized cache of equipment. Every taskforce is sponsored by a State or local government “sponsoring agency,” although the task forces may be comprised of members of several State or local government agencies “participating agencies”. In some cases, task forces consist of participating agencies from more than one State.

<sup>1</sup> 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207.

<sup>2</sup> Task forces may also deploy as a “light task force” with a smaller number of members.

FEMA also deploys Incident Support Teams (ISTs) composed of FEMA employees or staff borrowed from other Task Forces. ISTs are used when more than one US&R task force is deployed to help provide support and incident command for the US&R operation.

US&R is a classic all-hazards disaster program. US&R task forces respond to the consequence rather than the cause. Regardless of what causes the structural collapse (e.g. earthquake, hurricane, gas explosion, bomb, or structural failure) the essential elements of the US&R operation remain the same. The capabilities of US&R task forces include:

- Conducting physical search and rescue in collapsed buildings;
- Providing emergency medical care to trapped victims;
- Search-and-rescue using dogs;
- Assessment and control of gas, electric service, and hazardous materials; and
- Evaluation and stabilization of damaged structures.

The task forces are trained, and partially funded and equipped by FEMA. It is expected that State and local governments will use the task forces and their expertise for events in their communities and State, and in neighboring States and communities regardless of whether the President declares a major disaster or an emergency for that event. In return, these task forces may be “Federalized” by FEMA when needed for major disasters and emergencies under the Stafford Act.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to their deployments in the United States, two of FEMA’s US&R task forces have agreements with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to be deployed for disasters overseas. Currently, those are the tasks forces based in Fairfax County, Virginia and Los Angeles, California. When deployed by USAID, these task forces use training and equipment provided by FEMA. USAID provides funds to the task forces to replace or refurbish the equipment that is used.

#### **HAITI**

On January 12, 2010, a devastating earthquake, with a magnitude of 7.0 on the Richter scale struck Haiti, followed by a number of aftershocks. According to the Haitian Government, there were 112,500 persons killed and 194,000 injured.<sup>4</sup>

USAID, under the authority of section 491 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961,<sup>5</sup> led the United States Government’s response efforts. The Los Angeles, California, and Fairfax County, Virginia task forces were deployed by USAID pursuant to their agreements. In addition, four other FEMA US&R task forces were deployed. Those task forces were: Virginia Beach, Virginia; New York, New York; Miami-Dade, Florida; and Miami, Florida. This is the first time that FEMA deployed US&R task forces outside the United States. In this case, the task forces were called up by

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<sup>3</sup> *Federal Emergency Management Agency: National Urban Search and Rescue Response System*, 70 Fed. Reg. 9183 (February 24, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> As of January 24, 2010, information provided through the American Red Cross (January 28, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> 22 U.S.C. § 2292.

FEMA and provided to USAID through a reimbursable agreement<sup>6</sup> under the authority of section 632(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.<sup>7</sup>

Together these six task forces deployed 524 personnel, as part of a broader international effort that deployed 1,918 personnel. The six teams from the United States are credited with rescuing at least 47 people.

#### **HISTORY OF THE US&R PROGRAM**

FEMA's US&R program grew from the need to rescue victims from structural collapses during natural hazards such as earthquakes and hurricanes, and developed after the devastating results of the Mexico City Earthquake of 1985 and the Loma Prieta Earthquake, which struck California in 1989. It was especially noted after a large number of people were trapped in the aftermath of the Mexico City earthquake that there was no national capacity in the United States for large-scale rescue from structural collapses should a similar event occur in this country.

As a result of this identified need, FEMA created the US&R system in 1989. Originally, the US&R system was composed of 25 task forces, which was later expanded to the current size of 28 task forces.

The incidents and disasters that FEMA has deployed US&R task forces in the United States under the authority of the Stafford Act include:

- The Murrah Federal Building bombing in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in 1995;
- The Humberto Vidal Building explosion in San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1996;
- DeBruce Grain elevator explosion in Wichita, Kansas in 1998;
- The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001;
- Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne in 2004;
- Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast in 2005; and
- Hurricane Ike in Texas in 2008.

#### **AUTHORITY, APPROPRIATIONS AND LEGISLATION**

The US&R program is an administrative creation of FEMA. As FEMA describes in its regulations, the US&R program was created by using various provisions of the Stafford Act.<sup>8</sup> FEMA continues to rely on these provisions as its authority for the US&R system.

Section 634 of the Post Katrina Emergency Management Performance Act<sup>9</sup> provided for the first specific statutory authorization for the US&R system and simply provided "There is in the Agency a system known as the Urban Search and Rescue Response System."<sup>10</sup> The statute

<sup>6</sup> Reimbursable Agreement Between USAID and FEMA (January 13, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> 22 U.S.C. § 2392(b).

<sup>8</sup> Specifically, 44 C.F.R. § 208.3(a) provides: "The Federal Emergency Management Agency established and operated the System under the authority of §§303, 306(a), 306(b), 403(a)(3)(B) and 621(c) of the Stafford Act." (42 U.S.C. §§ 5144, 5149(a), 5149(b), 5170b(a)(30)(B), and 5197(c)).

<sup>9</sup> Title VI of P.L. 109-295, 6 U.S.C. § 722.

<sup>10</sup> 6 U.S.C. § 772(a).

authorized appropriations for fiscal year (FY) 2008 only at the level appropriated for FY 2007, which was \$25 million, plus \$20 million.<sup>11</sup>

Section 105 of H.R. 3377, the “Disaster Response, Recovery, and Mitigation Enhancement Act of 2009”, provides for a reauthorization for the US&R Program. H.R. 3377 was ordered reported favorably to the House by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on November 5, 2009.

Section 105 of the bill adds section 328 to the Stafford Act to reauthorize the US&R. In addition, this section codifies existing workers’ compensation and tort liability protections for UR&R System members that are currently provided administratively by FEMA. It also provides new protections under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), and establishes licensing and professional liability protection.

In recent years, the US&R program has received significant Federal funds for training and equipping task forces. Specifically, the US&R program has received the following appropriations:

FY 2002	\$32.4 million
FY 2003	\$60.0 million
FY 2004	\$60.0 million
FY 2005	\$30.0 million
FY 2006	\$20.0 million
FY 2007	\$25.0 million
FY 2008	\$32.5 million
FY 2009	\$32.0 million
FY 2010	\$32.0 million <sup>12</sup>

This is in addition to the funds that reimburse task forces for their operations when they are deployed under the Stafford Act.

#### **PRIOR LEGISLATIVE AND OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY**

The Committee and Subcommittee have held numerous hearings dealing disasters and the Stafford Act.

- “This is NOT a Test: Will the Nation’s Emergency Alert System Deliver the President’s Message to the Public?” (September 30, 2009)
- “Final Breakthrough on the Billion Dollar Katrina Infrastructure Logjam: How is it Working?” (September 29, 2009)
- “Post Katrina: What it Takes to Cut the Bureaucracy” (July 29, 2009)
- “Still Post-Katrina: How FEMA Decides When Housing Responsibilities End” (May 22, 2009)
- “An Independent FEMA: Restoring the Nation’s Capabilities for effective Emergency

<sup>11</sup> 6 U.S.C. § 772(b).

<sup>12</sup> Source Francis McCarthy, Congressional Research Service (Jan. 28, 2010).

- Management and Disaster Response” (May 14, 2009)
- “FEMA: Preparedness for the 2009 Hurricane Season” (May 1, 2009)
- “Post-Katrina Disaster Response and Recovery: Evaluating FEMA’s Continuing Efforts in the Gulf Coast and Response to Recent Disasters” (February 2009)
- “FEMA’s Response to the 2008 Hurricane Season and the National Housing Strategy” (September 2008)
- “Moving Mississippi forward: Ongoing Progress and Remaining Problems” (June 2008)
- “Assuring Public Alert Systems Work” (June 2008)
- “Saving Lives And Money Through The Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program” (April 2008)
- “Readiness in the Post Katrina and Post 9.11 World: An Evaluation of the New National Response Framework” (September 2007)
- “Legislative Fixes for Lingering Problems that Hinder Katrina Recovery” (May 2007)
- “Assuring the National Guard is as Ready at Home as it is Abroad” (May 2007)
- “FEMA’s Preparedness and Response to All Hazards” (April 2007)
- “FEMA’s Emergency Food Supply System” (April 2007)
- “Post Katrina Temporary Housing: Dilemmas and Solutions” (March 2007)
- “Disasters and the Department of Homeland Security: Where Do We Go From Here?” (February 2006)
- “Legislative Proposals in Response to Hurricane Katrina” (November 2005)

In the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress and the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure acted on the following bills related to FEMA, the Stafford Act, and disaster assistance:

- **H.R. 3377, the “Disaster Response, Recovery, and Mitigation Enhancement Act of 2009”:** This legislation amends the Stafford Act to improve the assistance the Federal Government provides to States, local governments, and communities after major disasters and emergencies. Section 105 of H.R. 3377 reauthorizes the US&R Program. On November 5, 2009, the Committee ordered H.R. 3377 reported to the House.
- **H.R. 1746, the “Pre-Disaster Mitigation Act of 2009”:** This legislation reauthorizes FEMA’s Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program and makes improvements, including codification of the competitive aspects of the program. On April 23, 2009, the Committee reported favorably H.R. 1746 to the House. On April 27, 2009, the House passed H.R. 1746 by a vote of 339-56.
- **H.R. 6658, the “Disaster Response, Recovery, and Mitigation Enhancement Act of 2008”:** This legislation would have amended the Stafford Act to improve the assistance the Federal Government provides to states, local governments, and communities after major disasters and emergencies. Section 105 of H.R. 6658 reauthorizes the US&R Program. On July 31, 2008, the Committee ordered H.R. 6658 reported to the House.
- **H.R. 6109, the “Pre-Disaster Mitigation Act of 2008”:** This legislation would have reauthorized FEMA’s Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program and makes improvements, including codification of the competitive aspects of the program. On June 23, 2008, the House passed H.R. 6109 by voice vote.

- **H.R. 3247, the “Hurricane Katrina and Rita Recovery Facilitation Act of 2007”:** This legislation would have provided additional Federal relief targeted to the recovery from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Louisiana and Mississippi. On October 29, 2007, the House passed H.R. 3247 by voice vote.
- **H.R. 3224, the “Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act of 2007”:** This legislation would have established a program to provide grant assistance to states for use in rehabilitating publicly-owned dams that fail to meet minimum safety standards and pose an unacceptable risk to the public. On October 29, 2007, the House passed H.R. 3224 by a recorded vote of 263-102.
- **H.R. 1144, the “Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma Federal Match Relief Act of 2007”:** This legislation provided significant relief for communities devastated by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, by raising the Federal cost share for critical disaster relief programs to 100 percent and by authorizing the cancellation of Community Disaster Loans under certain conditions like all previous Community Disaster Loans. H.R. 1144 was enacted as part of P.L. 110-28, the “U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act of 2007”.

In the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee also collaborated with the Committee on Financial Services on H.R. 1227, the “Gulf Coast Hurricane Housing Recovery Act of 2007”, to ensure that Louisiana is allowed to use Hazard Mitigation Program funds for its Road Home program. H.R. 1227 passed the House on March 21, 2007, but the Senate took no action on the bill.

In the 109th Congress, Congress enacted the “Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006” (Title VI of P.L. 109-295).

WITNESSES

**Mr. William Carville**

Assistant Administrator for Response and Recovery  
Federal Emergency Management Agency

**The Honorable Matthew Bettenhausen**

Secretary of the California Emergency Management Agency  
National Emergency Management Association

**Mr. Fred Endrikat**

Special Operations Chief  
City of Philadelphia Fire Department  
Task Force Leader  
Pennsylvania Task Force – 1

**Mr. Dave Downey**

Division Chief  
Training and Safety Division  
Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department  
Task Force Leader  
Florida Task Force - 1

**Mr. Steven Cover**

Fire Chief  
Virginia Beach Fire Department  
Sponsoring Agency Chief  
Virginia Task Force - 2

**Mr. Mark Kramer**

Assistant Chief/Operations  
Orange County Fire Authority  
Sponsoring Agency Chief  
California Task Force-5

# HEARING ON FEMA'S URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE PROGRAM IN HAITI: HOW TO APPLY LESSONS LEARNED AT HOME

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC  
BUILDINGS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:00 p.m., in Room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, the Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton [Chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Ms. NORTON. Good afternoon and welcome to today's hearing on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Urban Search and Rescue program, its role in Haiti, and the lessons our Subcommittee can learn from the humanitarian work of our U.S. teams and their experiences that might be applied during disasters in the United States. The National Urban Search and Rescue System, which, for short, is sometimes called US&R, is an administrative creation of FEMA, using the authority of the Stafford Act, and is within the jurisdiction of this Subcommittee.

Today, we will hear from FEMA, from officials from California, a State that faces risks for virtually every type of disaster, and from four participants in the National Urban Search and Rescue program, including two heroes who have just returned from their deployment in Haiti.

FEMA'S US&R program was developed after the devastating results of the Mexico City Earthquake in 1985 and the Loma Prieta Earthquake, which struck California in 1989. It was clear, after many people were trapped in the aftermath of the Mexico City earthquake, that a national capacity was needed for large-scale rescues from structural collapses in the U.S. Today, we again look to a tragic earthquake in a neighboring country for lessons learned.

FEMA, which established the Urban Search and Rescue program in 1989 to create a nationwide capacity with 25 task forces, has now grown to 28 task forces in 19 States. We are fortunate that two of them are here in the National Capital Region: Maryland Task Force-1, based in Montgomery County, and Virginia Task Force-1, based in Fairfax County. Every deployment of these task forces anywhere in the Country or abroad must be understood as preparation for disasters here as well.

US&R is a classic "all hazards" response program, not an earthquake response program. Urban Search and Rescue task forces re-

spond to the consequence rather than to the cause of disasters. It does not matter what causes a structure to collapse, whether it is an earthquake, a hurricane, gas explosion, terrorist attack, bomb, or structural failure. The essential elements of their operations remain the same. The expertise the Urban Search and Rescue teams build reinforces the breadth of their possible applications.

The rescue and response network within the FEMA system is built on an efficient and economical Federal-State quid pro quo model. FEMA provides training and resources to the task forces, which in return are available to the Federal Government as needed. While we see Urban Search and Rescue task forces on television when they are deployed to large disasters, they are more often being using their expertise in their own States and communities, as well as in neighboring States, for events that do not reach the level of a major disaster or emergency declared under the Stafford Act.

Among the incidents for which FEMA has deployed the Urban Search and Rescue teams: the Murrah Federal Building bombing in Oklahoma City, in 1995; the Vidal Building explosion in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1996; the DeBruce Grain elevator explosion in Wichita, Kansas, in 1998; the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, in 2001; the four Florida hurricanes of 2004; and, of course, Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast in 2005; and Hurricane Ike in Texas in 2008.

Two of the task forces also have agreements with the United States Agency for International Development, or USAID, for overseas deployments: the task forces based in Fairfax County, Virginia, and in Los Angeles, California. When task forces deploy overseas, they are using training and equipment provided by FEMA. USAID then reimburses these task forces for the replacement and refurbishment of the equipment that is used.

However, the earthquake in Haiti marks the first time that task forces were sent that did not have an agreement already with USAID, and that, of course, reflects the need in Haiti, a particularly tragic and extensive earthquake. Four task forces, including two that are represented here today, were called upon by FEMA on loan to USAID for this tragedy, through an agreement between FEMA and USAID. In today's hearing we will discuss whether this is a model that should be used again in the future.

I am pleased to be a cosponsor of H.R. 3377, the "Disaster Response, Recovery, and Mitigation Enhancement Act of 2009," along with Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Members Mica and Diaz-Balart.

Section 105 of that bill reauthorizes the program and provides the US&R system, or the Urban Search and Rescue task forces we are discussing here today. It reauthorizes them as a matter of law, with many of the protections they will need, including a clear and specific authorization, as well as workers compensation and tort liability protection. H.R. 3377 was reported favorably to the House by the Full Committee in November, but we will revise or strengthen this legislation before the House takes it up if today's hearing makes that necessary.

I am also pleased today to have introduced a resolution expressing gratitude and appreciation to the personnel of FEMA'S Urban

Search and Rescue system for their unyielding determination and work as first responders to victims of disasters, including the recent earthquake in Haiti. This resolution is cosponsored by Chairman Oberstar, Ranking Members Balart and Mica, and a number of other members of Congress already. We will get more. I think we need 50 cosponsors—that will be very easy to get—in order to bring this resolution to Committee and to the floor.

I look forward to hearing the testimony of today's witnesses and thank them in advance for being available to us, as this tragedy is ongoing, so that we can learn lessons now; not a year from now, not five years from now, but right now, because we do not know when a tragedy of this kind—not an earthquake, but a tragedy involving rescue and recovery—will occur in our Country, given the diversity of our population and of our terrain.

Ms. NORTON. I am very pleased now to yield to the Ranking Member and to congratulate him. I believe that he has a team from Florida in Haiti now and that he was instrumental in bringing to the attention of the Administration that this team could be useful. Mr. Diaz-Balart.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you very much, Madam Chairwoman. First, let me thank you for this very important hearing and very timely hearing. I also want to thank, obviously, the witnesses for taking of their valuable time to share some insight with us.

And if I may be a little parochial, Madam Chairwoman, you mentioned Miami-Dade County. I would especially like to welcome David Downey, Division Chief of the Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue Department from obviously the area that I am blessed to represent. Thank you for being here.

As you just said, Madam Chairwoman, the Miami-Dade Urban Search and Rescue team has a long successful track record of doing these sorts of operations, and I appreciate their work and the work of the other teams that are also represented here today.

You mentioned, Madam Chairwoman, that we made some phone calls, but I think we also have to thank the Administration, because we know that bureaucracies are very difficult to break through, and we called the Administration and within the hours the Administration, not being too concerned about fiefdoms or kingdoms or walls, they broke down those barriers in order to get the job done; and I think it is important that we recognize that.

The devastation and the destruction that occurred on January 12th was really without parallel, and it is difficult to comprehend the level of devastation, of destruction, no matter how much you see it on television, unless you have been there, unless you have seen it, which is why it is so important to hear from those first responders that were there, and some of them are here today.

I know the people of Haiti are very grateful for the selflessness and the bravery of these responders who responded to this horrible, horrific disaster. It also, by the way, says a lot about the greatness of our Country, the United States of America. I mean, we know that these are difficult economic times, but the American people, as always, have responded to the devastation of Haiti by donating millions upon millions of dollars, goods, and services, even donating time and physical labor to try to help the people who are struggling in Haiti. Obviously, then, through their Government also, as tax-

payers also have contributed greatly to the efforts, and they are efforts that one can only imagine the difficulty that the people are going through right now.

I would be remiss, Madam Chairwoman, if I didn't recognize the contributions of the U.S. armed forces, the Coast Guard, the Department of State that you have mentioned, FEMA, that you have also mentioned, our State governments, and obviously the search and rescue teams for their unbelievable generosity. Working through those incredible challenges on the ground, including the limited airport capacity. It was impossible at first to get things in and out. The fact that the port was basically destroyed, the damage of the infrastructure.

These search and rescue teams were in Haiti within hours of the earthquake and quickly began their efforts when they were there. Six search and rescue teams, comprising over 500 personnel, were sent from the U.S. to join other teams from other countries, again, to search for survivors and to try to save people from the rubble. And these efforts did result in numerous, numerous many lives actually being saved. In fact, just last week international search and rescue operations found a 16 year old girl still alive more than two weeks after the earthquake, which is just hard to believe.

The efforts of the search and rescue teams resulted in the largest number of survivors of this type, this kind of effort, in history, is my understanding, so we can't speak highly enough of the efforts they are doing.

Now, it is going to take years before the response and the rebuilding process is complete. They will eventually be complete, but the scars never go away, and we know that. But it is my hope that we can learn from this disaster in order to be even better prepared to mitigate against and to respond to the next major event, whether it is in the United States or whether it is abroad.

I really want to thank again the witnesses for joining us today. I know they have all been slightly busy, even busier than usual, in the last few weeks, and I appreciate all of you taking the time to travel here to the Capitol to share your experiences and your expertise with us today.

As the Chairwoman said—and, again, I need to thank her for her leadership—whatever is learned—and I know that I have already heard some issues that we can improve on, and we will do what we can to try to incorporate it into the legislation. But, again, thank you all for being here and thank you, Madam Chairwoman, for this very important hearing.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Diaz-Balart.

We will go now to the panel. William Carwile, who is the Assistant Administrator for Response and Recovery at FEMA; and Matthew Bettenhausen, who is the Secretary of the California Emergency Management Agency and also a member of the National Emergency Management Association representing emergency managers across the United States.

Why don't you begin, Mr. Carwile?

**TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM CARWILE, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR RESPONSE AND RECOVERY, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY; AND THE HONORABLE MATTHEW BETTENHAUSEN, SECRETARY OF THE CALIFORNIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

Mr. CARWILE. Good afternoon, Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and members of the Subcommittee. I am William Carwile, Associate Administrator of FEMA for Response and Recovery.

After serving as an officer in the United States Army for 30 years, I joined FEMA in 1996 and retired in 2005. I returned to FEMA last May in my present position. During my earlier years, I served in the field and senior management positions during major disasters, including the 9/11 World Trade Center and Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi. During these events, I worked closely with our Nation's Urban Search and Rescue teams.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today to discuss our Nation's Urban Search and Rescue teams and capabilities.

The US&R system is an outstanding example of a highly effective local, State, and Federal partnership, a team approach that Administrator Fugate has stressed. In addition to focusing on the concept of team, one of Administrator Fugate's highest priorities this year is to enhance the Nation's overall preparedness to respond to a catastrophic event.

The National Urban Search and Rescue Response System has been and will continue to be a critical part of this overall effort. The system plays a vital role in providing essential capabilities not only for the 28 teams themselves, but it has a multiplier effect through its establishment of standards for procedures and equipment. This has a very significant benefit, as many of the national methodologies are adopted by other departments, many of which have received substantial grants to increase capabilities under post-9/11 programs.

Under the lead of the United States Agency for International Development, USAID, the lifesaving capabilities of the United States US&R teams were clearly demonstrated during the response to the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the people of that devastated country as the recovery continues.

Side by side with our colleagues from the international SAR community, to courageous Americans, including Fairfax, Virginia Task Force 1, the first international SAR team to arrive in Haiti, worked around the clock in dangerous conditions to locate and save survivors. For some of our U.S. team members, their efforts were very personal.

Several French Creole speaking members of the Miami Fire Department were integrated into the deploying South Florida Task Force. Each one had family members in Haiti. These brave Haitian-Americans played an important role in recovering seven survivors under dangerous and unpredictable conditions. One of these firefighters remained in a void comforting a survivor for over 15 hours. Another was on the scene of a collapsed market for 22 hours, reassuring the survivor and gathering information, finally

able to touch the survivor's hand as the teams broke through the concrete rubble. During this rescue, a 4.0 magnitude aftershock forced rescuers to evacuate the collapsed building momentarily, but immediately following the tremor the team continued rescue efforts under these precarious conditions.

In another remarkable case, a member of the Miami US&R team helped to rescue a woman who had been trapped for over 100 hours. It turned out that she had a son living but a few blocks away from the team member's Pembroke, Florida home.

Madam Chair, these are but a few of the countless examples of the courage and selflessness displayed by the US&R responders. In all, the United States task forces rescued 47 survivors. While there were over 40 international teams, this number represents one-third of all saves.

The impressive performance of the United States teams was based on years of experience and adaptation to changing threat environment. Coordination and planning between local, State, and Federal partners on the development of standards and methodologies have resulted in expanding the scope of search and rescue capabilities. These include operations in hurricane, flood, and aviation crash events.

Based on our renewed focus on catastrophic event preparedness and the experiences of last year's flooding in North Dakota and the Haiti deployments, the US&R community will conduct a comprehensive review of operations, training, equipment, and organization. This review will be conducted by those who best understand the Urban Search and Rescue system, including the task force sponsoring agencies, individuals who were responsible for establishing the system, and others with recent field experience.

The goal of the review will be the development of recommendations on how to enhance the capabilities of the teams to respond to events of all kinds with additional flexibility and agility, and how team members with national expertise might be leveraged to quickly train others to perform light Urban Search and Rescue in large-scale events.

Although it is premature to draw conclusions and lessons learned from the Haiti response, ultimately, we believe this experience will contribute to improving our future domestic response operations.

In closing, on behalf of Administrator Fugate and the entire FEMA team, I want to express my admiration and appreciation to the courageous members of all the search and rescue teams for their humanitarian and lifesaving efforts in Haiti.

I also want to thank you for your continued support and oversight of these important teams. I look forward to answering your questions.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Carwile.

Yes, Mr. Bettenhausen, you are next.

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to testify and share our experiences not only with the Urban Search and Rescue team, to speak more broadly, though, about mutual aid and the Emergency Management Assistance Compact and the leadership of this Subcommittee and specifically you, Madam Chairwoman, in your sup-

port for emergency management and homeland security in H.R. 3377, which is important for all of us.

I am here on behalf of the California Emergency Management Agency, as well as the National Emergency Managers Association, which represents all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and our five U.S. territories.

Let me begin by commending Secretary Napolitano, Administrator Fugate, and my good friend—well, Craig is also a good friend—and Bill Carwile for their help, their support, and their leadership. It has been a pleasure to work with them. And, as the Ranking Member knows, it seems Florida sort of has the monopoly over the Administrator with Chief Paulsen and the former administrator.

This has been an important partnership. It is about the team effort, as Bill spoke to the Committee about. It is about those partnerships and the team effort because it is not a Federal effort, it is not a State or local effort, it is a national effort; and this is a wonderful opportunity for the Subcommittee and the public to learn about the great things that we are doing.

But the bottom line is, when we look at emergency management and we look at preparedness, not only does it have to be a national program, we have to recognize that all incidents are local, and you need to build capabilities from the bottom up. And that is one of the things that the EMAC, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, and the Urban Search and Rescue teams are based on; it is that all incidents are local and, as you said, Madam Chairwoman, it is one for all and all for one in terms of sharing and leveraging these resources, which is critical for the wise investment and use of our scarce taxpayer dollars.

I am pleased to come from a State who has gotten this and has led the Nation in terms of its mutual aid efforts. Governor Schwarzenegger makes clear to his cabinet all the time that public safety has to be government's number one priority. Constitutionally, when you look at it, it is only government who can provide law enforcement services and the kinds of things the voters expect us and our constitutional form of government expect us to do, is to provide them with public safety. And one of the ways that we can effectively do this, and most effectively do it and efficiently, is through the mutual aid system.

We are pleased, of the 28 teams that FEMA sponsors in terms of Urban Search and Rescue, eight of those are located in California. They have been vital for responding to all sorts of disasters, as well as building collapses, and day-in and day-out events where they are there 24/7, 365, saving lives and property. It is a wise investment that we have made both at the State, local, and Federal levels to support those teams.

Those teams have been deployed to the Gulf States in 2005, after Katrina and Wilma; they also, with Gustav and Ike, were deployed to Texas and Louisiana as we had those earthquakes. Our teams, the eight that we have, have been built up with swift water rescue capabilities. It is something that all 28 of the US&R teams should have.

Earthquake risks are not alone to California. I am originally from and did homeland security for the State of Illinois. The New

Madrid Fault that last went off in 1810 and 1811, which rang church bells out in Boston and Philadelphia, shows that the Midwest is also at risk for the type of catastrophic incident that these US&R teams would be important to support.

One of the questions we all get, Madam Chairwoman, and that we often hear is why should the Federal Government support these State and local assets, and they are principally local assets. It is because the Federal Government doesn't own these capabilities, and they shouldn't build these capabilities to have them sitting around, waiting for the all like the Maytag repairman. Rather, instead, they should be built, as they have been, in local departments, where they are there working, training, exercising and saving lives 24/7, 365.

The cost of these teams is shared, but the bulk of the expense falls on locals and States. FEMA currently provides \$1 million a year to each of the 28 teams. We estimate the cost just for equipment and exercising, as you go through that, is about \$1.7 million a year. That is not counting the cost of personnel. We as State and locals are assuming about a \$10 million cost for these teams, which consist of 70 members in each of the positions, from medical, hazardous material, search and rescue capabilities.

Those personnel costs, those insurance costs, those licensing costs, are picked up by State and locals, and having those 70 positions filled three deep is about 210 people for each of these task forces and about 6,000 people nationwide. If you add those up, it approximately costs about \$10 million a year in personnel costs, equipment, and exercising to maintain these teams.

So we need to have the support of FEMA to fully fund the operational costs, which would come to about an additional million dollars a year in support.

In addition, there are liability issues that have not been resolved for our Urban Search and Rescue teams, and H.R. 3377 will go a long way to addressing them. Another way to deal with it would be to do it under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, which has liability issues worked out. But these heroes who are going out and saving lives should not have to be worrying about may happen to them or their families if they are hurt and injured while they are rescuing, saving lives, and providing comfort to those who have been victims of a catastrophic incident.

While I am here, I want to plug the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, which is a way that not only can we share Urban Search and Rescue teams, but fire resources, swift water rescue teams, hazardous material response. All of that can be done through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, which NEMA supports with FEMA. And the \$4 million investment the two make to support the EMAC system, which is also in H.R. 3377, is a bargain for the American taxpayers.

Let me conclude by saying that we in government continue to work very hard to get better prepared and do the work that we need to do to build our capabilities and resources, and leverage those resources efficiently and with value to the taxpayers through mutual aid. But citizens have a responsibility to get prepared themselves, and our paid response teams, in terms of the Urban Search and Rescue teams, are also supported by great volunteers

who are out there, such as Community Emergency Response Teams, a concept developed in Los Angeles and in California. We have those teams that are also there as a surge capacity to assist us. In these catastrophic incidents, it requires an informed and prepared public so that we have survivors, not victims.

So I thank you for your support. I thank you for the opportunity to be here and welcome any of your questions.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Bettenhausen.

Before I begin questioning, could I ask the members who have come in whether they have any brief opening remarks?

Mr. CAO. Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair. First of all, Madam Chair, I would like to introduce to you a group of students from New Orleans. They are from the McKee School. They were in my office and we were discussing about the U.S. Government and how Congress operates and do our work up here, so I asked them to follow me to a Subcommittee hearing.

And I just want to introduce to the students from New Orleans Congresswoman Norton. She represents the District of Columbia. And besides Congressman Diaz-Balart of Florida, Congresswoman Norton has been one of the greatest champions of the recovery effort in New Orleans. She has held many hearings in connection with FEMA and other Federal agencies to make sure that New Orleans gets the money that we need in order for us to rebuild and recover. So we owe a great debt of gratitude to Chairwoman Norton, and I hope that once you get back to your classes, you can write her a letter and thank her for the hard work that she is doing up here to make sure that we get what we need in New Orleans.

Madam Chair, I give back my time. Thanks.

Ms. NORTON. Well, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana for the generosity of his remarks and thanks. It has been a pleasure to work with him, particularly given the great priority we believed that the Gulf Coast and especially New Orleans, which suffered this ravaging tragedy, should have.

Would you raise your hands so we can see which—welcome. We just want to welcome you here. Mr. Cao is working very hard; he wants to make sure that Louisiana and New Orleans are brought up every moment he can. So I appreciate that he has invited you to this hearing, and I hope we are not boring you too much.

Are there any comments from any other members?

[No response.]

Ms. NORTON. No? Let me then begin first with thanks, because already I think members have learned from your testimony. Mr. Carwile, could you tell us approximately how many personnel and urban rescue teams are deployed from the United States to Haiti at this moment? Some of them, I know, have returned. I am just trying to get a handle on about how many of our people have been there doing this work. We have seen them on television.

Mr. CARWILE. Yes, Madam Chairwoman. The number was 564 members of both Urban Search and Rescue teams—those are the two teams that came under the foreign teams—and the remaining teams that, under arrangement with USAID, we sent down. Additionally, we sent down parts of our Mobile Emergency Response System Communications to provide overall communications for

both the Urban Search and Rescue teams and other U.S. Government agencies.

Ms. NORTON. Wait a minute, this is important. These are communication teams.

Mr. CARWILE. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. NORTON. In a country which not only doesn't have its basic infrastructure up, but I can't believe that there is any communication. And Mr. Cao will understand, from Louisiana, that much of the tragedy stemmed from not being able to communicate. Was there any communication left?

Mr. CARWILE. Ma'am, it was severely damaged, as you suggest. So without having sent down the Mobile Emergency Response System, it would have been much more difficult for our Urban Search and Rescue teams to communicate.

Ms. NORTON. So they can stand up equipment that allows who to communicate with whom?

Mr. CARWILE. Yes, ma'am. The teams set up three repeaters and it enabled the teams that were deployed, doing the rescue work, to communicate back to the Urban Search and Rescue team headquarters, if you will, the DART, Disaster Assistance Response Team, under USAID. It tied in the ambassador in the embassy, as well as Secretary Napolitano, of course, had other interests besides hers and FEMA there. ICE was there, the United States Coast Guard was there, as well as the Customs and Border Patrol. So it provided a command and control node for those elements back here. As a matter of fact, the moment we had been deployed there, we had video teleconferencing back to us here in Washington.

We also provided external affairs and set up the joint information center for the U.S. Embassy in Haiti.

Ms. NORTON. So we have to understand that everything was down; that there is no parliament, that the prime minister didn't have a radio that he could talk to anybody with. And we have the kind of equipment that can set up communication in a country that essentially has none. If we can do that in Haiti, you can imagine how important that is in the United States, because we have States that are vast where whole millions of people, or certainly hundreds of thousands of people, would be left without any way to communicate; and we have already seen what happened in Louisiana.

I am interested in cost. The people of the United States, not only through their Federal Government, but through their State and local governments, have borne this expense, and I think we need to understand how that occurs, especially since, on the question of tort liability, we have, in our reauthorization legislation, some sections that would deal with this.

Now, as I understood your testimony, Mr. Bettenhausen, personnel liability costs are borne by the State?

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. Principally by our local governments, because these teams are based, like, for example, Task Force 2, from LA County that went to Haiti, that is borne by LA County.

Ms. NORTON. While they are deployed in other States or in other countries?

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. No. When they are deployed—it is probably easier just to talk about if it were domestically. That is usually going to come under a president's disaster declaration, which

FEMA then would be reimbursing the cost for their time while on the scene.

Ms. NORTON. Now, this is important to note for the record as well. These teams are your normal emergency management folks with a lot of expertise, and they acquire a lot of it, or more of it as they are deployed elsewhere. But these are people that the State or the local government pays for. But when these teams are in another State and you hear Fairfax County, for example, all over the Country and other places, or in Haiti, FEMA picks up the cost. All the cost?

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. Cost while they are deployed.

Ms. NORTON. While they are deployed.

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. Of course, they will replace the equipment but, you know, on a 24/7 basis, these firefighters, these hazardous materials experts, these engineers, the paramedics, they are on the payroll to be ready and to be on call, and that is the expense which is the largest expense of maintaining those teams—

Ms. NORTON. This is wonderfully efficient way to do government. If you are in Fairfax County today, you are not going to get a lot of practice doing major disasters, I hope, since you are right across the river from us. So if a disaster comes, with all that expertise that you may have, you have not really had real-time experience. This way, when you go to Haiti or when you go to another State, in essence, that is helping you to not only acquire, but to maintain expertise you need in your local jurisdiction. You pay for it while they are there; we pay for it when you are deployed elsewhere. If you in California were needed in Nevada, who would pay for that?

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. If there was a presidentially-declared disaster, FEMA would pick up the cost. Now, if it weren't a presidentially declared disaster, as we deploy these throughout California or elsewhere, particularly within California, we have our own disaster systems act, where the State would pick up 75 percent of that cost.

I think it is also important, when you talk about these real-life events that they respond to, these teams, these professionals, are training and exercising all of the time; and, as you talked about, construction accidents, trench collapses, train derailments, as we have seen here in D.C. These teams are equipped and prepared to respond to those and save lives and property.

It is that training and exercising, though, and those local incidents that go through that equipment that requires the support from FEMA. It is a small price to pay for the Federal Government to have these assets and resources available as national assets in the time of catastrophe. And when we are talking about the expense, right now the Federal Government is picking up only about 10 percent with the million dollars that they are funding each of those teams. They should fully cover the costs of the equipment, training, and exercising that goes on for these teams, which would require—

Ms. NORTON. Wait a minute. Would you clarify that? Picking up 10 percent of the cost of what?

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. Of maintaining and supporting these teams.

Ms. NORTON. Well, I thought the Government does refurbish and help with equipment.

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. A million dollars a year. It costs \$1.7 million in equipment and training expenses each year to maintain each of these teams.

Ms. NORTON. I see.

Mr. CARWILE. Madam Chairwoman, if I might, a point of clarification.

Ms. NORTON. Yes, Mr. Carwile.

Mr. CARWILE. The teams that deployed under FEMA to Haiti, those were under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. We had an interagency agreement with USAID, so they are going to reimburse us for the cost. Just a point of clarification, ma'am.

Ms. NORTON. No, that is an important point.

Mr. CARWILE. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. NORTON. This will not come out of the FEMA budget, it will come out of the USAID budget?

Mr. CARWILE. That is correct, ma'am. As well, the other big benefit, I think, of the teams is they set standards and procedures and doctrine for the rest of the Nation. I mean, that is one of the other added benefits to tag on what my friend Matt Bettenhausen talked about.

Ms. NORTON. I have just one more question and then I will move to the Ranking Member.

I was pleased to learn that the U.N., working with Haiti prior to the earthquake, was apparently trying to replicate something of the model we have, something called the Citizens Emergency Response Team Program that began in the States. Do you see the possibility that something like the Urban Rescue and Response teams can in fact be on the ground in a place like Haiti? And has any other jurisdiction where FEMA teams have served taken up this model on their own?

Mr. CARWILE. Ma'am, the practice of the United States Agency for International Development, those two teams that deploy is to leave their equipment and then train the host nation individuals, in this case the Haitians, on that equipment. Moreover, I know several countries around the world have used the United States model for Urban Search and Rescue teams. I know before the Beijing Olympics, for example, the People's Republic of China was looking to create that capability, and they used our teams as a model for that.

So there will be an increased capability in the country of Haiti.

Ms. NORTON. But you are leaving the equipment in Haiti?

Mr. CARWILE. Yes, ma'am. The USAID teams, the two international teams, it is their practice—

Ms. NORTON. And this is teams from Fairfax and from Los Angeles?

Mr. CARWILE. Those two teams, yes, ma'am, the international teams.

Ms. NORTON. So what do they carry to Haiti?

Mr. CARWILE. Well, they carried their basic load. There are 70 individuals plus their other bioptic equipment, their medical equipment, and their jaws of life, all those kinds of pretty sophisticated equipment. But this is part of the USAID program to train the host country and give them the capability that remains there.

Ms. NORTON. So does that mean that people are being trained on the ground in Haiti now with Urban Rescue and Response, where you will leave equipment there with people who know how to take care of it and who can do the best they can? You will actually have trained people when you leave?

Mr. CARWILE. Yes, ma'am, that is the practice of the USAID to do that.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much.

Mr. Cao?

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. Madam Chairwoman?

Ms. NORTON. Oh, excuse me. Mr. Bettenhausen?

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. Specifically to the CERT teams, the Community Emergency Response Teams,—

Ms. NORTON. The citizen teams.

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. Yes. They are fantastic. They are our surge capacity in terms of what they do and train, and can come in behind the FEMA-sponsored Urban Search and Rescue teams. We have those located in communities throughout California. The governor created the first cabinet level position of service and volunteerism to help support this because the public is anxious and sometimes we in government just don't ask them for their help and support, and these CERT teams are valuable. They come with the technical expertise.

Three years ago we started a nationwide training exercise for CERT teams, so other States that have CERT teams have brought them out to California; they train and exercise together. But they bring radio communications abilities, they bring all—just like the Urban Search and Rescue teams, they bring those capabilities and they are used throughout the United States. There were CERT teams deployed to the Gulf States for Katrina.

Now, whether they would be deployed internationally, it is not likely, just given the depth that we have with the 28 teams. You know, we had Task Force 1 and 2, the USAID teams. We had Task Force 5 and 7 at our airports, ready to go, from Orange County and Sacramento. With those 28 teams, I think that there is probably enough capacity and the logistics are a little bit harder on the volunteer citizen teams than it would be for these teams.

Ms. NORTON. Well, Mr. Carwile, does FEMA encourage or have any program to encourage these Citizen Emergency Rescue Teams all across the United States? What is that program?

Mr. CARWILE. Yes, ma'am, that is a program, the Community Response Teams, that has been active. Additionally, Administrator Fugate—in the whole urban search and rescue issue and my friend, Matt, is correct, 28 heavy teams is probably about the right answer.

However, based on lessons learned—I happen to have been the Federal coordinating officer in the four hurricanes that hit Florida in 2004 and then in Mississippi in 2005—there is a real need for light Urban Search and Rescue, without all the very heavy equipment. So we are engaging in discussions as late as this morning with the National Guard to train others, including the National Guard, on how to do basic light urban search and rescue to get kind of a Force-Multiplier, and we have been working with sponsoring chiefs to develop a program instruction to expand the capa-

bility of light urban rescue using National Guard. And in the State of Florida they use volunteer groups, as well, as I think much like California does.

Ms. NORTON. But that is not a FEMA activity?

Mr. CARWILE. Ma'am, the sponsors are putting together the program and instruction, marrying up the Urban Search and Rescue teams with National Guard units and others will be under our auspices.

Ms. NORTON. Will be a FEMA program?

Mr. CARWILE. It is very low-cost, actually.

Ms. NORTON. Yes. And as Mr. Bettenhausen says, people are anxious to be useful, and here is a perfect opportunity.

Mr. CAO?

Mr. CAO. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Carwile, I was driving through New Orleans several days ago and I was listening to one of the local radio stations, and one of the hosts was proposing why not use some of the FEMA trailers that we presently have, ship them to Haiti to help the people there? Can you comment on whether or not that proposal is actually workable, whether or not the cost benefit analysis would be something that we can ascertain?

Mr. CARWILE. Congressman, we have been working extremely closely with our colleagues at USAID. As a matter of fact, Administrator Fugate and Administrator Shaw together went down to Haiti and visited the site of the destruction and visited many of our Urban Search and Rescue teams. We have provided a large amount of resources to USAID. As the lead Federal agency, they have not articulated any requirement for the trailers. I would tell you, having come from Hawaii and having been the director of the Pacific Area Office, that, in general, there are some issues. I don't know what is in the lead Federal agency's mind, but they have not considered, that we know of, sending FEMA trailers down.

Mr. CAO. Well, I know that FEMA is in the process of auctioning out many of those trailers. The last number that I heard, FEMA was trying to sell about 100,000 trailers at pennies to the dollar. So I figured whether or not the trailers can be put in better use. Obviously, with the people of Haiti, they are presently living in tents. A lot of them don't have shelter over their heads. I am pretty sure that these trailers would be very beneficial, even though we have to address the issue of formaldehyde in these trailers.

Can you provide me, Mr. Carwile, maybe with an inventory with respect to how much FEMA still—how many numbers of trailers FEMA still has in its possession?

Mr. CARWILE. We will provide that to you.

Mr. CAO. And also a cost benefit analysis of shipping a trailer to Haiti?

Mr. CARWILE. We might defer that to our colleagues at USAID. That would be under their auspices and not FEMA'S, of course.

Mr. CAO. Sure.

Mr. CARWILE. We can approach our colleagues over there with that.

Mr. CAO. I would like to ask you how has FEMA implemented some of the lessons learned in Katrina? Have they applied that to Haiti in regards to certain rescue? Also, what have we learned in

Haiti that we can implement in future disasters in the United States?

Mr. CARWILE. That is a really good question and that is why we are going to undertake and have a game plan to undertake a very detailed after-action review, as well as the Urban Search and Rescue teams have been conducting after-action reviews as they redeploy and demobilize. I can tell you there are a lot of differences. The basic blocking and tackling, the saving lives, the working in the rubble certainly in an overseas environment is very similar, whether it is Mexico City, Armenia, or Haiti and the United States.

There are some differences, and I am sure my colleagues that follow on can address those. In terms of working in an international environment, under the United Nations, under USAID, there are over 40 teams from around the world that were down there, so some of those—some of the lessons learned may have to do with working in that different kind of environment. But certainly lessons learned, I think my colleagues, the chiefs that come up, are really experts in this and can address this, but it has been an evolving program and continues to mature and learn lessons through every single event, all the events that the Chairwoman referenced in her opening remarks. Every one of those has resulted in improvements to the system.

Mr. CAO. Madam Chair, if you can allow me one more question.

Ms. NORTON. Certainly.

Mr. CAO. One of the students from the McKee School that are in here right now asked me a question that I did not really know the answer to, and it deals with hazard mitigation in regards to I guess individual homeowners rebuilding. There was an issue of qualification based on the cost to rebuild per square foot. I know that this hearing does not deal directly with recovery issues and with individual homeowners, but, still, if you can provide me with information regarding what is FEMA policy in connection with hazard mitigation in regards to individual homeowners.

What are some of the qualifications? Is there a cost per square foot limit that FEMA can assist? All those issues that deal with individual homeowners applying for hazard mitigation that they want to apply to their homes. Obviously, here we are talking about homeowners in the 2nd Congressional District in Louisiana that were damaged by Katrina and other hurricanes.

Mr. CARWILE. We will be happy to provide you information on that. We mixed a couple different programs, the Individual Assistance Program and then the Hazard Mitigation Program, but we will provide follow-on information for you, Congressman.

Mr. CAO. Thank you very much.

I yield back.

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. If I could also add to that. In the discussions on H.R. 3377, while it doesn't go to individual assistance for homeowners, the National Emergency Managers Association and in that bill supports the reauthorization for the pre-disaster mitigation funding, and that is critical. A dollar spent on prevention is going to save a lot in response and recovery costs. So, in H.R. 3377, it would help us a lot in government for the public assistance to have the reauthorization for the pre-disaster mitigation grant funding.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Cao.

Before I go to Ms. Edwards, in deference to the fact that we are fortunate that the Chairman of the Full Committee has joined us today, could I ask Mr. Oberstar if he has any statement or questions?

Mr. OBERSTAR. [Remarks in foreign language.] That is in the language of Haiti, the Creole language, thank you, Madam Chairman; only in Creole and in French it is Madam President. I love to have the French come and visit and said Messr. President. It only means Chairman in our language, but it sounds good. But that Haitian Creole expression, you are a loaded mule means you have a lot of work, but with many hands the work is lighter. Or we say many hands make light work. The Haitians have an expression for just about everything. I lived there three and a half years and learned the language, and love it and treasure it and love the Haitian people.

Mr. Cao suggested sending FEMA trailers to Haiti, not with the formaldehyde, though. We wouldn't want to—in addition to the international problems of moving product from the U.S. overseas with foreign trade issues and others that attend this matter, and then the question of how you bring them back, what you are supposed to do at the end of their use for an emergency, we wouldn't want to be exporting a source of illness, certainly not to our neighbors in the Caribbean.

Lessons learned, I think the most important lesson learned from Haiti is to have building codes. They have never had building codes. If they had, there is no enforcement mechanism. The Haitian government has so many other things too be worried about that building codes are way down the list of their issues of concern and for enforcement.

I think Haiti is on track to do that. I think the lesson learned in Haiti is more important for the Haitians than for us, and that is you need to have a building code, you need to have an enforcement mechanism in the rebuilding process. Don't just put concrete block on concrete block, in many cases, without mortar, without rebar, without foundations. In light of what we know, this is one of the most active seismic areas in the hemisphere, and that issue never had raised itself. There was no preparation.

Lesson learned from Minneapolis, when the bridge of I-35 over the Mississippi River collapsed, the response was impeccable because Mayor R.T. Reibach of Minneapolis had availed himself of FEMA'S pre-disaster planning funds, Madam Chair and colleagues, and put his entire city governance apparatus and that of the first responders of St. Paul through a three-day training exercise two years before—or was it a year? It was a year and a half before the collapse of the bridge. When it happened, they were prepared. They all knew what to do. They had communications, they had coordination, they had equipment available, they had hospitals prepared to accept the injured and the mechanisms to deal with the fatalities.

There was no such planning in Haiti. The Coast Guard was the first on station, on response. They did everything they could. I would just like to read—I get a daily report from the Coast Guard. From Day 4, after the four Coast Guard cutters were offshore and two more enroute from Health Services Technician Larry Berman: Today gave my partner, Elias Gomez, and I the mental break we

needed from running the clinic for the past three days without any medical officers to team with. Elias ran the pharmacy and I ran the medical supply. I took a moment to pray and thank God for the surgeons as our emotions surfaced. We saw about 100 patients today. In four days our count is 350.

In the next lines he says: I want to pass on the story of the miracle betadine, the surgical soap used to cleanse and prepare an area for surgery and to cleanse wounds. We started the day with two and a half gallons and we never ran out. Every patient had wounds requiring betadine. Some need lots of betadine. I'm telling you, it was God that kept that soap flowing; otherwise, the clinic would have had to stop seeing patients.

What do they need? He said, here is what we need: morphine, Kerlix—which is gauze bandage—betadine by the gallon, triple antibiotic ointment, wash basins, medical supplies, medical staples, Ace wraps, crutches, canes, sutures, Zylocane, tubing, mops, brooms, thermometers, suture sets, headbands for lighting, and Gatorade for the team.

Everything is needed and it is needed all at once in Haiti.

An important lesson learned is coordination. There are a host of organizations, all working at the same time, from many countries, many cultures, many languages, many different practices, all within a government structure which largely was destroyed by the earthquake; government buildings collapsed, important ministers killed, staff personnel disrupted, the president having to operate out of inadequate quarters without communications.

I recommended to President Obama that he bring James Lee Witt, who already was in Haiti under a contract with the Haitian government prior to the earthquake guiding and training people in disaster response. He didn't have much time, he hadn't been there very long before the earthquake struck; and his role now has been expanded under a contract with AID. But you need organization structures for long-term recovery of the infrastructure and I have had discussion with Chairwoman Norton and with our wonderful Ranking Member, Mr. Diaz-Balart, about long-term recovery, and we need to be doing some things here in this Committee to prepare for that.

Command and control and coordination on the ground, that is still an issue, is still something that needs attention. Most of our U.S. Government agencies who respond are accustomed to operating under presidential directions, but AID is not in that mode; AID operates in a different structure.

So we need to re-think the role of AID in a disaster response situation. You need coordination with the 10,000 NGOs, non-governmental organizations, that are in Haiti. Why do you have 10,000? Because during the Duvalier dictatorial era, no government was willing to deal with the corruption of Duvalier, so they went around the government and worked with the NGOs, which proliferated; and in that process government atrophied, it had little or no capability to respond to its own needs.

Ms. Brown, the Chair of our Rail Subcommittee, can tell you. She has organized time and again shipments of goods to Haiti by the truckload, by the shipload, and then they have trouble getting the goods into Haiti; they get to the dock, they wait there for weeks.

Finally, we met with President Preval and he said, when you have that problem, call me.

Well, she said, rightly, Mr. President, with all respect, we shouldn't have to call you; you should have a governmental structure in place that responds. That is a failure of government, if the president has to be involved in getting goods off a dock and into the hands of people who need the food and the clothing and the other material that we are sending.

So coordination among the NGOs and developing governmental structure is critical in this process. So I think the task on the ground is converting Haiti from a government of NGOs to a self-sustaining government with a structure and with personnel in place. There are more talented and gifted Haitians living outside the country, working for the International Monetary Fund, The World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank for African Nations.

Haitians are gifted, talented, skilled, but because there was no future for them in their own country, they left. We need to bring them back and assure them there is going to be a solid, stable political future, and I think we have that opportunity now at our fingertips if we do this recovery right with the international community, but engaging the Haitian people at every step. This is their country, and they are proud of their country.

I will just conclude with one of my favorite of the Haitian expressions. [Remarks in foreign language]. The pencil of God has no eraser. God's pencil can't erase the earthquake, but we can help, and that is what we have to do there.

So I want to thank you for being—I thank Madam Chair for your foresight and holding this hearing. This Committee intends to stay on top of this issue in Haiti.

Do you have any comment on the command, control, and coordination issue?

Mr. CARWILE. Perhaps my colleagues who are going to follow, who were actually there, sir, may do so better, but I do know that, from observing it and having folks on the ground reporting back each day, I know that the international community—of course, led under the United Nations—is certainly a different environment in terms of command and control communications, and I know that USAID and the White House has been working very closely to put together a structure down there with the government of Haiti going forward to enable them to have the kind of recovery that you described, sir.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you.

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. I do think that, from what we learned from the teams, it is going to be one of the lessons learned from Haiti is those coordination issues. The international community hasn't adopted, like we have here in the United States and in California, the National Incident Management System and standardized, as our teams have deployed, understand incident command and unified command, and I think you are going to hear some of the challenges with the international partners there who are not as familiar with that kind of unified command and the use of the National Incident Management System.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Bettenhausen.

We are going to move on to Ms. Edwards and then quickly move on to our next panel before there is a vote called.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and thanks so much for holding this hearing today. I actually want to go back to the earlier discussion about FEMA and these trailers, because it really does concern me that the recent news reports that indicate perhaps some consideration of using the formaldehyde-laden FEMA trailers in Haiti, and I would like to hear directly from FEMA and from Secretary Napolitano that this is absolutely off the table. I think that we owe that to the Haitian people and we owe it out of respect, frankly, to Mississippians and those in the Gulf who were subjected to these trailers.

Also, Madam Chair, I want to enter into the record, so that we make sure that we have it, a certification that is actually required in the bidding process when these trailers are being sold in open bid that is essentially a hold harmless statement that purchasers are required to fill out with respect to the acquisition of these trailers.

And there is a portion of it that says that requires the purchaser to acknowledge that "the sale and lot number may contain formaldehyde and I agree the United States shall not be liable for personal injuries to disabilities of or death of any persons arising from or incident to the sale of this property trailer, use or its final disposition, and to hold the United States harmless from and shall indemnify the United States against any or all debts, liabilities, judgments, cost, demands, suits, actions, or claims of any nature arising from or incident to the sale of the property."

Ms. NORTON. So ordered. It will be admitted into the record.  
[The information follows:]



U.S. General Services Administration

**Usable Park Model Trailer Sales Certification**

I, the undersigned, certify that I am aware that the park model trailer(s) I am purchasing as Sale \_\_\_\_\_, Lot \_\_\_\_\_ may contain formaldehyde. I agree the United States shall not be liable for personal injuries to, disabilities of, or death of any persons arising from or incident to the sale of this property [park model trailer(s)], use, or its final disposition; and to hold the United States harmless from and shall indemnify the United States against any or all debts, liabilities, judgments, costs, demands, suits, actions, or claims of any nature arising from or incident to the sale of this property, its use, or its final disposition.

I have read, and understand, the documentation prepared by the CDC, FEMA, and EPA, which is offered with these units, and I agree to provide copies of these documents to any subsequent customer/purchaser/buyer for this/these purchased unit(s).

This certification is made in accordance with and subject to the penalties of Title 18, Section 1001, the United States Code, Crime and Criminal Procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of purchaser (print or type)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of purchaser

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you. This hold harmless statement is required to be submitted, to be filled out by those who purchase the trailers, and yet there is this conversation about dumping—and I do use that word—dumping these trailers onto the Haitian people.

You know, as Chairman Oberstar has pointed out, the Haitian people are resilient, they are smart, they are talented. Their expatriate community is all across the world and their talents spread every place and need to go back to Haiti. But just because you are poor and your immune system may be compromised and you don't have someplace to live doesn't mean that you want to live in a formaldehyde trailer. So I would really appreciate it if the Secretary and if FEMA would simply take it off the table, not make it a part of the discussion anymore, out of fairness to the Haitian people.

I want to say also that—and to thank you because the service of our Urban Search and Rescue teams is really tremendous. Great people doing work that some of us couldn't possibly do under the most difficult circumstances. We have seen that at work in Haiti; we have seen that at work here on our own shores.

I am curious as to whether there are barriers to more of our Urban Search and Rescue teams being trained or certified, or whatever it takes, to do more international work, because I do think it provides the kinds of hands-on, on the ground work that isn't always accessible here in the Untied States, and that we need the talents of multiples of these teams able to do that kind of work, and I wonder if you would respond to that.

Mr. CARWILE. First, on the trailers, there is no intention of the Department of Homeland Security or FEMA. Trailers going to Haiti have never been in discussions with USAID, the lead Federal agency on that, just to take that off the table, ma'am.

On other teams having the capacity to go overseas, we are going to hear from a couple of the folks that had the responsibility of USAID, but I think it was remarkable that we were able to stand up the other teams that weren't off the teams and didn't have passports and didn't have shots and didn't have those kinds of things very quickly to respond to an overseas deployment. So I think there will be a lot of lessons learned for our domestic teams as we come back.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you.

No further questions.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much.

I just want to establish for the record on this matter of Incident Command System. Now, when FEMA goes—that is what FEMA is trained in. Here is USAID, it is in its own jurisdiction and it is doing the best it can. Would it, in light of the expertise of the Federal Government and where it has placed the expertise, would it be better for FEMA to exercise that Incident Command—and let me explain what I mean—where multiple agencies get together, work on a single disaster, where there is no time to waste, there is no time to get together, how you get them all together and how you deploy them for the first time.

If the Federal Government has a lead agency for doing that, wouldn't it, by some memorandum of understanding or action by this Subcommittee, be best to say, when you are overseas and you

are using or need FEMA, FEMA'S help, FEMA will be your Incident Command System control?

Mr. CARWILE. Ma'am, we would always be—and you correctly described our role in terms of the National Incident Management System and the Incident Command System, much of which came from our great State of California. But we would certainly offer up our assistance to help train others—

Ms. NORTON. No, no, I am asking another question. Government bothers me because government immediately goes into bureaucratic responses; wait a minute, who is supposed to do this. Look, we went through this with FEMA, where who was supposed to do it on paper seemed to be how it must be done, and where the flexibility to do what has to be done when there is nothing in the statute saying that you are forbidden from doing it, was not exercised. So this Committee and Subcommittee had to pass a post-Katrina act. FEMA already had the authority to do much of what was in it.

Now, what I am trying to find out—this is a hearing, this is an oversight hearing. We do fact-finding here. I want to know what is the fastest and best way if you deployed overseas. If USAID says we need FEMA for your urban rescue teams, what would be lost and would be required in saying not only are we deploying some people and some expertise, we are deploying you the Incident Command Control to make sure they do in fact work together on the ground? Is that the best practice overseas, the way it is the best practice in the United States of America?

Mr. CARWILE. I think it is the best practice to send an incident support team that provides the overhead management of the teams using the Incident Command System. And, actually, we did send augmentation to USAID to provide that expertise. They weren't called an incident support team, but they were actually augmentation and performed that function.

Ms. NORTON. Well, I appreciate that and I have no criticism of USAID. All I know is these are response and recovery people, and that 10 minutes can mean a life. So to the extent that the bureaucracy is trying to decide, okay, make sure the USAID people, who really don't know anything about incident command, gets stood up, that I would find quite frustrating, since quick action is what you are called upon to render.

What would be your answer to that, Mr. Bettenhausen?

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. In fact, the US&R teams that are going, they use the Incident Command, Unified Command. They have that. They also bring that kind of overhead support that is doing the—

Ms. NORTON. Who is the "they," please?

Mr. BETTENHAUSEN. The US&R teams themselves have that capability within that. FEMA, on top of that, also sent in these overhead. The issue that I think is going to come out of this, though, is that while you are having good command, control, and communications with your teams that are deployed, the issue there was—you heard, for example, there were 40 international search and rescue teams there. The overall coordination—if we are talking about a lesson learned, some of these international responses, they are not using necessarily the same system we are. Plus, there was the

additional challenge that there was not COOP and COG, Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government, existing there, that it had completely collapsed.

So in terms of our teams going over there, they were correctly following it. The challenge, I think, that you are going to have is sort of that coordination, when it is not things that we—

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Bettenhausen, I don't doubt that they were correctly following it. What you have said about the foreign teams only emphasizes my point. I can't expect you all to take control of those teams. But if we have two agencies over there, we experienced this on the ground in Katrina. There was huge confusion about who on the ground is in charge. Now, the Incident Command System should be in the hands of somebody who has used it before and who has some practice in using it. And I am not suggesting even that a change in statute is necessary.

I would ask you, Mr. Carwile, to go back and have discussions with USAID. I doubt that they would much care who dealt with a system foreign to them if it got the work done.

Finally, let me ask does FEMA plan to support efforts in Haiti beyond what you are doing now? In other words, I am told you are near the end of recovery. Does that mean that the teams are coming home and they have done all they can do in Haiti?

Mr. CARWILE. Ma'am, as far as the Urban Search and Rescue effort, there are 12 members that had not deployed down that have been deployed two days ago from Los Angeles and from Fairfax to provide technical assistance to the contractors who are undertaking the recovery efforts at the Hotel Montana and another. So that is the last of the United States commitment to the recovery efforts. We do have 15 members, both MERs that I referred to earlier, and a small Command and Control element down there—

Ms. NORTON. The MERs are the communication feeds.

Mr. CARWILE. Yes, ma'am, the Mobile—

Ms. NORTON. And they are going to remain for how long?

Mr. CARWILE. Well, probably for another two weeks, ma'am. We are trying to reconstitute that. It has some critical capabilities down there well prior to the hurricane season.

Ms. NORTON. Is there not recovery from the overall disaster that American teams will be doing? If not rescue teams, who is going to be doing that? I mean, recovery, they are going to be in some kind of recovery. I recognize that is such an umbrella term. Are you a part of that or—

Mr. CARWILE. No, ma'am, we are not. USAID has the big part of that. I know a representative of the White House, Richard Reed, was down and helped craft an overall U.N. structure in which the United States had an appropriate role, but that will be an international situation under Secretary Clinton, ma'am.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Carwile. Unless there are—oh, Ms. Edwards does have a question.

Ms. EDWARDS. I do, just to follow up. Now, you mentioned earlier that when the international teams are deployed, they leave equipment on the ground and then there is training. So how many people are still on the ground in Haiti performing that function, training Haitians about the use of the equipment and maintaining it and doing services?

Mr. CARWILE. I believe some of duties of those 12 that are providing technical assistance, I believe they are doing some of that training as well, but some of that was—a great part of that was done before the teams redeployed back, as I understand it.

Ms. EDWARDS. Before the teams came back this time, this first go-round. All right, thank you.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much. We may have a vote within a half hour, so we want to thank this panel, very valuable testimony, and ask the next panel, the last panel, to come forward.

This is a panel we must hear from. This is the panel that has been on the ground here and elsewhere, and I am going to call upon them in this order: Back from Haiti has come the Task Force from Pennsylvania 1, Fred Endrikat, Special Operations Chief, City of Philadelphia Fire Department; Dave Downey, Division Chief, Training and Safety Division, Miami-Dade Rescue, both of whose task forces have been there; Virginia Beach Fire Department, Fire Chief Steven Cover, Virginia Task Force 2; and, of course, Mark Kramer, Assistant Chief/Operations, Orange County Fire Authority, California Task Force 5.

Mr. Endrikat, why don't you begin?

**TESTIMONY OF FRED ENDRIKAT, SPECIAL OPERATIONS CHIEF, CITY OF PHILADELPHIA FIRE DEPARTMENT, TASK FORCE LEADER, PENNSYLVANIA TASK FORCE 1; DAVE DOWNEY, DIVISION CHIEF, TRAINING AND SAFETY DIVISION, MIAMI-DADE FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT, TASK FORCE LEADER, FLORIDA TASK FORCE 1; STEVEN COVER, FIRE CHIEF, VIRGINIA BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT, SPONSORING AGENCY CHIEF, VIRGINIA TASK FORCE 2; AND MARK KRAMER, ASSISTANT CHIEF/OPERATIONS, ORANGE COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY, SPONSORING AGENCY CHIEF, CALIFORNIA TASK FORCE 5**

Mr. ENDRIKAT. Thank you, Chairwoman Norton, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, Chairman Oberstar, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. I have been a Philadelphia firefighter for 35 years and I am speaking today as a first responder in relation to my duties in Philadelphia and a FEMA National US&R Response System member who arrived in Haiti on January 19th. As the FEMA US&R National Task Force Leaders representative, I also have the responsibility and privilege to speak on behalf of the nearly 6,000 members of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's US&R National Response System.

With all due respect and condolences to the people of Haiti in the aftermath of this devastating disaster, it is important to look at the international emergency response to this incident and determine how to apply lessons learned in Haiti to our future operations here at home. The following observations and recommendations are in no way intended to serve as a criticism of the response operations in Haiti. They are submitted with the thought that we have an obligation to use this experience and leverage what we learned in the sole interest of better preparing our Nation and serving our citizens.

There were many lessons learned, and I would like to focus on four main areas.

Tiered response. We must ensure that we continue to develop a structured tiered response capability that places an emphasis on first responders and common operating platforms. All disasters start as local level events. The faster we can engage technician level rescuers in a tiered response after a sudden onset event, the more likely it is that we will save many more lives.

Haiti did not have a fully developed technical rescue US&R capability at the local, regional, or the national level, and precious time was lost in the immediate hours after the initial earthquake as a sufficient number of skilled rescuers were not quickly able to engage in rescue operations.

It is vital for us to continue to fund local government technical rescue and US&R initiatives by way of the Homeland Security Grant Program, Urban Area Security Initiative Grants, Maritime Port Security Grant Program, and possibly other related Federal funding mechanisms that are not tied specifically to response to terrorism. It is important for FEMA'S National US&R system to continue our outreach to other responders, including the State Urban Search and Rescue Alliance, to assist them in building upon their good work as they continue to develop technician level response capabilities at the local, regional, and State levels. This will enable our Nation to put rescuers that are trained to the highest technical levels to work in the shortest amount of time possible.

Second area is command and control. Strong unified command and control is essential for successful rescue operations at catastrophic events. In Haiti, US&R operations were coordinated by the United Nations On-Site Operations Coordination Center. At a similar event in the U.S., operations would be directed by the local authority having jurisdiction, with assistance from the Federal Government, with the FEMA US&R Incident Support Team having a significant role. The FEMA US&R system needs a structured formal mentoring and shadowing program for our less experienced incident support team members. We have an obligation to fully train and exercise these field managers before we assign them to critical roles at an actual disaster.

One of the many observations that was communicated to me by FEMA US&R System Task Force Leaders operating in Haiti was that international teams of widely varying staffing and capability were assigned to similar sized large operational areas, which in Haiti were called sectors, and that certain sectors did not have enough resources assigned to adequately perform prioritize search operations in a given operational period.

At home, we should continue to develop and implement the National Incident Management System resource-typing standard. We need to develop a comprehensive national catalog of all US&R resources in this Country and we need to catalog them in relation to the NIMS typing standard, and then eventually validate their readiness by the use of an assessment tool similar to the FEMA US&R National Response System Operational Readiness Evaluation Program.

Two specific aspects of recognizance and search operations in Haiti warrant our attention here at home. The foundation of how we operate here in the U.S. for our concept of operations for effective search and rescue actions at large-scale catastrophic events is

effective recognizance. Sector assignments and corresponding mapping during the recognizance phase in Haiti presented a significant challenge. In the first days of operations, Florida Task Force 1 and some of the other FEMA US&R Task Forces deployed to Haiti were using tourist maps provided by the U.S. Embassy. Search assignments were developed along geographical borders rather than like-sized grids.

The FEMA US&R system has a strong working relationship with the National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency. Their analysts and technicians are able to provide sophisticated mapping that contains detailed grid references with corresponding up-to-date satellite images, as well as Light Detection and Ranging, or LIDAR, graphics soon after a sudden onset disaster occurs.

Included in your briefing packets in the section following my written testimony are examples of the mapping products developed by NGA. We have to continue to use their technology when we have disasters here at home.

FEMA Administrator Fugate has recently shared his vision of a Force-Multiplier concept with the leadership of the FEMA National US&R Response System. This Force-Multiplier concept would use the 28 FEMA US&R Task Forces to assist impacted local and State governments at disasters when requested and build upon their operational capabilities and expertise by training selected Department of Defense assets and non-FEMA US&R assets.

By pairing these trained resources with the 28 FEMA US&R Task Forces, recognizance and initial search operations at complex events could be accomplished in a much more efficient, uniform manner, creating a significant positive impact in the areas of search documentation and operational planning.

It is vital that we continue to support and further develop our all-hazards National US&R system, which also serves as a best practices model for our local, regional, and State US&R teams, and it is important that we address a number of related administrative and funding concerns.

Chairman Oberstar's House Resolution 3377 addresses the current administrative concerns involving the National US&R program by consolidating the statutory authority for the system under the Stafford Act and explicitly authorizing the US&R system. As of January 26th, it was reported that a total of 134 people were rescued from collapsed structures in Haiti by rescue teams that responded from all over the world. Forty-seven of those people were rescued by the efforts of the six US&R Task Forces from the United States.

Some of those rescue operations were extremely complex, with one of them taking a Task Force from the U.S. 30 hours to complete. Those rescues did not occur by chance; they were the direct result of the dedication of our personnel, the extensive training that is provided to them, the specialized equipment cache and logistical support package that the Task Forces deploy with, the framework of the National US&R system that enables them to operate in a uniform and efficient manner, and the unwavering support of the sponsoring agencies and participating agencies that furnish all of the nearly 6,000 members of our national system.

Based on our lessons learned and reinforced during the response to the earthquake in Haiti, I would respectfully ask that the Committee consider the continued support of the FEMA US&R National Response System.

Thank you, Chairwoman Norton, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and distinguished members, and Chairman Oberstar for the opportunity to testify today.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Endrikat.

We are going to hear next from Mr. Dave Downey from Florida Task Force 1.

I am afraid we are going to have a vote shortly. If so, I will recess the hearing, if we don't get to hear from everybody or to ask questions, and ask members to come back.

Mr. Downey?

Mr. DOWNEY. Thank you, Chairwoman Norton.

Ms. NORTON. This is very important testimony. These are the people who have been there, done that, so I don't want to give any short shrift to these witnesses.

Thank you, Mr. Downey.

Mr. DOWNEY. Thank you. Thank you, Chairwoman Norton, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, Chairman Oberstar, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee for inviting me to be here today. Again, my name is Dave Downey. I currently serve as a Division Chief with Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue in South Florida, and also as a Task Force Leader for Florida Task Force 1.

My written testimony and comments today are from my perspective as a Task Force Leader who led an 80-person search and rescue team to Haiti. I will discuss my direct observations from the mission, with the goal of identifying lessons learned that can be applied here at home.

Shortly after the news that a magnitude 7.0 earthquake had struck the country of Haiti, Florida Task Force 1 alerted and rostered a search and rescue team, even though our task force is not currently designated for international response. Our close proximity to the island, coupled with our past international response and training experience, necessitated us being prepared if called upon. Based on the preliminary reports, it was clear that this would be a catastrophic event requiring tremendous amounts of international aid.

After receiving our activation orders, we began what would turn out to be a day-long effort trying to secure transportation to move the 80-person task force and 62,000 pounds of rescue equipment to Haiti. Ultimately, we would be transported by a contracted carrier, one for personnel and a different carrier for our equipment.

While the plane carrying the personnel landed without delay in Port-au-Prince the following morning, the two planes carrying our equipment cache were delayed and then diverted to Santo Domingo. Ultimately, one plane landed with primarily base camp supplies the next morning, almost 24 hours after we got there, and the other plane with our rescue cache, the equipment most essential to this mission, didn't arrive until another 36 hours later.

Pre-identification of specific airframes and providers capable of moving US&R assets rapidly and efficiently is essential. Addition-

ally, when airports are inundated with a myriad of flights, priority must be given in the early days to search and rescue.

Once on the scene, the size of this disaster was overwhelming. My first thought was, where do we begin. Our priorities were already established. We first were directed to look at hospitals, universities and schools, multi-story buildings, and any other large structures. While the priorities seemed logical, the mapping and sector assignments were woefully inadequate. The maps that we used for the first two days were, as my colleague described, tourist maps like this one provided by the embassy. These maps lacked the sufficient detail, such as street names, and the locations of these significant structures we were supposed to prioritize.

Search sectors were developed along geographical borders rather than like-sized grids. This created various shapes and sizes for each sector, and with the lack of adequate maps, sector boundaries were difficult to determine.

Again, I have included in my testimony some examples of the mapping that we were using actually the first week.

It is my recommendation that the capabilities of the National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency be incorporated early on in disaster response. Prescribed mapping packages must be identified and adherence to the National Grid Reference System must be implemented for all search and rescue operations to ensure the priority areas are identified and grid searches are accomplished in the most expeditious fashion possible.

Transportation was a daily challenge for search and rescue teams. This was probably the greatest struggle we had in performing our job. Every day the task forces competed for the use of a small contingent of transport vehicles. We should not expect a local infrastructure that is already devastated by a disaster to supply transportation. If a task force is deployed without their transportation assets, as was this case, then dedicated onsite transportation has to be secured.

During collapse search and rescue, besides the type of construction we are confronted with, our greatest enemy is time. To be successful, we must be able to get the right resources to the right place as quickly as possible in order to save as many lives as possible. To this end, task forces must ensure operational readiness, and the implementation of pre-established transportation assets is essential.

An ongoing issue that is yet to be resolved is the security for task forces operating in a disaster site. During this response, our personnel operated every day without any protection. While plans were made to evacuate an area if a confrontation developed, the reality was that, based on the damage and the topography and the lack of familiarity with the area, it would have been difficult to actually retreat.

Let me conclude by saying that this mission wasn't without success. The efforts of the six US&R task forces from the United States, coupled with the other 40 teams from around the globe resulted in the largest number of survivors rescued in history, and we should all be proud of this achievement. I was pleased to see that the years of work put into developing our equipment caches and training has paid off.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Mexico City earthquake and the first organized US&R response to such a disaster from the United States. Since that time, the United States has developed a robust national capability that today we know has incorporated the equipment, the training, and, most importantly, personnel to be successful. This capability is built on a foundation supported by the 28 sponsoring agencies, countless participating agencies and affiliated personnel that collectively provide the 6,000 member ready reserve that we know as the National US&R Response System.

These agencies support this national system sometimes at the expense of local service, and this can't continue. Supportive legislation as defined in Chairman Oberstar's House Resolution 3377, coupled with adequate funding, is necessary for the National US&R program to sustain current capabilities, as well as to explore new opportunities.

Again, I would like to thank the Subcommittee for the privilege of appearing before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Downey.

Steven Cover, Fire Chief of the Virginia Beach Fire Department, Virginia Task Force 2.

Mr. COVER. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman Holmes Norton, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, full Chair Mr. Oberstar, and distinguished Committee members. It is my pleasure and honor to appear before you today.

As an introduction, I am Steve Cover, and I currently serve as the Fire Chief for the City of Virginia Beach Fire Department, and, as such, I am the Sponsoring Agency Chief for Virginia Task Force 2, one of the 28 Urban Search and Rescue teams. I have also been asked to serve the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Program as one of three Sponsoring Agency Chief Representatives, representing the nine Eastern Region Team.

I would also like to recognize Fire Chief Robert Khan from the Phoenix Fire Department, who represents the Central Division, and Fire Chief Raymond Jones, from Sacramento Fire, for both of their leadership along with me.

I have served in various capacities within the Urban Search and Rescue program since its inception.

I am speaking to you today as a Sponsoring Agency Chief and, as such, I want you to know how proud I am of this program. The men and women who serve our Nation through the Urban Search and Rescue Program are committed, competent professionals who care deeply for both the program and the citizens they serve. Every team member is a professional provider in his or her locale, whether a firefighter, a medical doctor, or a trained search dog handler. These professionals respond to natural disasters with the same skill sets that they apply every day in their home towns. The concept is fairly simple: utilization of an all-hazards approach to incident mitigation utilizing special training, special equipment, and special people.

The Urban Search and Rescue System is part of a tiered approach to managing disasters. It has the capability to augment local and State resources with federally sponsored teams that can

readily plug into operations at the local level following the National Incident Management System. These Urban Search and Rescue Teams, made up of local providers who are on their local payrolls until activated, are far less expensive to maintain than a resource that may otherwise be fully funded by the Federal Government.

The 28 Urban Search and Rescue Teams and their localities benefit from the training, equipment, and experience that comes from being part of this program. Just as the system members apply the skills learned at home to national disasters, they apply the lessons learned while on Federal missions in their local jurisdictions. The same search and rescue methods that were utilized and refined during the 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and Haiti responses are performed throughout America daily by our members.

The recent Haiti response, just as FEMA Urban Search and Rescue deployments in the past, once again proved the value of the program to the people impacted by this disaster. The four FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Teams—Florida Task Force 1, Florida Task Force 2, New York Task Force 1, and Virginia Task Force 2—along with the two USAID teams—USA 1 and USA 2—which are also members of our Urban Search and Rescue System, as Virginia Task Force 1 and California Task Force 2, performed some 47 live rescues while in Haiti. Many of the international teams did not have the heaving breaking and breaching capabilities that our teams did. This, coupled with a rapid deployment of our teams, made a difference.

Our training, equipment, and processes worked and lives were saved as a result. The deployed teams knew each other and operated from a common operating platform grounded in training, similar equipment, and common policies. Several of the remaining 28 Urban Search and Rescue Teams were on standby at their points of departure, waiting to deploy as augmentation or in relief of the first teams that were deployed.

The Urban Search and Rescue Program Office also worked diligently to coordinate the deployment of the teams and to ensure the practices applied to a domestic response would also be applied here. As a Sponsoring Agency Chief of one of the deployed teams, it was nice to know that support was there and spelled out in the activation orders. As with every deployment, there are areas for improvement, and we feel confident that after-action issues will be addressed by not only the Urban Search and Rescue Teams, but the Program Office as well.

I would like to thank Mr. Carwile, Mr. Fenton, and the entire Urban Search and Rescue Program staff for their efforts and support. Mr. Carwile has clearly made an effort to make himself and his staff available to the Sponsoring Agency Chiefs Representatives and the Task Force Leaders Representatives. This increased spirit of cooperation will go a long way toward making the program even better. I feel that issues identified with the Haiti response, ranging from transportation, re-supply, and force protection, will be refined and improved upon. This will ensure our teams are mobilized and transported to the disaster site within the window of opportunity for successful search and rescue operations, whether in a domestic or foreign theater.

From a Sponsoring Agency Chief's perspective, there are legal and financial liabilities that are of concern. We want to send the best trained teams to assist others while assuring our localities are not exposed. In this economic climate, expenses that have been borne by Sponsoring Agencies in the past are being more closely scrutinized by our localities.

Many of the Sponsoring Agencies are facing staffing cuts that have not been seen in 30 years. We are continually being asked to do more with less in our municipalities. It is increasingly more difficult to place a fire company out of service for Urban Search and Rescue training or equipment maintenance when we do not have enough resources to protect our community to the levels we have in the past.

We feel it important for this program to have recurring funding in order to support training and exercise, acquisition and maintenance of equipment and medical monitoring for our responders. Workers compensation and liability protection for our personnel is also very important. God forbid a member of our Task Forces is injured or killed while deployed on a mission. We want the proper protections in place for that member and their family. Additionally, we want to ensure our deployed members have proper liability protections in place and their jobs are secure.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Cover, could you summarize, with this vote on, please?

Mr. COVER. Yes, ma'am.

In conclusion, we are willing to explain the value of the Urban Search and Rescue Program to their communities for the reasons I have outlined, and your support through House Resolution 3377 will assist in providing the needed funding and legal sufficiency for this worthwhile program. We stand ready to assist in making this proven system better now and into the future.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Cover.

Assistant Chief Kramer, Orange County, Fire Authority, we are going to let you begin according to the length of your testimony. We will try to hear your testimony. Even I have to vote on this one; I vote in the Committee of the whole. So we are asking members, to the extent that they can, please come back. But would you summarize your testimony, and we will try to hear you out?

Mr. KRAMER. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman Norton, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and distinguished members of this Subcommittee. My name is Mark Kramer. I am the Operations Chief for the Orange County Fire Authority, one of California's largest all-risk fire service agencies, as well as a Sponsoring Agency Chief for California Task Force 5.

As a professional firefighter for the last 31 years, I have been involved in the Urban Search and Rescue Program since its inception in the early 1990s. I am here today to speak on behalf of the California Task Force 5, the nine task forces in the Western Region and the request of the US&R system. As a sponsoring agency, the Orange County Fire Authority is proud to be associated with the 27 other teams comprising the National Urban Search and Rescue Response Program.

As one of the original US&R Teams, we have seen this program evolve from responding to natural disasters, such as earthquakes and hurricanes, to all hazard mitigation response. Your US&R Program has been able to adapt primarily due to its 28 groups of professional first responders from across the Country who work together seamlessly to address the needs of this great Nation. Regardless of the cost, we respond with the intent to mitigate the impact and the consequences of the event.

Last month, California Task Force 5 was one of the US&R Task Forces activated but not deployed to Haiti. Although disheartening for the Task Force, we understood the magnitude of this mission and we will be ready to ship out or to stand down as required.

The quick response as a result of preparation, training, and dedication of our personnel, along with support from Federal, State, and local government. I strongly believe that without this support the Urban Search and Rescue Program would not exist and could not exist as it does today. However, we are facing fundamental challenges that need to be addressed if we are to continue to be the Federal's first responders.

There are difficult financial times. We would like you to consider the cost to the sponsoring agencies and their local taxpayers, and what the impact of the civilian professional personnel that make up these task forces.

I would like to address the cost of the program.

On January 31st, 2006, FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Program Office provided an overview of their report to Congress on the status of the Urban Search and Rescue Program. Based on this report to Congress, the average cost to maintain a national task force is approximately \$1.7 million. In contrast, the actual project funding for that year was approximately \$600,000, leaving the balance of \$1 million for the sponsoring agency to incur.

Orange County Fire Authority subsidizes this program in many ways, such as the allocation of overtime funds, the allocation of workload, insurance, and maintenance of vehicles. Our finance section estimated that the cost of the Fire Authority to sponsor this program is over \$1.5 million.

We believe that the funding of \$52 million allocated in House Resolution 3377 would more accurately balance the partnership between the Federal and local governments. H.R. 3377 also addresses three fundamental flaws within our system that affect our sponsoring agencies, our professional personnel with licenses, and those not normally employed by government agencies. Therefore, we are very much in favor of this bill. These three fundamental flaws are workman compensation, protection of professional licenses, and re-employment rights.

Workman compensation varies between States. So does the cost to the sponsoring agency if a task force member is injured during the deployment. If a task force member's agency's worker's compensation is greater than the Federal Government's protection, the sponsoring agency or participating agency is required to make up their difference. This not only becomes a financial burden to the local governments, but impacts the individual task force members.

The second item. Several members essential to the mission of the task force are required to have professional licenses. These licenses

are not protected from tort liability while performing in accordance with the task force mission. Under the current system, each is risking their livelihood with every response.

The last issue is re-employment rights. This is the re-employment rights of our civilian task force members. As a program manager during Hurricane Katrina, I was shocked when one of my heavy riggers, who was deployed to Louisiana, gave his heart and soul to the response, came home and was terminated by his employer. We need the same protection and safeguards that are afforded under USERRA and the task force members.

In conclusion, the sponsoring agencies urgently request that the Federal Government codify this important national response program, in doing so, provide the necessary protections, adequate reoccurring funding by sponsoring and passing H.R. 3377. In 22 days, I will be retiring after 31 years as a professional firefighter. It has been my honor to serve the public and the Nation, but after my retirement I will probably not be involved at this level. However, it is still important to me, although on a selfish level, that the members of this great system are provided with the protections that they deserve, as my son, Kyle, is a member of Nevada Task Force 1.

Thank you.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Kramer. I certainly hope you will be involved, as all of you are involved, as we have heard incredibly important expertise from all of you. You are really the highlight of this testimony, testimony from people who have been on the ground in the United States and in other countries, so I will ask you to excuse us for a few minutes.

There are five votes, maybe more, about that, but it could take a half hour or even maybe 45 minutes. But we do not intend to close this hearing without giving members an opportunity to ask you questions not only for the record, but so that we can use your answers for some of the very issues you have raised with respect to the reauthorization of the urban rescue bill now going to the House floor.

We will return. The hearing is now in recess.

[Recess.]

Ms. NORTON. I apologize again for the interruption for votes. I am looking at what looks to be—I am asking perhaps that it be put up. I am looking at a map or some maps of Port-au-Prince, except they are not tourist maps of the kind that you would expect the State Department to have; they provided by National Geo-Spatial Agency. I understand FEMA—it certainly states—uses Spatial Agency and they instantly get this kind of material. Now, one wonders how you were able to operate in Haiti without maps like this, which show not what the street is. This is what a tourist needs. You need to know where the major roads intersect so that you can get around.

This far more technical—and one is up—which you would understand, but I would not—was apparently not available to you when our urban rescue teams first got there. Could I ask how did you know what to do? Or was the collapse so extraordinary that you just went where you could see with the naked eye?

Mr. DOWNEY. If you could put the other set of slide sup. Again—the other set. And you have that in my testimony.

Ms. NORTON. That is what, the ordinary map?

Mr. DOWNEY. Well, that was actually what was provided to us by the—

Ms. NORTON. State Department.

Mr. DOWNEY. Well, this was actually provided to us by the United Nations, the coordinating team that my colleague spoke of. They divided—these heavy black lines were what they made up the sectors, and then those big white dots were supposedly the areas of interest that we had to focus on.

Next slide, please.

This is what we had to operate off of. We had to take the tourist map—

Ms. NORTON. This is what you initially had, this map?

Mr. DOWNEY. Yes, for the first five to seven days.

Ms. NORTON. Five to seven days you were working off this map?

Mr. DOWNEY. That is correct. Yes, ma'am. We would take that map and then transpose the sectors onto that map, and then utilize. Fortunately, with handheld GPS units, we were able to at least fix our positions and, once we had internet access, we were able to use, quite honestly, Google Earth and use Google Earth and our GPS units to help fix the locations where we were working. So it was a very rudimentary method, but, quite frankly, the only thing we had available to us.

Ms. NORTON. But you are used to having National Geo-Spatial Agency maps. This really goes to the question of who is in charge. Now, USAID, of course, gave you all USAID usually uses. Speaking as experts in emergency management, with some knowledge of what happened in Katrina, even given the extraordinary efforts, for which all applaud, of USAID and FEMA, would it have been easier to have had a central command already familiar with the usual maps used stateside, so that you would have those maps before five days, you were there five days in the country?

Mr. DOWNEY. Absolutely. In fact, while there I was reflecting on my response to Katrina. I arrived in New Orleans the day after the storm with our team, and we, quite frankly, were using maps that we obtained from service stations, gas stations, as our original search and rescue maps in the early days, and that was when we were first made aware of the capability of the National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency.

Ms. NORTON. So you used the spatial agency, Spatial Intelligence Agency for the first time in Katrina?

Mr. DOWNEY. We used that in a few days following Katrina and we have used it successfully in other responses since Katrina. It felt as though I was going back to 2005 when I looked at the type of mapping that we were forced to use when we got to Haiti. I knew we had better technology; I knew it was there; and we just didn't have it with us there in Haiti.

Ms. NORTON. I ask this question because I am trying to avoid duplication of effort. When government has a special intelligence agency who has the maps, FEMA is more likely to know about the maps. We want to know—FEMA is on the ground. USAID, a heroic agency—I mean, it is overseas in the worst circumstances—does

not have access to these or doesn't usually use them. I see duplication of effort and I see unnecessary duplication.

Who would be in charge was a source of great consternation to this Subcommittee, and we had some trouble getting Homeland Security to understand that having somebody from Homeland Security and having somebody from FEMA produced confusion on the ground. Who really was in charge? And it took both Committees working to try to get some clarity on that. I would not like to see it repeated here. Nobody cares except somebody who knows how to do it best. We just want to make sure that we understand on the record.

I would like to know about the heavy equipment. I am having difficulty understanding how you were able to move around Haiti at all. You took some heavy equipment, I take it, with you. What kinds and did you leave it there?

Mr. DOWNEY. Our standard equipment cache has everything from the technical search equipment, such as search cameras, listening devices, to hand tools for breaching and breaking, all the way up to heavy hydraulic machinery that can break heavy reinforced concrete structures.

Ms. NORTON. So is that like a truck?

Mr. DOWNEY. It is not a truck. It is all packaged in containers and palletized so that it gives us the most flexibility, whether we have to load it in a truck, load it in an airplane. We are able to configure the equipment cache as best we can depending on the transportation.

Ms. NORTON. How did you get from one point to another point with that heavy equipment?

Mr. DOWNEY. Well, what we ended up doing in Haiti was organizing most of our rescue squads as reconnaissance squads with just some basic search and rescue equipment. Once they encountered a possibility of a victim, we would follow it with a truck that had the breaching and breaking capabilities, the heavier tools.

Ms. NORTON. Where did you get the truck?

Mr. DOWNEY. We had a pool of vehicles operating. There were four teams operating out of the U.S. Embassy. We had a pool of vehicles that were available to all four teams. The problem was we were all competing for the same pieces of equipment. There were only two flatbed trucks that could carry some of this equipment, so, for instance, if California or Florida 2 was working on another rescue site, we would have to recover that truck, have it come back to the embassy so that we could load our cache and go out to the new rescue site. So we had no dedicated—my task or any of the other task forces had no dedicated transportation assets that I knew I could use to move my team to the rescue sites.

Ms. NORTON. Was any priority given to the fact that you were on rescue and recovery, which means whatever you have to do, you do it now or it probably doesn't much matter?

Mr. DOWNEY. Absolutely.

Ms. NORTON. Were you prioritized for use among other uses that had to be done, or was that just impossible given the many missions that came together at one time?

Mr. DOWNEY. I think the latter part of your statement. There were so many missions coming together. There was such a need to

get all these reconnaissance teams out that we just didn't have enough vehicles.

Ms. NORTON. Were there helicopters in service from the United States in the very early days, I mean in the first week, for example?

Mr. DOWNEY. Absolutely. I would say within the first two days or so of our arrival there was a lot of military aircraft, helicopters.

Ms. NORTON. Did you use any of them? Were any of them useful to rescue and recovery?

Mr. DOWNEY. We used them one time for some aerial reconnaissance of the distance areas to look at. But the fact of the matter is the topography of Port-au-Prince and the amount of devastation trying to do any type of aerial reconnaissance was impossible by helicopter. And if we found something, it would have been impossible to land the helicopter in the area. I mean, over-the-road transportation was by far, although stressful trying to get through the traffic, especially in the daytime, was the only way to move around in the city.

Ms. NORTON. Well, urban rescue teams are the quintessence of flexibility, of knowing how to adapt on the ground. That is why we have such enormous respect to you. I would like to know from each of you, particularly since I would venture to guess you had the toughest sort of disaster in Haiti. You had a country already without the basics; you had the worst disaster. In fact, if you look at California, California has had earthquakes of that kind and it does not fall down like that.

I would like to know what lessons, what you found most significant that could be transferred here. I mean, assuming, for example—and California, by the way, is not the only State which has fault lines; Tennessee. We have fault lines all over the United States. And, of course, I am not referring only to earthquakes. But it is not difficult to envision a country which is prone to literally every kind of disaster. It is not difficult to conceive of entire countries, which would be the functional equivalent of this Country going down, where nothing was left up. The fact is we don't often encounter that. But we didn't often encounter Katrina, and we were not prepared for it.

So looking back, those of you who went and those of you who know about Haiti and understand what has happened there, what do you think most significantly transfers to disasters involving rescue in the United States, whether they are rescued from water, as in Katrina, from collapse, from roads that go out, bridges that go out and you can't get from here to there, but the hospitals are over there? If you give us some thought of how you might use what you understand from Haiti to train in the United States for similar disasters or disasters that are not similar.

Mr. ENDRIKAT. Madam Chairwoman, one of the things I spoke about early in my testimony was a tiered response and the ability for us to put highly technician level trained rescuers to work as soon as possible. And I think Chairman Oberstar mentioned the bridge collapse in Minnesota and he used that analogy, that highly trained people had exercised that within two years before that event and they were able to successfully engage at a technical level, coupled with the incident command structures that we have

in a country. That is another important lesson learned, direct command and control of tactical operations is critical.

Ms. NORTON. That is a lesson learned in what respect? You didn't have quite the instant command that you have become used to in the United States.

Mr. ENDRIKAT. Correct.

Ms. NORTON. And you would benefit from that.

Mr. ENDRIKAT. Yes. In Haiti—Dave, what would be the right way to say this?—probably a little bit looser. In the United States there is definitely an organizational structure; there is definitely responsibilities; there is definitely accountability for field actions. We have Incident Command System forms, there are divisions, operational areas that are broken out and specific assignments given with reporting and documentation that follow that. On the international response in Haiti, that wasn't quite as evident.

Dave, I will let you talk to that.

Mr. DOWNEY. Again, the big topics, the take-home topics I had, we have touched on it and I will stress again: transportation. Transportation was an issue for us in Katrina because we didn't have the boats. Transportation has been an issue for us in this Haiti response. In the—

Ms. NORTON. But that is an issue that you think could have been overcome with what?

Mr. DOWNEY. I think pre-established air transportation assets, either knowing what military entity or commercial carrier is going to provide the transportation; having dedicated over-the-road transportation. All of the 28 teams were given money back in 2003 to purchase transportation for all of the equipment cache, you know, so we can move up to 1,200 miles across the U.S., but we haven't had any money to sustain those transportation assets. We still don't have our own—

Ms. NORTON. When things got bad enough in the United States, we recognized there was no way other way to do it. That is when the Coast Guard came in.

Mr. DOWNEY. I am sorry?

Ms. NORTON. During Katrina, when the usual agencies were not prepared to operate, the Coast Guard came in there.

Mr. DOWNEY. Absolutely.

Ms. NORTON. Some such agency that is not normally on the ground—we have all kinds of military and other agencies on the ground now—should simply be deployed so that you can do your job, rescue and recovery job.

Mr. DOWNEY. Absolutely. Absolutely.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Cover?

Mr. COVER. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Two areas, in addition to transportation, that concern me as a Sponsoring Agency Chief having a team deployed was re-supply of my personnel there, to make sure they had their basic needs met when—

Ms. NORTON. By that you mean that they ran out of certain supplies and it was difficult to get them supplies? Elaborate on that a bit, please.

Mr. COVER. Okay. Our teams are self-sufficient when they go out the door. Certainly, we don't want to be a load on the exact folks that we are going to help, so our folks went out the door with five

days worth of MREs and water. In checking back with my task force leader that was there, at one point re-supply was an issue; they were not sure, with the airframes in and out of the country, whether those needs would be met.

Certainly, to have 80 personnel deployed there, that was an issue for me. I wanted to make sure that we had that covered. And they did, they worked it out. They got with the USAID folks; I am sure the folks over at the embassy. My team was deployed to an area separate from Chief Downey's team. The Virginia 2 team and the New York team, as I understand it, were in a different area of the country, housed at the airport as their base of operations.

So re-supply and making sure we have the basic needs met is something that has been an issue in the past as well, and we want to make sure that that is a lesson learned that we improve on.

Another area of concern for me was force protection. When these folks come in to an area that has been just absolutely decimated, those people are hurting and after a certain period of time, when they don't get their basic needs met, there is consternation that can occur and I worry about that, having folks over there that have supplies, have resources. So I want to make sure that they are protected not only while they are operating, but when they are there in their down time as well.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Cover.

Mr. Kramer?

Mr. KRAMER. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. The only thing that I would really like to add to this, because you brought in Katrina, is the ability for us to do water rescue. That is one of the things that the Secretary from California mentioned when he was talking, that we have swift water capability. All the task forces in California have that capability, and under EMAC they actually did respond. We responded, I responded, my swift water team, to Katrina within the first 24 hours.

Ms. NORTON. That means emergency workers who are specially trained to do water rescue?

Mr. KRAMER. Absolutely.

Ms. NORTON. Including getting in the water if necessary?

Mr. KRAMER. Absolutely. What we call live bait or the rescuers will get in the water with the victim and then pull them out. We have Zodiac type boats that we bring along when we take the swift water teams with us. That is one aspect of the task force that not all task forces enjoy that aspect. Because the State of California wanted us to have that resource, they trained us and made us to that level.

Ms. NORTON. I think that maybe one of the bases upon task forces are deployed, if there were a task force that had that capability, since we have 28—and I am so proud of having so many—then I am sure what you are saying would come into effect. We will have to see how many others have that.

Mr. KRAMER. I know that other task forces may be trained at that level. In fact, I am pretty sure that they are. It is just that we haven't been given the nod to actually deploy that type of resource.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Diaz-Balart?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

And, again, thank you, gentlemen for this whole thing about democracy gets in the way, right? But thank you for your patience. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

We have heard, I think, some really, really, really good specific recommendations. Let me just kind of ask a couple questions, though.

Katrina. Some of the issues that we have heard today that are kind of no-brainers for you all, but those of us that are not on the field don't necessarily think about it all the time. I was aware of the job that you all did in Katrina, but I have to admit to you that I never asked myself the question how did they get there. Now, how did you get there from different parts of the Country? I am assuming that, from Florida, maybe you drove yourself there, but from California? So how did you all get there with all your assets?

Mr. ENDRIKAT. Like Dave was describing to you, the ground transportation package that we have is the way the majority of the task forces traveled, and there was two distinct operational theaters in Katrina, Mississippi and New Orleans. I was assigned as the Operations Chief for Mississippi. We were flown in in advance of the storm hitting, flown in to a central location, then obtained vehicles and actually weathered the storm.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Who flew you in?

Mr. ENDRIKAT. FEMA.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. FEMA did.

Mr. ENDRIKAT. Yes, through national travel.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Okay.

Mr. ENDRIKAT. So the Incident Support Team historically travels that way, sir, and the task forces travel usually by our ground transportation packages.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Okay. Now, domestically, that is the way it works. Now, it gets a little bit more complicated now when you travel internationally. Historically, whether it is in Mexico City or whatever, how has that been done? I mean, is it you are on your own, like some of you all were now, or does DOD take care of it, or how does it usually work?

Mr. DOWNEY. Well, on this particular response, we were working directly with USAID in Washington, who was tasked with arranging the transportation. As I stated in testimony, it pretty much took all of that day, after we were activated, to figure out how we were going to get down there.

Our equipment cache, our task force is housed at Homestead Air Reserve Base, so my initial assumption was that we would go out military, out of Homestead Air Reserve Base. We have done that before with responses to Turkey and the earthquakes in Turkey. There were aircraft there, but never had them dedicated to the movement of our team.

Later in the day, a contract carrier was arranged through AID in Washington and we moved the entire cache up to Miami International Airport for movement out of the airport. So some of the task forces, California 2, Los Angeles, came by military airlift. Fairfax came by the same method we did, which was a contract carrier. Florida 2 came on U.S. Coast Guard. So it was——

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Whatever could be found.

Mr. DOWNEY. Yes, exactly. Nothing had a dedicated—we didn't have a dedicated airframe that we knew our cache would fit on, we knew our personnel would fit and be able to move it, ideally, with one aircraft.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Now, when you were pre-positioned, I guess, before Katrina, you were flown in there by FEMA, was that charter airplanes?

Mr. ENDRIKAT. It is a standard commercial carrier. They will just book flights on a priority basis for the Incident Support Team members.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Now, one of the things that was very difficult and was at first—we had a briefing when the Vice President was in South Florida—was the fact that—I guess there are only about 46 airplanes that can be handled a day landing in Port-au-Prince, out of which I think something like, I don't know, less than 20 percent were from the U.S., and those decisions were being made by the Haitian government—who was landing, who wasn't—which just adds to the problem here.

But it would seem to me that who does have the capability of doing that, particularly internationally, is the Department of Defense. But there isn't a pre-existing compact, whatever, with DOD to have under specific cases, to have assets available, correct?

Mr. ENDRIKAT. I think in the case of the two USAID teams that have the agreement with USAID and OFTA, there might be more of a priority, but as far as the FEMA use of our system, this deployment was way outside of our normal range of operations and we don't have anything prescribed mission-wise.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. That would seem to me, Madam Chairman, that is one of the things that I know you have talked about that we need to look at to see how we can get a better handle on that and making sure that we can have something—yes, sir.

Mr. KRAMER. If I could add. During 9/11 we did fly, California did fly military aircraft, obviously, because everything else was grounded.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Right.

Mr. KRAMER. During Katrina we did fly our swift water teams military, and then our full task force drove. So our caches right now, all of our equipment are configured so we can either fly military or fly commercial or go by ground. We have military pallets that everything is loaded on.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Right.

Mr. KRAMER. We have all the plans for each type of airframe.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. You all are ready to go.

Mr. KRAMER. We are ready.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Right. The issue is that there doesn't seem to be a set pre-established plan for how, in certain conditions—because I would imagine that in most cases, God willing, that you can drive there or you can hire USAID—and for domestic FEMA can hire some planes. But if it is a big one, it would seem to me that, under certain circumstances, there should be some pre-established norms where, if Department of Defense assets are required, that that is available; and there doesn't seem to be that at this stage.

Mr. KRAMER. No, there isn't, and we do have local agreements and we train routinely with Ardner Air Force Reserve Base to actu-

ally be able to fly military, but there aren't the agreements that say that in the event you get a military aircraft.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Right. Right. So that is something I think we need to look at and see if we can get a handle on. And I know that the Chairwoman has been looking at that and will hopefully be able to come up with some specifics.

Now, you all talked about a lot of issues and I took some notes, so I am not going to go through them all, but I do want to just hit on a couple of other ones. On the re-supply issue, domestically, again, it is easier, I would assume. Internationally, in a case like Haiti, where you had no port to speak of, because that was destroyed, and then we had, in essence, really one airport that was overtaxed, at best, it would seem to me that we have to have some sort of pre-arranged—the same kind of thing that we are talking about for initial equipment to have a re-supply chain ready to go with assets to be able to get the stuff in there, correct?

Mr. COVER. Yes, sir, I agree. I think the bottleneck was the fact that the airport was small; there were many, many missions, from humanitarian aid to search and rescue that were competing missions. I think we spoke to that. The ports were damaged to a point initially that it is my understanding we couldn't utilize that method.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Right.

Mr. COVER. So having these plans in place will certainly be helpful.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Because in the case of Haiti, right, there was, frankly, one airport that was overburdened and the port was not available, and then eventually DOD did start putting ships off and then helicopters filling things in. Then, obviously, you have to compete with everything else, and we understand that.

So as you all said, this is not criticism, this is just there seems to be—these are—Haiti was horrible. It is not necessarily, unfortunately, the worst case scenario. You always have to plan for a worse case scenario, if that is possible. Hopefully, it never will be possible, as horrible as that was.

So one of the things that we need to think about is who has those assets. DOD has the assets, and that includes—obviously, when I talk about DOD, I am also including as a part of that the Coast Guard, which is kind of a separate but—and it seems to me, though, that there needs to be a pre—you know, basically some compacts are already established beforehand that if the worst case scenario happens and if you need assets, that you already have that so that USAID and others don't have to start scrambling to figure out how we are going to get you there. Does that not sound like something that makes sense?

Mr. COVER. It does exactly, yes, sir. And I think part of the after-action process is going to be to drill in to some of those issues. I will tell you, in my mind, the reason that it worked is the resiliency of our people and their ability, whether it is maps or whether it is trying to figure out how to get re-supplied. These men and women are very capable, competent people that flex and apply their skill sets in an austere environment, and that is what makes it work.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Sure. And, again, I am obviously saying what you all are saying. I just want to make sure that I understood it.

Another issue that you all talked about was security, force protection. Now, obviously, when you go domestically, you assume, I would assume, that it is the local law enforcement that provides the—or how does that happen? I know that in Katrina we had some issues there, but—so how does that work domestically?

Mr. ENDRIKAT. Internally, in our program, there is a program directive generated by FEMA'S program office that assigns us force protection. Federal law enforcement officers are assigned to each Federal task force, theoretically and at the point of departure, all the way enroute and, when we get in theater, those needs are assessed and, dependent on the different options available to us, we could either use military, local, or Federal law enforcement officials. So since Katrina that has gotten much better as far as policy and procedure.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. So domestically it has gotten—because we all saw, we saw the visuals of people getting shot, your folks getting shot at and with no protection. That has gotten better domestically. But obviously, again, when we are dealing with international, we are dealing with now a totally different animal as well. Are there arrangements, pre-arrangements with—is it DOD again or embassies in different countries, whatever, to have a preset way to provide security?

Mr. DOWNEY. There were in Haiti United Nations Peacekeeping Forces there that the—and, again, as Chief Cover spoke of, there was almost two separate operations, there was the operations run out of the airport and there were the operations run out of the U.S. Embassy. At the airport they had the U.N. Peacekeeping folks that they would try to send out with the task forces. At the Embassy, we really didn't have those assets available to us. There were DOD assets, but it wasn't something that was on a consistent basis.

And I can only speak for my team that, in the 12 days we were there, we never operated with any security with us. Definitely something, as Chief Cover said, as the leader made me uncomfortable, but we tried to, as best we could, make sure our personnel were aware of surroundings, always posting a lookout. We were fortunate because three of our team members were Haitian-Americans, so we were able to communicate well and know the areas a little bit better than maybe some of the other teams. But I don't know if it is a very easy answer.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Well, but is there—to your knowledge, is there a preset—I am talking about now for foreign deployment. Is there a preset, I don't want to say standardized because this is not standardized stuff; every case is different. But is there a preset set of guidelines, rules, arrangements made so that, if you do deploy and you deploy in a place where—by the way, fortunately, there were 7,000 U.N. troops in Haiti before, which was obviously a huge help, even though a lot of those, as we know, got hit hard, but there were—but if you are deployed someplace else where that doesn't exist, to your knowledge, is there a preset way to—standardized way that you are going to have force protection?

No, right? So that is something that we need to look at. I just want to make sure I understand how—what is there now, and right

now, to your knowledge, that is just not something that is really dealt with, per se—

Mr. DOWNEY. That is correct.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART.—in a comprehensive way, at least.

Mr. DOWNEY. That is correct.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. And, obviously, when you get there they deal with it because everybody understands it, but there is no preset way to do that.

Mr. DOWNEY. No. The best we can do, in my experience with other international deployments, is work with the embassy, the U.S. Embassy security officer to identify areas that have potential hostile areas. We did that here. We had no-go areas where task forces would say, you stay out of that sector because it is just not a safe area without any type of force protection; and that is really the best we could come up with. There isn't anything pre-established.

Quite frankly, I am not sure what the answer is because one or two soldiers, when there is a crowd of three or four hundred people, I am not quite sure how much they are going to be able to provide for us. I go back to my roots as a firefighter. For the most part, everybody is happy to see us when we get there, and in the event things start to look like they are getting unsettled, we need to back out.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Except that if you don't have transportation, easier said than done. So in a case like what happened in Haiti, luckily, again, people were very happy to see you, but if it would have not been that case, things could have gotten pretty interesting.

Mr. DOWNEY. Absolutely.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Right.

Lastly, Chief Kramer, I think it was you that mentioned about those that are civilians, and the fact that—did I hear you right, about the fact that people have lost their jobs when they come home? Is that correct?

Mr. KRAMER. That is correct. After Katrina, we had one of our heavy riggers who, when he got home, was told that he was no longer employed.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Because he had been gone for?

Mr. KRAMER. Because he had been gone for a couple weeks.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Right.

Mr. KRAMER. Much of our task force, a lot of the task force, obviously, are firefighters that deal with the rescue, but we have specialties within the task force that aren't necessarily firefighters; they are people that have other jobs. Some of our dog handlers have other jobs and we have physicians that may be working in the local emergency rooms; we have structural engineers that may have firms dealing with architecture and design and such. So if they are working for an employer, they are not protected if they go with us. We are lucky enough that we have people that are dedicated enough to go.

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

Madam Chairwoman, if I may—by the way, she puts up with me; she lets me go. So she is very generous with me, and thank you.

Let me just, before I close, let me thank you all. But when I thank you all, I hope you understand that I am thanking you all and all of the men and women that you represent. Obviously, being from South Florida and living in a State that, unfortunately, is used to lots of storm events, I have seen what you all do. I have seen it in South Florida, I have seen it when we had, what was it, four hurricanes in one year?

And then to see what you all do not only domestically, but internationally is something that all Americans are proud of and grateful for your service and your incredible sacrifices, the men and women that you all are representing here today. That is time away from your families and at great risk, at great, great risk. So just thank you. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Ms. NORTON. I would certainly like to be associated with your remarks, Mr. Diaz-Balart. We cannot say enough about these heroes stateside and abroad. And I know the people of Haiti feel that way because I saw a headline in The Washington Post that said, "United States, Take Over". Now, when is the last time you heard that? They are talking about you. They are talking about who they saw go in at considerable risk for themselves and get things done.

Mr. Diaz-Balart has raised the question of force protection. Very courageously you said, Mr. Downey, well, we go in. We figure that a few guns here wouldn't be much protection anyway if the crowd got unruly. We are going to look at—we are aware that there were a great many troops down there. We also are aware we are in somebody else's country. And we want to understand exactly how to behave, no matter what the situation is.

Now, as I understand it, the troops do know how to behave and they were told that they weren't law enforcement and they were not to engage unless they were at risk, and I take it to mean you at risk. In other words, you can't go shooting people who even are doing bad things, because you are not the Haitian police.

I am concerned, though, that people who are risking their lives don't have at least that protection around them, and we will look at our legislation to see whether there could be at least some kind of memorandum of understanding that what apparently was the case anyway once they got on the ground, knowing when to shoot—they are well trained—whether those people could be on the ground earlier so that our emergency responders and rescue teams would not be at any risk, or would be at certainly less risk.

The Ranking Member raises a very important point, about whether or not you are risking your own livelihood when you go either out of State or, for that matter, to a foreign country. Are you satisfied with what we have in the bill regarding re-employment rights, such as they have in the National Guard and the Reserves, for these rescue team members as well?

Mr. KRAMER. Absolutely. Absolutely. The USERRA rights that are still afforded to National Guard, those are the same type of rights that we are looking for.

Ms. NORTON. And for people who have already lost their job—is there somebody who in this deployment has lost his job that you know of?

Mr. KRAMER. Not that I am aware of.

Ms. NORTON. That has happened before in the past?

Mr. KRAMER. And just as a note, the person who lost his job after Katrina, it wasn't long and he got another job. That profession is one that they needed people in, so he did well.

Ms. NORTON. I guess all you have to do is let the word go out that somebody who was down there trying to do good in Katrina lost their job, and people will come forward and say, I will hire you. But we don't want that to be necessary.

I wish you would help us—because it will help us when we go to the Floor. The urban rescue teams are not being used in major disasters every day. Would you give us an idea of how the urban rescue teams are used, I take it locally, so that it can be understood what your real use in an ongoing basis amounts to, Haiti being rare and, for that matter, out of State being rare?

Mr. ENDRIKAT. Madam Chairwoman, an example of this would be that the skill sets that we require our rescue specialists to maintain can be applied at the local level every day.

Ms. NORTON. Go ahead, yes.

Mr. ENDRIKAT. In April of 1997, we had——

Ms. NORTON. And the jurisdiction?

Mr. ENDRIKAT. In Philadelphia. We had a significant fire in a boarding home. There was a subsequent structural collapse that buried seven firefighters. Without the training that we received through the FEMA US&R system, our specialized units there would never have been able to get them all out alive.

So that is an example of the partnership or the type of partnership and the benefit of it when it comes to skill sets and a common operating platform and similar equipment, interoperability. And then you can take that a step further in that tiered response concept and do that at the regional level and the State level. The system has been used as a best practices model by all of the local, regional, and State assets that are developing this capability, so across the board it is very beneficial for a local jurisdiction to be involved with this system.

Ms. NORTON. This is so typical of what you see in any big city. Do any of the rest of you have examples of when the urban rescue teams have been used locally?

Mr. DOWNEY. Absolutely. Again, the skill sets either applied by our medical or surge personnel. Our canines, many of our search canines are owned and trained by fire department personnel, and we actually have used them multiple times in desolate areas of Miami-Dade County when there are car accidents and we have had victims that were thrown out of a vehicle, and it was our search canines that are trained to find live victims that found these people in the bush or away from the vehicle.

We were used as a State asset—again, our search canines and our technical search capability—when a parking garage collapsed in Jacksonville and they were trying to recover three of the workers that they knew had been killed in this parking garage collapse. Again, it was the assets that were trained and utilized from the National Search and Rescue that were used at a State level.

So it is occurring in all of the disciplines every day, and although we are not having earthquakes in Florida, we certainly have our share of storms, and the search techniques, the wide area search

that our people learn about and are trained on for the national level and international are applied right at home. So it is a great opportunity to hone your skills at home and then, in the chance that you are going to deploy either domestically or internationally, even can refine those skills better.

Ms. NORTON. This is going to be very important for the public to understand how your Federal dollars are being used, and I recognize that there has been testimony that you could do with more money, that the grants go up to \$1 million. You may spend \$1.5 million, and that must come out of State funds or local funds.

But what I think most people don't realize when they see a team from Fairfax or a team from California, I am afraid that they do not understand that is their own firefighter, their own EMS worker who has been trained by the Federal Government, who almost all the time is being used locally, even though the training and some of the material comes from the Federal Government. This joining of State and Federal resources is very unusual, where there is a grant, it comes from the Federal Government, but the fact is most of the time the people are used locally.

And when people saw people going from Fairfax County, I am convinced that not until they saw people coming home, being greeted as if they were soldiers returning, that they understand that was their own firefighter, their own EMS worker. So we certainly will stress this as we go forward.

Do either of the rest of you have examples you want to lay on the record?

Mr. COVER. I will speak briefly. Just every day on the streets in many of our cities, in Virginia Beach, for example, hazardous materials technicians are utilizing many of the same monitoring and detection equipment on our streets daily for hazardous materials incidents, for example.

Our team has been—our folks, on a regional basis, have been utilized in shipping and rail accidents. We responded across the State for a tornado, a Walmart collapse search was done in a tornado where our team was utilized. So, again, as these gentlemen have addressed, these skill sets, put together, while they may only be used, portions of them, on a daily basis in our towns and cities, when they all come together it is quite a fighting force, if you will.

For example, this past weekend, in the city of Virginia Beach, we had a major snowstorm, a snowstorm that we haven't had in, say, 20 years. Many of the planning elements that we used to ready our city were—these skill sets were learned, the plans people that we used there in Virginia Beach were the same folks that will be working on plans on many of these deployments.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. We don't have to deal with snowstorms in Miami, by the way.

Ms. NORTON. No snowstorms. You have everything else in Miami, Mr. Diaz-Balart.

Mr. Kramer?

Mr. KRAMER. The only thing that I would like to add is pretty much echoing what they said, the skill sets are the same. And in California we, over the last couple years, had a couple major fires, and after the fires we have rainstorms. Rainstorms produce mud slides and debris flows. Debris flows cover houses, can cover areas,

neighborhoods and such, so we use those same capabilities that we are trained for on the Urban Search and Rescue dealing with winter events.

Ms. NORTON. Yes, same personnel, same capabilities, most of the time applied stateside, right in your own local community. Very important for people to recognize. Little bit of money to get a whole lot of rescue and lives saved and injuries no longer taking place.

I want to make sure we understand that we are taking care of the basic needs for tort and other liability. Do you know of any member of an urban rescue team who has been injured while being deployed? If that were to happen, who would take care—what would be the liability? Who would take care of the liability, assuming there was liability, and who would take care of the team member's medical care?

Mr. KRAMER. We did have, in California, California Task Force 6 with Riverside—in fact, the Task Force Leader Program Manager sitting behind me at 9/11 he had some respiratory injuries that caused him to retire.

We did have some issues with the workman's comp. As was stated earlier in my testimony, the workman's comp, we are covered whenever we respond nationally under the Federal workman's comp system. However, if you are a local agency and you have State workman's comp that is at a higher level than the Federal, then that employee is going to be covered under that State, because we can't give them less than what they are already negotiated to have.

So there were some issues with Riverside, where it was Federal level that they were willing to cover, and then we had to go back and debate and argue to a higher level.

Ms. NORTON. The worker's compensation I think is taken care of in the bill.

Mr. KRAMER. Yes, it is. In fact, I think the tort liability is also covered.

Ms. NORTON. And the tort liability.

Mr. KRAMER. Yes.

Ms. NORTON. When you leave your equipment in Haiti or elsewhere, the Federal Government replaces that equipment?

Mr. DOWNEY. Yes. On this particular deployment, we were asked to leave, as a donation on behalf of AID, some of our equipment, and that all has already been catalogued and reimbursement being sought to replace all that equipment. It does create an operational shortfall, though, because some of our operationally necessary equipment we don't have anymore. So we are trying to—

Ms. NORTON. I hope there are not delays in taking care of that, because we don't want to short-change at home in order to make sure we take care of people abroad.

Mr. DOWNEY. Right. No, we, at least from my task force's perspective, what we left was already in the pipeline to be replaced and ours was strictly the tents, the cots, the sleeping bags, the generators, the lights. All of our vital rescue equipment, communications equipment, search equipment we didn't leave.

Ms. NORTON. Did you have something you wanted to add to that?

Mr. ENDRIKAT. Yes, Madam Chairwoman. I just wanted to clarify. I think Mr. Carwile mentioned that only the two USAID task

forces left equipment, and just to clarify that, all six of the American task forces left equipment. Virginia 1 left their rescue equipment, and that is what they will be training the Haitian government on.

But all of the other task forces, like Dave said, left primarily the logistical support equipment, the medical, the pharmaceuticals, and some other support things that were very important for the humanitarian side of the mission.

Ms. NORTON. We are very pleased to hear that, and I think the people of the United States would have wanted it that way.

Mr. Diaz-Balart wants to add something.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. One thing that I neglected to mention.

One of the other issues, because you all have given us a lot to chew on here, was the issue of water rescue and obviously part of it is the training, we understand that, but then the equipment is the other part of it.

One of the things, Madam Chairman, we are going to have to also try to figure out is how do you deal with that aspect of it. It even gets more complicated when you are dealing with now, because I guess there is water rescue assets and then there are water rescue assets, and, depending on the circumstances, they can be larger or smaller. So that is a little bit, that is kind of a difficult task to try to figure out who has those assets that you all can tap into.

Mr. KRAMER. We actually did a study from the Urban Search and Rescue Program about probably four or five years ago, right after Katrina, what the cost of those water assets we need, and they were the Zodiac boats and such. As you mentioned, there are different levels of water rescue.

Locally, at home, for the level that my team is at, we require a helicopter. Obviously, the task forces can't have that, but just the capability to have boats to get into areas and rescue people. A lot of the rescues that my swift water teams did in Katrina during the early portion of it were simply removing people off of bridges, removing people off of houses, out of homes and places where they were trapped; not necessarily that they couldn't have gotten out on their own, but we don't know that.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Right. And that is going to be—because, for example, again, in Katrina you are saying obviously helicopters, and we saw the Coast Guard had a big role to play in helicopters. That was a specific Katrina kind of phenomena. So when you are talking about that, you are dealing mostly with inflatable Zodiacs?

Mr. KRAMER. That is correct.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Is that what you are basically talking about?

Mr. KRAMER. That is correct.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Okay, so it is less complicated in that sense than I thought.

Mr. KRAMER. Fred, correct me if I am wrong, I think the cost for us to get to be to water rescue is like about \$35,000 a task force.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Okay.

Mr. KRAMER. Reasonably low because the task forces right now, although they are not, if you will, water rescue—

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. But they are already there.

Mr. KRAMER. Yes. They do have the ability for self-protection, so we have PFDs, floatable devices, the helmets. We have things for our task force already that you would need for the swift water.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. And, again, thanking the Chairwoman again for indulgence. I just do want to end on one note, and I know it has nothing to do with this issue, but I know that there are those who like to bash America. They have always existed and they continue to exist, and they will be there in the future. And I know that some of even our allies were bashing the United States for too much of a presence in Haiti, and so be it. You know, I, for one, am not apologetic about the fact that once again the American people, through our heroes and our first responders and our armed forces, were there to provide incredible humanitarian relief. And if our wonderful friends and allies like the French and the Italians don't like it, tough luck. Thank you.

Ms. NORTON. I love those words, Mr. Diaz-Balart, and I join you in those words.

Gentlemen, your service makes us proud to be part of a Federal union that also is joined to its component parts, and that those component parts adhere and come together, whether at home or abroad, in time of distress. You have made the whole notion of the Federal union, which has worked so well in our Country for more than two centuries, shine, because when we are most needed somehow the other—for all the differences among the States, the Federal Government and the States and localities come together and do really heroic work.

And we know heroes is an overused word. You know, people use hero when a kid comes home with passing grades these days. We try, since we deal with very serious issues in this Subcommittee, to use it not in some generic sense, but to apply it appropriately. We think that it is not overuse of the term or inappropriate use to say that the work you perform every day is regarded by the American people as heroic, because we see you at home and people, when they saw you in Haiti literally identified with you because they know you and they know what you can do in this Country.

So, Mr. Endrikat of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Mr. Downey of Miami-Dade, Florida, Mr. Cover of Virginia Beach, Virginia, and Mr. Kramer of Orange County, California, on behalf of our Subcommittee and our Committee—and I do not think it presumptuous to say on behalf of the American people—let me thank you for your testimony today, for what you do every day, for what you do under extraordinary circumstances even not in this Country.

And let me assure you that your testimony has been instructive and you will see parts of it that are not already in the bill echoed from today's hearing. Thank you again for taking the time to come on fairly short notice to testify before us today. We have learned much from you.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:59 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]



**OPENING STATEMENT OF  
THE HONORABLE RUSS CARNAHAN (MO-03)  
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

**Hearing on  
FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue Program in Haiti: How to Apply Lessons Learned at  
Home**

**February 3, 2010**

Chairwoman Norton and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, thank you for holding this important hearing on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search and Rescue Program in Haiti and how we can apply lessons learned here at home.

First, I would like to thank the six Urban Search and Rescue tax forces who deployed to Haiti for their efforts in aiding Haiti in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake which struck in mid-January.

I represent part of the St. Louis Metropolitan Region which lies on the New Madrid fault system. This fault system is the highest earthquake risk in the United States outside the West Coast. The New Madrid fault is active, averaging more than two-hundred measured events per year. Tremors large enough to be felt occur annually. The fault has released shocks that have caused minor damage, the most recent of which was in 1996.

The US&R program, which grew from the need to have a national capacity in the United States for large-scale rescue from structural collapses, could offer great assistance to the St. Louis community should the New Madrid fault release a large shock causing a major disaster and emergency in the community I represent. I was very happy to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee take action this Congress to improve the US&R so that it has needed resources to respond to communities in the event of a disaster.

Finally, I want to thank our witnesses for joining us today and I look forward to hearing your testimony.



STATEMENT OF  
 CHAIR ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON  
 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND EMERGENCY  
 MANAGEMENT

“FEMA’S URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE PROGRAM IN HAITI: HOW TO APPLY LESSONS  
 LEARNED AT HOME”

FEBRUARY 3, 2010

Good afternoon and welcome to today’s hearing on the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) National Urban Search and Rescue program, its role in Haiti, and the lessons our subcommittee can learn from the humanitarian work of our U.S. teams and their experiences that might be applied during disasters in the United States. The National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) System program is an administrative creation of FEMA, using the authority of the Stafford Act, and is within the jurisdiction of this Subcommittee. Today, we will hear from FEMA, officials from California, a state that faces risks for virtually every type of disaster, and four participants in the National US&R program, including two heroes who have just returned from their deployment in Haiti.

FEMA’s US&R program was developed after the devastating results of the Mexico City Earthquake of 1985 and the Loma Prieta Earthquake, which struck California in 1989. It was clear after many people were trapped in the aftermath of the Mexico City earthquake that a national capacity was needed for large-scale rescues from structural collapses in the U.S. Today, we again look to a tragic earthquake in a neighboring country for lessons learned.

FEMA established the US&R Program in 1989 to create a nation-wide capacity with 25 task forces, which has now grown to 28 task forces in 19 states. We are fortunate that two of them are here in the National Capital Region— Maryland Task Force-1, based in Montgomery County, and Virginia Task Force-1, based in Fairfax County. Every deployment of these taskforces anywhere in the country or abroad must be understood as preparation for disasters here.

US&R is a classic “all hazards” response program. US&R task forces respond to the consequence rather than to the cause of disasters. It does not matter what causes a structure to collapse, an earthquake, hurricane, gas explosion, bomb, or structural failure. The essential elements of their operations remain the same. The expertise the US&R teams build reinforces the breadth of their possible applications.

The rescue and recovery network within the FEMA is built on an efficient and economical federal-state *quid pro quo* model. FEMA provides training and resources to the task forces, which in return are available to the Federal government as needed. While we see US&R task forces deployed to disasters on television, they are more often being used in their

own states and communities, as well as in neighboring states, and communities for events that do not reach the level of a major disaster or emergency declared under the Stafford Act.

Among the incidents for which FEMA has deployed the US&R System are: the Murrah Federal Building bombing in Oklahoma City, in 1995; the Humberto Vidal Building explosion in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1996; the DeBruce Grain elevator explosion in Wichita, Kansas, in 1998; the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, in 2001; the four Florida Hurricanes of 2004; Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast in 2005; and Hurricane Ike in Texas in 2008.

Two of the task forces also have agreements with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for overseas deployments -- the task forces based in Fairfax County, Virginia and in Los Angeles, California. When task forces deploy overseas, they use training and equipment provided by FEMA. USAID then reimburses these task forces for the replacement and refurbishment of the equipment that is used. However, the earthquake in Haiti marks the first time that task forces were sent overseas without having an agreement with USAID. Four task forces, including two that are represented here today, were called up by FEMA on loan to USAID for this tragedy, through an agreement between FEMA and USAID. In today's hearing we will discuss whether this is a model that should be used again in the future.

I am pleased to be a co-sponsor of H.R. 3377, "Disaster Response, Recovery, and Mitigation Enhancement Act of 2009" along with Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Members Mica and Diaz-Ballard. Section 105 of that bill reauthorizes the program and provides the US&R system, as a matter of law, with many of the protections it needs, including a clear and specific authorization as well as workers compensation and tort liability protection. H.R. 3377 was reported favorably to the House by the full Committee in November, but we will revise or strengthen this legislation before the House takes it up if today's hearing makes that necessary.

I look forward to hearing the testimony of today's witnesses and to discussion of how this subcommittee can learn from their invaluable humanitarian work in Haiti.

*James L. Oberstar*

STATEMENT OF  
THE HONORABLE JAMES L. OBERSTAR  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT  
HEARING ON "FEMA'S URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE PROGRAM IN HAITI: HOW TO APPLY  
LESSONS LEARNED AT HOME"  
FEBRUARY 3, 2010

Today, the Subcommittee will receive testimony on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Urban Search and Rescue System, how members of that system played a role in the rescue efforts after last month's tragic earthquake in Haiti, and what lessons we can learn from that disaster and the response to that disaster.

On January 12, 2010, a devastating earthquake, magnitude 7.0, struck Haiti, a country where I was privileged to live and teach for three and a half years. I was just there late last year for the 50<sup>th</sup> reunion of some of my former students. Since the earthquake, I have seen photographs of some of the places I have visited that were leveled and I have received word that people that I know were killed.

As we often do, Americans responded quickly. Today, we will hear from some of those who responded. The U.S. Government's efforts were led by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is known for the work it does responding to disasters

here at home. However, in this disaster, FEMA lent its expertise and resources to USAID for the relief efforts in Haiti. This included specialized communications and deploying members of the Urban Search and Rescue System (US&R), some of whom we will hear from today.

A question for today's hearing is whether this should be a model for future foreign disasters, both in response and recovery. Earlier this week, I had the opportunity to speak with James Lee Witt, former Director of FEMA in the Clinton Administration. Witt was working on disaster preparedness in Haiti before the earthquake and, since the earthquake, has been assisting in the response and recovery.

One thing that I was troubled to hear was that while FEMA and the other U.S. Government resources that deployed to Haiti were prepared to use the Incident Command System, USAID and the entities through which this assistance was channeled was not prepared to use it. The Incident Command System is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management approach that is used by all levels of government in the United States. This system allows for the integration of resources operating within a common organizational structure and enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and agencies. Perhaps today's witnesses, all of whom are experienced in this system, can tell us whether they think this system should be applied to future foreign disaster efforts.

We also want to know if there are lessons from Haiti that we can apply here at home. FEMA created the US&R system in 1989, in part from lessons learned from the devastating earthquake in Mexico City in 1985. The widespread devastation of the Mexico City earthquake brought to light the fact that if such an event were to happen in this country, we had no national system to provide the needed search and rescue capability.

When we speak of our first responders, you will often hear discussion of the risks faced by man-made events. One sharp lesson of the earthquake in Haiti last month is that the greatest risks we still face are the ones presented by Mother Nature. However, the US&R system, like the rest of our emergency management system, is an “all hazards” system. It does not matter why the structures collapsed, be it from an earthquake, a hurricane, a tornado, a fire or a bomb. The brave men and women of the US&R system respond to the consequence not the cause, and the essential attributes of their response remains the same.

The US&R program was created by FEMA administratively using the authority of the Stafford Act. However, it is appropriate that this program have a clear and specific authorization. I am pleased to be the sponsor of legislation, H.R. 3377, the “Disaster Response, Recovery, and Mitigation Enhancement Act of 2009”. Section

105 of that bill reauthorizes the US&R program and provides clear and specific authorization in a new section in the Stafford Act. Further, the legislation would provide many of the protections the US&R system needs, including workers compensation and tort liability protection. H.R. 3377 was ordered reported favorably to the House by this Committee in November, and I expect that the legislation will be taken up by the full House soon.

Since this is the first hearing we have held on the earthquake in Haiti, I would like to take a minute to recognize another organization in the Committee's jurisdiction that played a vital role in the response to the earthquake, the United States Coast Guard. I would like to thank the men and women of the Coast Guard for their valiant effort in the hours and days after the earthquake struck Haiti. The Coast Guard immediately deployed cutters, helicopters, and C-130 cargo planes to bring in emergency teams. Coast Guard personnel improvised and used ceiling panels from their cutters to splint the legs and arms of injured Haitians. As in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Coast Guard was *Semper Paratus* – Always Ready.

I welcome each of you and look forward to your testimony.

**THE HONORABLE MATTHEW BETTENHAUSEN**

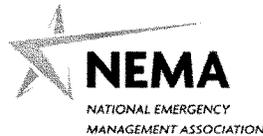
**Secretary, California Emergency Management Agency  
Member, National Emergency Management Association**

**TESTIMONY**

**Before the House Transportation & Infrastructure  
Subcommittee on Economic Development,  
Public Buildings and Emergency Management**

*FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue Program in Haiti:  
How to Apply Lessons Learned at Home*

**February 3, 2010**



**National Emergency Management Association  
Hall of the States  
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### **Introduction**

Chairwoman Norton, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and members of the Sub-committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Program and assistance to Haiti by California. Today I am testifying on behalf of the California Emergency Management Agency and the National Emergency Management Association.

The California Emergency Management Agency - or Cal EMA - has the overarching responsibility to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and quickly recover from any type of disaster that may impact California, whether man-made or naturally occurring. Additionally, Cal EMA also supports the eight local government based US&R<sup>1</sup> teams in California as part of the FEMA national US&R program.

In light of the devastating Haitian earthquake, I am here today to discuss the critical importance of the US&R Program to public safety, how states such as California have optimized the US&R program, and what challenges we face in maintaining the US&R program during a very difficult fiscal period.

I do not believe that California, nor probably any other state, has experienced the level of human tragedy that we are seeing and hearing about Haiti; our prayers and hearts go out to the people who are suffering. Governor Schwarzenegger has directed Cal EMA to help the Haitian people in any way possible and take action to learn from the tragedy so our state is better prepared for disasters.

Our US&R Task Force 2 from Los Angeles has just returned from several weeks in Haiti. They, along with many others from the United States, were an integral part of the international rescue operations. We are very proud of their work in Haiti; where they found and rescued nine (9) survivors in the rubble and performed many other critical rescue operations. We will be debriefing the team over the coming weeks and looking at the overall response to this disaster to evaluate where we can improve our domestic disaster preparedness.

The California teams had the fortune of working closely with other US&R teams from Virginia, New York, and Florida. As of January 21, international and U.S. US&R teams rescued 122

individuals throughout Port-au-Prince, Haiti. U.S. US&R teams are credited with rescuing 43 of the 122. Search and rescue activities continue under direction of USAID and the United Nations.

### **California's Experience**

Let me start by providing some background. California, like Florida, Virginia, and a few other states began the initial development of US&R teams during the early 1980s. We all saw the need for multi-disciplinary teams that were specially equipped and well trained to perform the complicated task of locating and rescuing people from large collapsed structures. In California, the initial concern was primarily earthquakes. In the other states, the threat included hurricanes, tornadoes, and the many other events that could demolish a large building or other structure.

The Mexico City earthquake in 1985, like the recent Haitian quake, was a wake-up call for all states and the federal government regarding the necessity of specialized rescue teams. California and other states responded to the Mexico City earthquake. California completed the equipping and training of its eight US&R teams shortly after the Mexico City tragedy.

Our US&R program is much like our state mutual aid system in that Cal EMA is responsible for overall coordination and development of the system, but local cities and counties are the ultimate first responders, the owners of the US&R resource, and the focus of our program. Through the state's mutual aid system, the eight local US&R teams become an asset to California's 58 counties and more than 500 cities. Also, through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact - or EMAC – California's US&R teams are an asset to the entire country and as we saw with Haiti, the international community.

I would like to emphasize that the eight US&R teams in California function as assets of local governments. Cal EMA and FEMA have a memorandum of understanding with each of these teams specifying the responsibility of all the parties. We do not see these teams as State of California teams or FEMA teams, but rather as a partnership among local, state, and federal governments, with the senior partner being the local agencies that staff, train, and take-on a major financial obligation to support these teams.

**California's Risk**

California's earthquake risk is generally well known. The Working Group on California Earthquake Probabilities, a working group made up of scientists from the US Geological Survey, California Geological Survey, and university scientists from around the state produced the Uniform California Earthquake Forecast (UCERF). The UCERF found that there is a 99 percent likelihood that at least one 6.7 magnitude earthquake (the magnitude of the Northridge earthquake of 1994) will occur in California in the next 30 years. Additionally, there is a 46 percent likelihood of a 7.5 or greater earthquake in California in the next 30 years. That risk is not California's alone; for example, many states in the Midwest are at risk from the New Madrid geological fault.

If a 7.5 magnitude earthquake were to occur in southern California on the southern San Andreas Fault, the earthquake would likely cause damage in eight counties and cause 1,800 deaths, 50,000 injuries requiring emergency room treatment, displace 255,000 households, cause approximately 1,600 fires, cause extensive building damage and utility outages and cause more than \$200 billion in damages.

This earthquake risk is far from hypothetical. Just last month, California's northern coast (Humboldt County) was impacted by a 6.5 magnitude earthquake. This was a small quake in intensity compared to Haiti's experience and in a relatively sparsely populated county - with less than 130,000 people - but the public sector damages alone have exceeded \$3.8 million and the total damages estimate is close to \$20 million. The low population density and the lack of large buildings in that county kept the human toll low and US&R teams were not needed, but the same event in any of our urban areas could have had a much more catastrophic effect.

The 1994 Northridge earthquake that occurred in Los Angeles was a 6.7 magnitude and lasted for only 20 seconds. Thirty-three deaths were attributed to the earthquake with more than 11,000 injured. In addition, the earthquake caused an estimated \$44 billion in damage, making it one of the costliest natural disasters in U.S. history prior to Hurricane Katrina. In the Northridge earthquake, eleven hospitals suffered structural damages and some were unusable after the earthquake.

The Loma Preita earthquake which occurred in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1989 only lasted 10 to 15 seconds and measured 7.0 magnitude. The Loma Prieta earthquake's epicenter was

70 miles from the Bay Area and killed 63 people, injured 3,757, and left between 3,000 to 12,000 people temporarily homeless.

To be clear, we do not look at US&R teams as an earthquake-only resource. Since January 2006, California has experienced 43 federally declared disasters and 55 state declared disasters<sup>ii</sup>. A significant proportion of these disasters were not earthquakes, but we are well aware that an earthquake like the one in Haiti or another terrorist attack could certainly be in our future. Therefore we have taken measures to substantially enhance our response and recovery capabilities.

Investments have been made by Cal EMA and FEMA in broadening the scope and capabilities of these teams.. It should also be noted that California and other states have responded with their US&R teams to a variety of disasters, most of which were not earthquakes. This includes the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah building in Oklahoma City, the Kansas grain elevator explosion in 1998, and the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. During Hurricane Katrina, all eight of California's teams were deployed to offer necessary assistance to the Gulf coast.

In addition, we have used California US&R teams during major landslides, multi-car train accidents, floods, and many other situations where people were trapped and needed to be rescued. US&R has also been the nucleus of our ability to expand urban search and rescue and to take urban disaster rescue to another level of preparedness.

#### **US&R at the Next Level or Best Practices**

The initial US&R concept focused on a large heavily equipped team with a primary mission of locating and recovering people trapped in collapsed large and complex structures such as multi-story office or apartment buildings. As previously mentioned, the primary first responder to a disaster is always the local agency nearest the emergency, and the timeliness of the response is often more critical than access to any specialized tools or equipment. Additionally, we have learned from experience there are many different types of rescue scenarios.

Many of the building rescues occurring during a large disaster, be it an earthquake, flood, tornado, or hurricane are not in big complex structures, but in much smaller buildings as witnessed in Haiti. Furthermore, many of the rescues occurring during disasters normally take place in remote areas that require the rescuers to reach victims over water or via air transport. Due to these factors, we recognize it is not efficient or practical to create substantially more US&R teams when our first

priority is to keep the current teams adequately resourced and to optimize our first response capability. Therefore, we have taken a multi-prong approach in California to enhance our overall urban search and rescue capability with US&R and local government at the core.

The first prong is for the state to maintain and enhance the existing eight US&R teams. Cal EMA currently budgets more than a million dollars annually to support the local teams. This money funds staff within the agency providing coordination and administrative support to the teams, an annual mobilization exercise, and training activities. We also recently used some of our Homeland Security Grant funds (more than \$1 million) to improve the radio communication systems for each of the teams beyond what is provided by FEMA.

We learned an important lesson from the 1995 floods in California when all 58 of the state's counties were declared major federal disaster areas. At that time, the state and our partners in local government saw a critical gap in our ability to aid people that are trapped in flood waters. With our local partners, we expanded the capacity of the eight US&R teams to include a water rescue capability. In 2007, we leveraged \$1.8 million in federal Homeland Security Grant funds to upgrade the equipment of the primary eight teams and add four more swift water teams. As previously noted, these teams and their water rescue capability were deployed to assist Texas in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike. They were also deployed to respond to Hurricane Katrina.

Our second prong in building capabilities has been the use of a combination of local, state, and federal funds to create a more widely distributed and more rapid rescue capability. We have developed a system of heavy, medium, and light urban rescue teams. These teams, like US&R, are built utilizing national standards. For example, a California Heavy Rescue ICS Type I team will have similar equipment, personnel, and training for its 29 members as a heavy rescue team in every other state; and be able to conduct search and rescue operations in collapsed structures involving heavy flooring, pre-cast concrete and steel frame constructions, high angle rescues, etc. [This compares to the 70 plus members of a full US&R team, which has the ability to address even more complex structural situations.]

Additionally, we have developed and deployed medium urban rescue teams which also have standardized systems and capability. California currently has 20 urban rescue teams that meet the national standards in addition to our eight full US&R teams. Most of our state owned fire engines

are now equipped at the basic light level urban search capacity enabling crews to conduct rescues in damaged structures or collapsed light frame structures such as most homes.

The third prong of our effort to ensure we have a robust rescue capability is to build upon EMAC and existing state and local level emergency response resources. When states and U.S. Territories joined together and Congress ratified EMAC (Public Law PL-104-321, 1996), it created a legal and procedural mechanism whereby we can quickly move state owned emergency response resources, like US&R, throughout the country to meet disaster needs. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and three territories are now members of EMAC and have committed their emergency resources to helping neighboring states and territories.

To give you a sense of EMAC's value in the context of search and rescue, in 2005 the year of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma more than 1,300 search and rescue personnel from 16 states searched more than 22,300 structures and rescued 6,582 people. This capability is sustained by the efforts of all the states and would be bolstered by a reauthorization of EMAC. Also, while EMAC is currently a recipient of FEMA grant funding, fulfilling NEMA's request for a \$4 million line item appropriation would codify the program for use in future disasters. In my opinion, \$4 million in federal funds is paying a small price for maintaining a substantial national emergency response capacity that day-to-day is equipped, trained, and principally paid for by state and local governments.

The final prong in our efforts to enhance rescue capability involves the Mexican Border States. California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas have long histories of sharing emergency response resources such as fire equipment across the international border. We are currently working with the Governors of the Border States and both the U.S. and Mexican national governments to develop a formal process for quickly moving resources in both directions across the border during disasters. We hope to have that system fully designed soon so it can be presented to Congress for consideration.

To be clear, none of these additional capabilities or interagency efforts will be fully adequate to address the disaster risk that California faces, or for that matter the disaster risk faced by most states. It also does not reduce the importance, or need, to fully resource the existing 28 US&R teams. As we have seen most recently in Haiti, the high-level capability of the US&R teams is critical.

**US&R Sustainment**

Like the emergency response resources provided through EMAC it takes a partnership to sustain the US&R teams, and as previously mentioned these teams are local and state based. Therefore, the day-to-day cost of employing or contracting for the 70 positions, three-deep with personnel (more than 210 personnel), which make up each of these teams is a local or state government cost. A substantial amount of the training and maintenance of the team's equipment also falls to the local partners. FEMA currently provides approximately \$1 million to directly support each of the 28 task forces for equipment, training, and various administrative functions. By FEMA's own estimates the \$1 million is more than \$660,000 short of the actual costs of supporting a US&R team. For several years, the vast majority of US&R team deployments have been out of state or out of county. As with EMAC, the federal government has a ready nationwide asset with US&R, but at a fraction of the actual costs necessary to sustain their capability.

It is not news to anyone that state and local agencies, like the federal government, are currently in a very difficult fiscal situation. California is more than \$20 billion in the red. No state, including California, wants to walk away from the US&R partnership that has proven itself so valuable. But when I speak with local mayors and members of county boards of supervisors, it is becoming increasingly difficult to convince them to continue their commitment to search and rescue teams. Like Congress, these local officials must balance the competing needs for limited resources. Some of these officials must choose between maintaining a heavy rescue capability or closing fire stations. These local officials are now seeing themselves as subsidizing the federal emergency response effort and wonder if they will ever realize return on their investments in sponsoring and training the US&R teams. Without increased federal funding to sustain the US&R capability demonstrated in Haiti, this resource could soon be substantially reduced. The capability will not be available for hurricane response in a southern state, flooding in the mid-west, or for any urban area that is victim to a terrorist attack.

Furthermore, team members can become injured during their deployments or while training for deployments. The task forces are conducting very complex and dangerous operations where accidents such as unanticipated structural failures can injure the task force members or the victims they are attempting to rescue. It is important Congress act to ensure the injured or killed team members have the full workers' compensation protection that they would normally have in their

home departments; that the local departments are adequately reimbursed for these workers' compensation costs; and the local departments are not subject to the claims of people who are accidentally injured during task force operations.

We also believe it is essential that Congress provide specific authority for FEMA to operate the US&R system and that FEMA have clear guidance from Congress on how the system should be supported. Chairman Oberstar's HR 3377 goes a long way towards addressing all of these issues by providing FEMA clear authority for US&R and protecting the local department and task force members when injuries or other liabilities occur as a result from their rescue efforts and NEMA supports much of HR 3377. Without these protections the local and state departments supporting the US&R Task Forces face potentially unfunded costs for sustaining these teams.

If states are going to be true partners in the US&R system we must have a seat at the table when FEMA is developing and directing the future of the system. FEMA has created the Urban Search and Rescue Strategic Group to advise them on US&R. There is, however, currently no state government representation within that group. As I have noted, no state or local agency wants to abandon this partnership. If we are going to invest our people and our financial resources, however, we must have the opportunity to provide input into how the system is operated.

Overall, FEMA has been a good partner in the development of the US&R system. They have provided support at some very critical points including after the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. The capability of the US&R has been substantially upgraded because of FEMA participation. But we are at a place now where the risks faced by states are not diminishing, but our ability to support US&R and their critical capability is more severely limited. These teams are in jeopardy without more federal resources and support.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your sub-committee and I look forward to answering any questions you may have today.

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<sup>1</sup> The eight teams are: Los Angeles County, City of Los Angeles, Menlo Park, Oakland, Orange County, Riverside, Sacramento, San Diego

<sup>2</sup> This includes: Five major disasters, one emergency declaration, and 37 Fire Management Assistance Grant disasters under the provisions of the Robert T. Stafford Act.

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY  
THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**CALIFORNIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY and  
NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION  
Testimony Presented February 3, 2010**

**The Honorable Matthew Bettenhausen  
Secretary, California Emergency Management Agency  
Member, National Emergency Management Association (NEMA)**

*Question:* How much of the annual cost of a US&R task force is paid for by FEMA? How much by California, and how much by the local governments?

**Answer:** In August 2006, an Office of the Inspector General (OIG) audit of the US&R system, based upon Task Force supplied information, estimated the annual cost to fully support a U&SR Task Force ranged from approximately \$1.1 million to \$2 million. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maintains an average allocation to each Task Force of typically less than \$1 million. Given such levels of funding, the OIG found five of the seven task forces reviewed rated themselves below 50 percent for operational readiness including one task force rating itself at 13 percent.

California's assessment of the shortfall in Task Force funding indicates that the OIG is assessment is accurate and substantially less than what would be required to achieve full readiness including Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive (CBRNE), and swift water capability.

Estimates indicate local governments subsidize Task Forces at an average of approximately \$600,000 to \$700,000 per year. The main cost factors remain essential training of staff and maintenance and storage of equipment. With eight Task Forces at the state level, California annually allocates \$1 to 1.5 million for statewide coordination, subsidized Task Force training, standards review, and program administration such as working with FEMA to ensure the Task Forces remain appropriately supported on deployments.

*Question:* Explain how US&R can be used under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). Has California or any other state used EMAC for US&R resources?

**Answer:** Deployments through EMAC leverages federal dollars invested into state and local resources for local response and allow for deployment of those resources into other states. US&R missions under EMAC are treated as any other resource request under the Compact. The emergency management agency of the impacted state requests resources from the state emergency management agency of a non-affected state. States may verbally agree on the mission terms and follow-up within 30 days with a written EMAC Request for Assistance Form or may fill out the EMAC Request for Assistance form upon request.

The resource is deployed for the agreed upon time frame which may be extended or terminated early depending on mission conditions. While deployed the resource is protected by the

Compact's 13 Articles of Agreement which address tort liability, worker's compensation, licenses and permits, and reimbursement. Upon completion of the mission the Assisting State would seek reimbursement from the impacted state. The impacted state may then seek Federal dollars through FEMA if they have a Federal declaration.

California, as well as many other states, has utilized EMAC for US&R resources. US&R resources have requested and deployed during the 2009 North Dakota flood, a 2009 search and rescue response in Kentucky, the 2009 winter storms in Kentucky, Hurricanes Ike and Gustav in Louisiana, the 2008 Iowa floods, 2005 Hurricane Rita in Texas, and 2005 Hurricane Katrina where requests came from both Louisiana and Mississippi.

**Question:** You mention NEMA support for both US&R and Emergency Management Assistance Compact provision of HR 3377. Are there other provisions of H.R. 3377 that you support?

**Answer:** The California Emergency Management Agency does not generally take official positions on federal legislation, but in addition to the US&R and EMAC provisions of H.R. 3377, remain overall encouraged by the policy direction of the bill and supportive of NEMA's position.

Despite remaining questions about the breadth of future Stafford Act amendments, NEMA remains supportive of many specific provisions within H.R. 3377. Overall, flexibility within Stafford programs and maintaining state leadership as the primary coordination point for assistance remain NEMA's highest priorities.

Section 101 of H.R. 3377 specifically addresses the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program. A lack of authorizing language and unnecessary earmarks stand to weaken this critical emergency management program. While the 2010 appropriation for DHS reauthorized PDM for one fiscal year, the program is in desperate need of a multi-year reauthorization. NEMA continues work with Senate authorizers to introduce companion legislation, but the swift passage of this provision will allow PDM to remain strong well into the future.

NEMA supports the reauthorization of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) through H.R. 3377 as the program remains a valuable tool for state and local government warning functions. The Association membership also appreciates the inclusion of state and local government emergency managers in the IPAWS Modernization Advisory Council Committee outlined in this legislation.

One of NEMA's legislative priorities for 2010 is the reinstatement of the Public Assistance (PA) Pilot Program and H.R. 3377 offers a logical opportunity for this program. The PA Pilot Program ended on December 31, 2008, pending a report by FEMA to Congress. FEMA officially submitted the required report on May 20, 2009. During the program period, 3,965 applications in 78 disasters participated in at least one procedure of the Pilot Program. The PA Pilot Program was not an independently funded grant program, but rather a means by which to disperse funds from the Disaster Recovery Fund (DRF). Using H.R. 3377 to restart this program will provide states added flexibility in responding to Stafford declared events.

NEMA also appreciates the broad authorization language of the DRF in H.R. 3377 and will continue to encourage appropriators to provide the DRF enough funds to avoid cumbersome supplemental requests throughout the fiscal year.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

STATEMENT OF

WILLIAM L. CARWILE, III  
Associate Administrator for Response and Recovery

On

FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue Program In Haiti: How to Apply

Lessons Learned at Home

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,

PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**February 3, 2010**

Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C St SW  
Washington, DC 20472  
202-646-4500

Good afternoon, Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and Members of the Subcommittee. I am William L. Carwile, III, Associate Administrator for Response and Recovery, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). I am a retired U.S. Army Colonel, and I have served as a Federal Coordinating Officer and in other senior management positions on large federal disaster response operations between 1996 and 2005. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today on such an important topic: our nation's Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) teams.

The National US&R Response System is an outstanding example of an effective federal, state and local partnership that provides for the protection of our citizens in times of disaster. One of Administrator Fugate's highest priorities this coming year is to continue focusing on improving catastrophic event preparedness through closer collaboration with our partners. The bottom line is that we need to be prepared to respond to catastrophic events. The National US&R Response System and Task Forces are critical to achieving this capability. Under the lead of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), last month, the life-saving capabilities of American US&R teams were on display during the response to the catastrophic earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. With their partners from around the world, these brave Americans worked around the clock to pull survivors from collapsed buildings and homes. We believe the lessons learned in Haiti will help us to be better prepared for domestic response.

#### **Mission and Structure**

The National US&R Response System is a coordinated, national, all-hazards capability designed to assist state and local governments' response to structural collapse incidents. The system may be activated when the President declares a major disaster or emergency under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), 42 U.S.C. 5121 *et seq.* or through interagency agreements with other federal agencies, such as USAID for international deployments.

The system consists of 28 Task Forces, strategically located throughout the continental United States. Each Task Force is comprised of highly trained individuals who possess the necessary expertise to locate, extricate and medically treat victims in heavy rescue and structural collapse situations. The system is administered by FEMA through cooperative agreements with state and local agencies throughout the country that sponsor the Task Forces.

Each Task Force is comprised of 70 multi-faceted, cross-trained personnel who serve in seven major functional areas including search, rescue, medical, hazardous materials, logistics, planning and command. Our personnel are also supported by canines trained to conduct physical search operations in damaged or collapsed reinforced concrete buildings. A Task Force can be divided into two 35-member teams to provide 24-hour search and rescue operations. Self-sufficient for the initial 72 hours, Task Forces are equipped with convoy vehicles to support over-the-road deployments and can be configured into Light Task Forces to support weather events such as hurricanes, tornadoes and similar incidents.

FEMA can activate and deploy a Task Force to a disaster area to provide assistance in structural collapse rescue, or pre-position them in anticipation of a major disaster threatening a community.

Each Task Force must have the capability to stage all of its personnel and equipment at the embarkation point within six hours of activation, so that it can be quickly dispatched and deployed to its destination. To maximize Task Force efficiency and effectiveness during disaster responses, the National US&R Response System FEMA Program Office utilizes a pre-defined geographical assignment list and a well-defined rotational schedule to initially deploy the Task Forces closest to the incident. Deployments generally range from 10 to 14 days. The number of Task Forces that are deployed is based on the magnitude and needs at the site of the disaster or event. During extended response operations, Task Forces are rotated, ensuring that Task Force members are refreshed, available at all times, and ready to respond to multiple events.

Specific US&R Task Force capabilities include the following:

- Conducting physical search and rescue operations in damaged/collapsed structures;
- Providing reconnaissance to assess damage and needs, and to report results to appropriate officials;
- Rendering emergency medical care for trapped victims, US&R personnel and search canines;
- Surveying and evaluating hazardous materials threats;
- Assessing and shutting off utilities to homes and other buildings;
- Operating in known or suspected weapons-of-mass-destruction environments;
- Providing structural and hazard evaluations of buildings; and
- Stabilizing damaged structures, including shoring and cribbing.

#### **National US&R Response System Deployment Record**

For more than 18 years, FEMA's National US&R Response System has been a valuable national disaster response asset. It has responded to more than 50 major disaster and emergency missions. The importance of US&R capabilities in saving lives has been demonstrated in every event.

FEMA US&R teams have responded swiftly and ably to the major U.S. disasters of the past two decades, including the 1995 Oklahoma City Murrah Building bombing, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, and Hurricanes Ike and Gustav in 2008.

During the September 11 terrorist attacks, in the combined response to the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, although a total of 25 Task Forces were utilized in responding to the event,

no more than 16 Task Forces were activated at any given time, even at the height of the disaster response effort, leaving 11 available to respond to other events.<sup>1</sup>

During Hurricane Katrina, in coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard and other federal and state agencies, US&R was instrumental in rescuing more than 6,500 people from flooded areas in New Orleans and providing them with meals, water and necessary medical care. This tremendous response effort was led by a group of dedicated personnel who built an infrastructure and organization to support and manage a massive rescue and relief effort that far surpassed any disaster response challenge ever faced by the US&R Response System. During the combined responses to Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana and Mississippi, all 28 Task Forces were utilized at some point during the response. However, even at the height of the response, no more than 18 Task Forces were activated, leaving 10 available to backfill or respond to other events.

During the responses to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008, FEMA deployed US&R Task Forces to Texas and Louisiana and formed a successful unified command structure that ensured strong coordination with state and local responders.

USAID had previously contracted directly with two of the Task Forces in FEMA's National US&R Response System (Virginia TF-1—Fairfax County and California TF-2—Los Angeles County) search and rescue teams. In addition, to support the earthquake response in Haiti, USAID contracted with FEMA to bring in four additional US&R teams beyond VA TF-1 and CA TF-2. There were roughly 60 teams from around the world supporting the earthquake response in Haiti. Collectively the US US&R teams rescued 47 people, 42 of which were by teams (or included team members) that were currently or previously contracted directly by USAID). These teams participated as part of a total of 67 search and rescue teams from around the world after the earthquake in Haiti

In all of these disasters, US&R was instrumental in supporting critical life-saving and life-sustaining efforts. These examples demonstrate the breadth and depth, as well as the flexibility of, the critical rescue capabilities that exist in the national US&R Response System. Of particular note is the fact that even during the most significant national disasters, the system's capabilities have never been overwhelmed. At least 10 Task Forces have always been available for response, providing a surge capacity for multiple events or prolonged operations.

FEMA has determined that the 28 existing Task Forces, with ongoing and sustained enhancements, provide the capacity and capability to meet the urban search and rescue needs of our country for emergencies and major disasters declared under the Stafford Act. Currently, we do not see a need to increase the number of Task Forces and, in fact, believe that to do so would dilute the available funding for these Task Forces and impede ongoing enhancement efforts. Other programs exist that allow states to procure and develop search and rescue capabilities. Indeed, many states have expressed an interest in enhancing their statewide search and rescue capabilities, and we encourage them to apply for funding through their State Emergency Management Offices or FEMA's grant programs, including the Urban Area Security Initiative. The National US&R Program Office is also facilitating opportunities for the 28 National US&R

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that there were 11 total available Task Forces, not 12, because NY-Task Force 1, which suffered its own losses in the terrorist attack, was being used as a state resource.

Task Forces to share their expertise by interacting, training and exercising with state, regional or local-level search and rescue teams. In keeping with this theme, the National US&R Program Office routinely shares training materials and operational manuals with state partners for their use and training, thus further expanding and leveraging overall search and rescue capabilities.

#### **Expansion of National Response Framework ESF-9 Scope**

As the primary agency for the National Response Framework's Emergency Support Function (ESF)-9, FEMA is responsible for developing national policy, providing planning guidance and coordinating assistance, standardizing procedures and evaluating operational readiness, funding equipment and training, and reimbursing Task Forces for costs incurred as a result of a deployment. While the number of National US&R Task Forces has not increased, the scope of ESF-9 search and rescue operations has been expanded over the last few years to address broader search and rescue operational needs on land and in flood environments, and to include large area and aeronautical searches.

The FEMA US&R Branch, in cooperation with our ESF-9 Search and Rescue (SAR) partners (e.g., U.S. Coast Guard, Department of the Interior/National Park Service, and Department of Defense) revised and improved the National Response Framework ESF-9 Annex, and the Catastrophic Incident Search and Rescue Addendum to the National Search & Rescue Plan. The changes to these documents clarified roles and responsibilities, resulting in improved interagency integration during 2009 disaster response SAR operations, including the response to the North Dakota flooding disaster. Many local emergency response organizations are now using these documents to refine and further develop existing SAR capabilities by adopting Federal ESF-9 doctrine, for instance using the U. S. National Grid System to define ground search areas and using a standard format for stating latitude and longitude.

#### **US&R Focus and Funding**

The focus of current national US&R Response System implementation is on standardizing, preparing, and maintaining the capabilities of the existing 28 National US&R Task Forces. On-Site Readiness Evaluations of the Task Forces have identified improvement areas for all Task Forces, including training, equipment, and mobilization drills. The evaluations have been beneficial in helping to identify and focus on priorities necessary to ensure maintenance of full capability of all Task Forces.

Since Fiscal Year 2006, Congress has appropriated funds specifically to support National US&R Response System response capabilities, as follows: Fiscal Year 2006 (\$20 million), Fiscal Year 2007 (\$25 million), Fiscal Year 2008 (\$32.5 million), Fiscal Year 2009 (\$32.5 million), and Fiscal Year 2010 (\$32.5 million). Congressional appropriations provide approximately \$1 million to each of the 28 Task Forces. These funds are to be used for Task Force management; training and exercises; cache storage and maintenance; hazardous material equipment maintenance; medical screening for Task Force members; and program staffing support. A Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) response capability was developed for the US&R Task Forces after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

However, the 28 Task Forces continue to maintain a basic capability to detect and monitor the presence of hazardous materials during a mission (i.e., site characterization, basic containment, and extrication and decontamination of trapped survivors and rescue personnel).

In light of today's evolving threat environment, we must ensure that the capabilities of the National US&R System are maximized to respond to all types of catastrophic events. As such, I plan to undertake a comprehensive review of the system in coordination with the Sponsoring Agencies. As part of this review, we will examine the program structure and identify Departmental programs and resources that we can more fully leverage to support the system.

#### **Lessons Learned in Haiti**

It is premature to draw final conclusions and lessons learned from the Haiti response. Just as lessons learned in past responses have contributed to the continued development and improvement of the US&R System, ultimately we believe the lessons learned during the deployment to Haiti will contribute to our future domestic response operations.

Lessons learned will be identified as we continue to review our efforts and conduct after action reviews. During this process, our thoughts and prayers will continue to be with the people of Haiti.

#### **Conclusion**

While it is important to highlight the past and ongoing successes and accomplishments of the National US&R Response System, it is also critical that we continue to build and maintain the capabilities of these critical response assets. The task forces represent a partnership involving federal and local government, as well as private sector experts. As we continue to learn lessons from search and rescue operations, the teams will continue to grow in capability and expertise. I thank you for your continued support and oversight of these important teams.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this exceptional federal asset. I look forward to answering any questions.

<b>Question#:</b>	1
<b>Topic:</b>	Haiti
<b>Hearing:</b>	Urban Search and Rescue
<b>Primary:</b>	The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
<b>Committee:</b>	TRANSPORTATION (HOUSE)

**Submitted By Department of Homeland Security**

**Question:** What types of support did FEMA provide in Haiti, in addition to deployment of US&R task forces?

Was FEMA prepared or able to send more US&R task forces? If so, what the reason more task forces were not deployed?

**Response:** FEMA's involvement in the Haiti earthquake response was at the request of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which is the lead U.S. Government agency for international disaster response. USAID directed FEMA to deploy certain assets and dispatch selected commodities.

FEMA supplied certain commodities at USAID's direction, including more than 1.4 million pre-packaged MREs, (commercial and shelf-stable meals) for the World Food Program, as well as more than 200,000 gallons of water, and more than 52,000 tarps used by other organizations.

In addition to the two US&R task forces immediately activated by USAID, FEMA activated a total of eight national US&R task forces, four of which went to Haiti. Shortly after the earthquake, the Government of Haiti announced that no more search and rescue teams were needed. FEMA continued to stage the remaining four teams at the air bases designated as their points of departure for immediate response to Haiti if ordered. There were over 40 search and rescue teams from around the world in Haiti, including those from the United States, who together saved over 130 lives. Of the 46 lives saved by the U.S. teams, most were saved by the teams with the greatest international experience (the two USAID-contracted teams and one team that was previously-contracted to USAID).

<b>Question#:</b>	2
<b>Topic:</b>	USAID
<b>Hearing:</b>	Urban Search and Rescue
<b>Primary:</b>	The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
<b>Committee:</b>	TRANSPORTATION (HOUSE)

**Question:** It has been suggested that USAID and other entities through which disasters response efforts were channeled were not prepared to use the Incident Command System. Did you find that to be so? If so, do you think it would be useful for USAID and others to use ICS?

When USAID sends task forces overseas under their own agreements, do those task forces use equipment paid for by FEMA? If so, does USAID pay for the use, replacement or refurbishment of that equipment?

**Response:** The Incident Command System (ICS) is an internationally-recognized as well as a domestic, standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept. USAID subscribes to and uses ICS within its Response Management Team (RMT) for --as well as Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) deployed to -- an affected country. ICS is incorporated into international responses through the Guidelines of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) -- in which USAID is a member. Also, ICS is taught in United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team training courses. The onsite UNDAC center in Haiti used some aspects of ICS to coordinate and designate divisions for US&R for all international teams at the individual incident sites, as is defined by INSARAG guidelines. The UN employs internationally-accepted coordination mechanisms, in concert with the affected country, to ensure that the country maintains its sovereignty.

To prepare for disasters, USAID trains in the use of ICS in international disasters with two US&R resources that have their own agreements with USAID -- California Task Force-2 (L.A. County) and Virginia Task Force-1 (Fairfax County). These teams are also part of the FEMA National US&R Response System and have extensive, specialized experience in both national and international disaster responses. The US&R teams with USAID agreements must maintain separate equipment caches for international deployments.

With respect to teams with which USAID has existing arrangements, USAID reimburses the Sponsoring Organization within which the team resides and with which USAID has cooperative agreements. The Sponsoring Organization submits claims for and receives reimbursement from USAID in accordance with USAID rules and regulations, which are reflected in the cooperative agreements. If USAID were to request FEMA's involvement in obtaining and deploying additional search and rescue support in the future, USAID would reimburse FEMA under an interagency agreement for costs associated with the

<b>Question#:</b>	2
<b>Topic:</b>	USAID
<b>Hearing:</b>	Urban Search and Rescue
<b>Primary:</b>	The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
<b>Committee:</b>	TRANSPORTATION (HOUSE)

deployment of the US&R task forces with which FEMA has existing arrangements. This would cover all reasonable costs related to the deployment, including replenishment of expendable supplies and any durable items that required replacement. Essentially, FEMA resources would serve as a surge capacity should, in a particular situation, USAID determine that resources are needed beyond those that it currently has at its disposal. This process may incur additional U.S. Government costs above USAID direct contracting.

As part of the after-action review of this disaster, USAID has asked FEMA to capture lessons learned by its US&R teams deployed in Haiti. The lessons learned will be shared with the international community.

<b>Question#:</b>	3
<b>Topic:</b>	role
<b>Hearing:</b>	Urban Search and Rescue
<b>Primary:</b>	The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
<b>Committee:</b>	TRANSPORTATION (HOUSE)

**Question:** Some have suggested that FEMA's role in this disaster should be a model for future catastrophic foreign disasters. Do you think FEMA could play such a role beyond US&R?

**Response:** It must be recognized that FEMA's involvement in this disaster was at the request of USAID. FEMA's focus is on domestic response and recovery, as specified in the Stafford Act. USAID is the lead Federal agency for foreign disaster response and has demonstrated excellent capabilities over the years to address international events, both complex emergencies and sudden-onset disasters. In this role, USAID has cultivated deep relationships and coordinates with other donor nations, the UN, as well as the many international and non-governmental organizations involved in international humanitarian relief. Haiti was an unusual and a larger-than-normal event, affecting one-third of the country's population. FEMA's involvement in this disaster was at the request of USAID. Pursuant to this request, FEMA deployed assets and dispatched selected commodities, including food, water and tarps. FEMA support of USAID in this disaster was similar to support that other Federal agencies provide to FEMA at FEMA's request in domestic disasters.

<b>Question#:</b>	4
<b>Topic:</b>	water
<b>Hearing:</b>	Urban Search and Rescue
<b>Primary:</b>	The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
<b>Committee:</b>	TRANSPORTATION (HOUSE)

**Question:** How many Task Forces in the US&R system are trained for swift water rescue?

**Response:** All 28 National US&R Task Forces are required to complete National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1670 Awareness Level Water Rescue Training. Many task forces go beyond this minimum by qualifying some task force members to the NFPA 16 "Operations Level" standard. More than half of the National US&R task forces have members qualified to the NFPA 1670 Water Rescue Technician standard, which is the highest available qualification level.

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**Testimony before the United States House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency  
Management**

**Regarding**

**FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue Program in Haiti: How to Apply Lessons  
Learned at Home**

**Steven R. Cover**

**Fire Chief, City of Virginia Beach, Virginia Beach Fire Department  
and Federal Emergency Management Agency Urban Search & Rescue Program  
Eastern Region Sponsoring Agency Chief's Representative**

**February 3, 2010**

Thank you, Chairwoman Holmes Norton, Vice-Chair Perriello, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and distinguished Committee Members. It is my pleasure and honor to appear before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management today.

As an introduction, I am Steve Cover, a 33 year member of the Virginia Beach, Virginia, Fire Department. I currently serve as the Fire Chief and Emergency Manager for the City of Virginia Beach, and as such, I am the Sponsoring Agency Chief for Virginia Task Force 2, one of the 28 Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Teams in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Urban Search and Rescue National Response System. I have been asked to serve the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Program as one of three Sponsoring Agency Chief Representatives, representing the nine Eastern Region Teams.

I have served in various capacities within the Urban Search and Rescue Program since its inception - from a Rescue Squad Leader to a Task Force Leader, operationally and from a Task Force Leaders Representative to a Sponsoring Agency Chiefs Representative on the program management side. I have deployed to incidents, including the Oklahoma City Bombing, the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon, the 2002 Winter Olympics, and Hurricanes Opal, Frances and Ivan, to name a few. I have been in the Sponsoring Agency Chief's role for Virginia Task Force 2's deployments to several hurricanes and the recent deployment to Haiti.

I am speaking to you today as a Sponsoring Agency Chief, and as such, I want you to know how proud I am of this program. The men and women who serve our nation through the US&R Program are committed and competent professionals who care deeply for both the program and the citizens they serve. Every team member is a professional provider in his or her locale, whether a firefighter or a medical doctor or a trained search dog handler. These personnel respond to national disasters with the same skill sets that they apply every day in their hometowns. The concept is fairly simple: utilization of an all hazards approach to incident mitigation utilizing special training, special equipment and special people.

The US&R system is part of a tiered approach to managing disasters. It has the capability to augment local and state resources with federally sponsored teams that can readily plug into operations at the local level following the National Incident Management System. These US&R Teams, made up of local providers who are on their local payrolls until activated, are far less expensive to maintain than a resource that may otherwise be fully funded by the federal government. The 28 US&R Teams and their localities benefit from the training, equipment and experience that comes from being part of the program. Just as the system members apply the skills learned at home to national disasters, they apply the lessons learned while on federal missions in their local jurisdictions. The same search and rescue methods that were utilized and refined during the 9/11, Hurricane Katrina and Haiti responses are performed throughout America daily by our members. Many of the planning methods learned by my Team members

in this system were applied this past weekend while dealing with a winter storm in Virginia Beach.

The recent Haiti response, just as FEMA US&R deployments in the past, once again proved the value of the program to the people impacted by the disaster. The four FEMA US&R Teams - Florida Task Force 1, Florida Task Force 2, New York Task Force 1, and Virginia Task Force 2, along with the two Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance Teams, USA-1 and USA-2, which are also members of the US&R System as Virginia Task Force 1 and California Task Force 2, performed some 47 live rescues while in Haiti. Many of the international teams did not have the heavy breaking and breaching capabilities that our teams did. This, coupled with a rapid deployment of the teams, made a difference.

Our training, equipment and processes worked and lives were saved as a result. The deployed teams knew each other and operated from a common operating platform grounded in training, similar equipment and common policies. Several of the remaining 28 US&R teams were on standby at their points of departure, waiting to deploy as augmentation or in relief of the first teams that were deployed. The US&R Program Office also worked diligently to coordinate the deployment of the teams and to ensure the practices applied to a domestic response would also be applied here. As a Sponsoring Agency Chief of one of the deployed teams, it was nice to know that support was there and spelled out in the activation orders.

As with every deployment, there are areas for improvement and we feel confident that after-action issues will be addressed by not only the US&R Teams, but the Program Office as well. I would like to thank Mr. Carwile, Mr. Fenton and the entire US&R Program Staff for their efforts and support. Mr. Carwile has clearly made an effort to make himself and his staff available to the Sponsoring Agency Chief's Representatives and the Task Force Leaders Representatives. This increased spirit of cooperation will go a long way toward making the program even better. I feel that issues identified with the Haiti response, ranging from transportation, re-supply and force protection, will be refined and improved upon. This will ensure our teams are mobilized

and transported to the disaster site within the window of opportunity for successful search and rescue operations, whether in a domestic or foreign theater.

From a Sponsoring Agency Chief's perspective, there are legal and financial liabilities that are of concern. We want to send the best trained teams to assist others while assuring our localities are not exposed. In this economic climate, expenses that have been borne by Sponsoring Agencies in the past are being more closely scrutinized by our localities. Many of the Sponsoring Agencies are facing staffing cuts that have not been seen in 30 years. We are continually being asked to do more with less in our municipalities. It is increasingly more difficult to place a fire company out-of-service for US&R training or equipment maintenance when we do not have enough resources to protect our community to the levels we have had in the past. We feel it is important for this program to have recurring funding in order to support training and exercises, acquisition and maintenance of equipment and medical monitoring for the responders. Workers Compensation and liability protection for our personnel is also very important. God forbid a member of one of our Task Forces is injured or killed while deployed on a mission. We want the proper protections in place for that member and their family. Additionally, we want to ensure our deployed members have proper liability protections in place and their jobs are secure upon their return home.

Establishment of an Advisory Committee, as outlined in House Resolution 3377, would provide input to the Program Office and the Administrator on matters concerning the US&R program. We welcome this opportunity to enhance the program. There are many members within the ranks of the program who could fill this important role and assist in bridging any gaps between FEMA management and the Sponsoring Agencies. The Sponsoring Agencies supply all of the nearly 6,000 members of this national system.

We are willing to explain the value of the US&R Program to our communities for the reasons I have outlined and your support, through House Resolution 3377, will assist in providing the needed funding and legal sufficiency for this worthwhile program. We stand ready to assist in making this proven system better, now and into the future.

84

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March 15, 2010

**Questions for the record as requested by Chairwoman Norton as a follow-up to the Subcommittee hearing on FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue Program**

**How does Virginia Beach use its Task Force when not deployed by the Federal Government?**

The Virginia Beach Fire Department (VBFD) is the Sponsoring Agency for Virginia Task Force 2 (VATF2), one of the 28 Urban Search and Rescue Teams that are part of FEMA's National Response System. When not on a deployment, the team is maintained through a Cooperative Agreement with FEMA. This agreement provides funding for training, maintenance and housing of equipment and medical screening for team members. The Sponsoring Agency and many of the Participating Agencies (other Hampton Roads Fire Departments that provide personnel to the team) incur soft costs that are associated with training, equipment maintenance and personnel readiness. The City of Virginia Beach, along with the Participating Agencies, understand this cooperative arrangement and have embraced it.

When not deployed, the team members are members of area fire departments. These personnel respond to emergency calls for service in their respective cities. In addition to providing front line fire, emergency medical and emergency management services, many of these individuals are members of specialty teams within their organization. Several are members of their hazardous materials teams or technical rescue teams or

they are paramedics who operate daily. Our civilian team members are doctors and engineers who are field professionals in their respective disciplines on a daily basis. We have K-9 handlers who are bankers, housewives or work in another professional field and train with our team as well. Our personnel are operating in their areas of expertise on a daily basis in Virginia Beach and the Hampton Roads area until needed for a federal deployment.

Our equipment cache is warehoused in Virginia Beach and is maintained and trained with regularly by our team members. In addition, VATF2 has a Program Manager, an Administrative Account Clerk and part-time training and logistics personnel who operate out of the facility. Our Program Manager is a Battalion Chief with the VBFD who is assigned to manage the program. Our organization has had success with this arrangement, as the individual is devoted full-time to the US&R Program, but is gaining valuable skills in many non-traditional fire department disciplines, such as budgeting and inter-agency operations.

Being part of the FEMA US&R Program has been beneficial to the Hampton Roads area. Having the equipment cache housed in the city and having personnel with the KSAs and experience readily available to operate the cache has proven beneficial. In the early 1990s a tornado went through the Petersburg area of Virginia. The state asked for support from our team and VATF2 responded to provide wide area searches and search and rescue operations in a collapsed Wal-Mart Store. Just last year, we were contacted by the Chesterfield County, Virginia, Fire Department and asked to respond one of our structural engineers to a collapsed structure with fatalities in the county. In essence, the members of VATF2 operate on a daily basis in the region, utilizing the skill sets they have developed by participating in this program and providing service every day. The concept involves utilization of an all-hazards approach to incident mitigation utilizing special people, special training and special equipment.

**As a Sponsoring Agency Chief, please explain why the tort liability and worker's compensation protection provided to US&R teams when they are "Federalized" is important?**

It is important for these protections to be in place to safeguard the Sponsoring and Participating organizations, as well as the individuals on the teams. H.R. 3377 provides protection for those appointed into federal service and may suffer personal injury, illness, disability or death while acting in the scope of their appointment. They would be covered, just as any other federal employee, in the unfortunate circumstance that they were injured.

Additionally, the resolution will provide for tort liability coverage for the workers who are federalized. This protects system members who have professional licenses, permits or

certificates, such as a structural engineer or a doctor. It will also provide protection for any member, while operating as part of the system, during a period of appointment into federal service. There are also provisions for reemployment rights for members who are not full-time employees of the participating agency. This protects civilian members of the US&R Program from employment discrimination and retaliation for engaging in federal US&R activities.

These protections will assist the Sponsoring Agency in recruiting team members and provide assurances for the Sponsoring Agency when working with their respective Participating Agencies.

**Do you think codifying those protections in law as is done in H.R. 3377 is important and, if so, why?**

The US&R Program is valuable to the nation and the communities that serve as Sponsoring Agencies for the 28 US&R teams. H.R. 3377 will go a long way towards sustaining this worthwhile program by providing stabilized funding, providing tort liability and worker's compensation coverage to system members and establishing an Advisory Committee to assist the Administrator.

The stabilized funding will assist Sponsoring Agencies not only with team management and readiness, but it will facilitate buy-in from cities and agencies whose fire departments serve as the Sponsoring Agencies for the program. The coverage for system members will protect members and provide much needed security and peace of mind. The Advisory Committee will assist in working through issues related to proper administration of the program.

The FEMA US&R Program is an excellent example of cooperation at the national, state and local levels. It provides a cost effective approach to disaster mitigation, while ensuring the American public is protected by skilled personnel. It is a system that has proven value and it will continue to improve with measures such as H.R. 3377.

87

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**Testimony before the United States House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**regarding**

**The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search & Rescue Program in Haiti:  
How to Apply Lessons Learned at Home**

**David Downey  
Chief of Training and Safety, Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue Department;  
Task Force Leader; Florida Task Force I; and  
Federal Emergency Management Agency Urban Search & Rescue Program  
East Coast Task Force Leaders Representative**

**February 3, 2010**

Thank you Chairwoman Norton, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management for this opportunity to discuss the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search & Rescue Program in Haiti: How to Apply Lessons Learned at Home.

My name is Dave Downey; I have been a firefighter for 28 years and currently serve as the Chief of Training and Safety with Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue in south Florida. I also serve as a Task Force Leader with Florida Task Force 1 (FL-TF1) which is one of the 28 task forces that comprise the National Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Response System under the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS/FEMA). Additionally, I serve as the East Coast Task Force Leaders Representative for nine task forces in the Eastern Division of the National System.

I have been a member of FL-TF1 since 1991 and have responded to disasters domestically on behalf of DHS/FEMA including Hurricane Opal, the World Trade Center, and Hurricane Katrina and also internationally on behalf of USAID/OFDA including the Turkey earthquake and most recently the earthquake in Haiti.

Today I am speaking from the perspective of a first responder, as the Task Force Leader of FL-TF1, who led an 80 person search and rescue team to Haiti on January 14, 2010. I will discuss my direct observations from the mission with the goal of identifying lessons learned that can be applied to the National US&R System and better prepare our teams for future disasters. I have tried to organize my thoughts into two broad categories: mobilization and on site operations.

**Mobilization**

On January 12, 2010, shortly after news that a magnitude 7.0 earthquake had struck the country of Haiti, FL-TF1 command staff elected to notify the members of the task force and roster a team. Based on the preliminary reports it was clear that this would be a catastrophic event requiring tremendous amounts of international aid including significant urban search and rescue and humanitarian relief. Even though FL-TF1 is not currently a US&R task force designated by USAID for international response, our close proximity to the island coupled with our past international response and training experience necessitated us to be prepared in the event we were called upon.

Early the next morning I was notified, by the State of Florida's acting Emergency Management Director that FEMA intended to activate our task force to respond to Haiti. Based on this preliminary information, we began to mobilize our task force. At 1345 hours on January 13, 2010, we received our official Activation Order from DHS/FEMA as a Type I (70 person) task force with an additional ten (10) support personnel. Our task force was assigned as a USAID asset through an interagency agreement executed between DHS/FEMA and USAID.

There were no pre-established modes of transportation so the remainder of the day would be spent trying to determine how our search and rescue personnel and a 62,000 pound equipment cache would get to Haiti. My assumption of our primary mode of transportation was military airlift and this was because our entire equipment cache and personnel are mobilized just off the flight line of Homestead Air Reserve Base in south Miami-Dade County. Preliminary discussion with USAID/OFDA Logistics in Washington, who would be tasked with acquiring transportation, initially suggested 1 or 2 United States Coast Guard C-130's. My initial concern was that this airframe would not permit the 80 rescue personnel and the entire equipment cache to travel together. Therefore a smaller contingent of personnel would have to respond with the cache followed by the balance of the team on a subsequent flight. While this option was not ideal, we began to plan for this method of transportation. This means of transportation never materialized and later in the day we were notified that the personnel and cache would be transported by commercial carrier.

Logistics personnel from our task force were then charged with loading the entire cache into our trucks and transporting it to the commercial carrier located at Miami International Airport, some 40 miles north of our location. The carrier would then be tasked with loading the cache so that it could be transported on two planes. Both planes were scheduled to depart Miami for Port-au-Prince within one hour of each other the following morning. This was acceptable because the commercial carrier hired to transport the team would depart early the next morning as well.

At 0800 hours on January 14, 2010, a commercial aircraft with all 80 personnel departed Miami and arrived in Port-au-Prince at approximately 1030 hours. As expected, the operations at the airport in Port-au-Prince were chaotic and securing the necessary transportation to get our personnel to the US Embassy, where we were scheduled to report, became a challenge. Even more of a concern was the fact that the two planes carrying our equipment cache were delayed and then diverted to Santo Domingo. Our task force personnel departed the airport leaving a small contingent of staff behind to await the arrival of the equipment cache.

Ultimately, one plane loaded with primarily base camp supplies arrived the next morning- almost 24 hours after the arrival of personnel- and the other plane with our rescue cache, the equipment most

essential to the mission, didn't arrive until 36 hours after the arrival of the team. Of particular note is the fact that our first rescue of a 23 year old student was performed during the early hours of January 15, 2010, with rescue equipment loaned to us by the US&R team from Los Angeles County. The fact that we were familiar with and able to use the equipment loaned to us is a testament to the standardized equipment cache and training methods currently employed in the National US&R System, but a lesson I would have preferred to learn on a training mission.

In 2003, funding became available to each of the 28 task forces to purchase ground transportation assets. This included semi-tractor trailers, box trucks, command, and support vehicles. This one time allotment allowed each task force to purchase sufficient resources with the goal of moving the entire cache over the road up to 1,200 miles. This project was tested extensively during the 2004/05 hurricane season and, with the exception of a few minor issues, seems to work. There has never been any additional funding for sustainment of these vehicles and as for transportation of the personnel, task forces must still rely on commercial carriers to provide buses. In recent response history, it has been determined that virtually every contract carrier for buses has been secured by DHS/FEMA for evacuation purposes and therefore it may be extremely difficult to obtain them for the US&R task forces in the future. Additional funding is necessary to provide for the sustainment of the current fleet as well as for the purchase of personnel transports to ensure a rapid response.

Prior to the purchase of vehicles, every task force had equipment cache load plans for military and civilian airlift. While we have retained these plans, there are no pre-assigned assets available in the event that air transport is needed. This was evident during the response to Haiti. Pre-identification of specific airframes capable of moving US&R assets rapidly and efficiently is essential not only for future international deployments but for cross-country response as well.

#### **On Site Operations**

The breadth of this disaster was overwhelming. As I stood atop a collapsed structure on the first day, I looked 360 degrees and all I saw were other structures in the same condition. My first thought was where do we start? Our priorities were already established: we were directed to focus on hospitals, schools/universities, multi-story buildings, and any other large structures. Additionally, we were guided to many rescue sites by locals. Haitians would come to us with information on locations where they would hear someone in the rubble and we would also be provided with text messages sent from survivors inside collapsed structures.

While the priorities seemed logical, the mapping and sector assignments were woefully inadequate. The maps that we used for the first few days were 2006 tourist maps provided by the embassy. These maps lacked sufficient details such as street names and the locations of the significant structures that we were supposed to prioritize. I felt as though we were back in 2005 when we first arrived in New Orleans, the day after Hurricane Katrina, and were using maps we had acquired from service stations in the area. I am well aware of the mapping capabilities of the National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) and question why those assets were not deployed to Haiti. Once internet access was secured, the use of "Google Earth" coupled with our handheld GPS units made location mapping a bit easier; however, the level of sophistication was still very primitive compared to what I knew exists.

In addition, there were no pre-established GPS formats i.e., Lat/Long, UTM, USNG, etc. for location reporting and directing. We would and did receive coordinates in a myriad of formats

which necessitated frequent conversions. This became an issue when, as an example, our team was trying to transport two rescued survivors to a field hospital. Our team had just pulled two children from beneath the rubble yet we were delayed as a result of having to re-format our GPS units to the proper coordinates of the field hospital. Search sectors were developed along geographical borders (streets and avenues) rather than like-sized grids. This created varied shapes and sizes to each sector and with the lack of adequate maps, sector boundaries were difficult to determine.

It is my recommendation that the capabilities of the NGA must be incorporated early on in disaster response. Pre-scripted mapping packages must be identified and adherence to the National Grid Reference System must be implemented for all search and rescue operations to ensure that priority areas are identified and grid searches are accomplished in the most expeditious fashion possible.

While the transportation challenges getting to Haiti were already discussed, on site operations were dramatically hindered by the lack of transportation assets available. Simply put, we had no efficient way of getting personnel and equipment out to perform search and rescue on a daily basis-- this was probably the greatest struggle we had in performing our job. Every day, task forces competed against both each other and with the needs of the embassy for the use of a small contingent of transport vehicles. Again I draw on my past experience with Hurricane Katrina, when it was not vehicles but rather boats that we needed everyday to perform our mission. In Haiti, hours were wasted everyday trying to secure transportation. Task forces should deploy as self-sufficient as possible and this includes their transportation. We should not expect the local infrastructure that is already devastated by a disaster to supply transportation. If a task force is deployed without their transportation assets, as was the case in this response, then dedicated on site transportation must be secured. This could be supplied by the military or other contract transport services.

Establishing a continuum of medical care is essential for the long-term survival of victims removed from collapsed structures. The function of the US&R medical personnel is threefold: to care for the team members, to care for the victims in the collapsed environment, and to care for the canines. The task force does not have the capability to provide long-term definitive care once the victim is removed. Medical assets must be on site early and ready to accept and care for the victims removed from the structures. As an analogy, a hazardous materials team will not make entry into a contaminated environment until the decontamination process is established. Likewise, US&R elements should not be engaged until there are medical care facilities established to receive the victims. What we experienced in Haiti was a lack of medical facilities that were able to receive and more importantly to care for the victims we rescued. Integration with Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT's) is a viable option as they are capable of providing the care necessary to support these victims and the US&R operations.

An ongoing issue that has yet to be resolved is that of security for task forces operating at a disaster site. During our Haiti response, our personnel operated at every search and rescue site without force protection. While provisions were made to evacuate an area if a confrontation developed, the reality was that based on the damage, topography, and unfamiliarity of the area it would have been difficult to actually escape. Only once did a squad feel threatened and this was quickly defused by task force members that were Haitian-American and spoke French-Creole. However, this bilingual luxury was not the norm for the other task forces. There are no easy answers when dealing with local customs, especially on an international response, and task force members are reminded daily at every briefing to be aware of their surroundings and always to keep one person as a designated safety officer.

This mission wasn't without success. I was pleased to see that the years of work put into developing the right equipment caches and training personnel on the right techniques paid off. Every search and rescue aspect of US&R was successful. Our search canines were remarkable: all 11 of the victims we saved were found first by a canine. The technical search aspect of our operations, using cameras and listening devices, worked. The breaching and breaking tools and techniques worked. The medical care provided to those trapped for extended periods of time worked. We should be proud of the fact that the time and money spent on tools and training has paid off. However, we can not rest on our laurels. We must continue to train and look for new ways, through emerging technology, to improve our capabilities and this can only be accomplished with adequate funding and support. We have not reached perfection but we are on the right track.

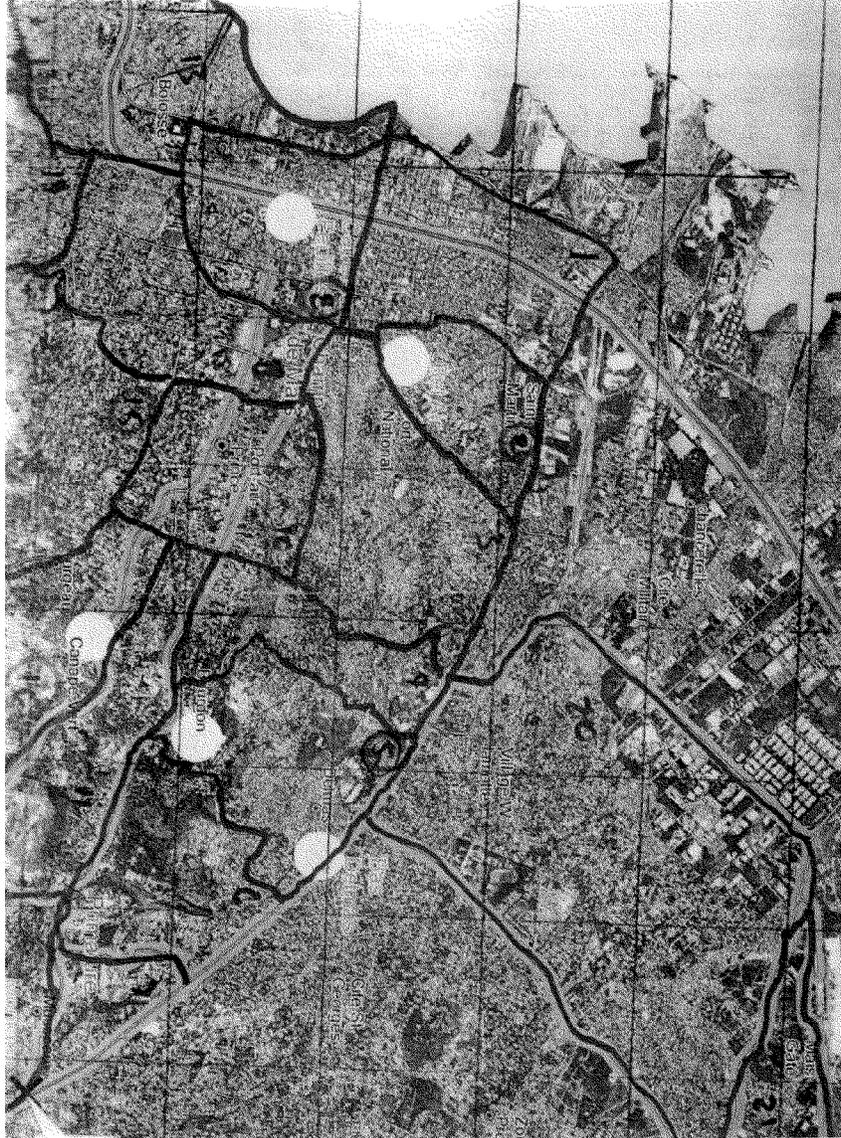
### **Summary**

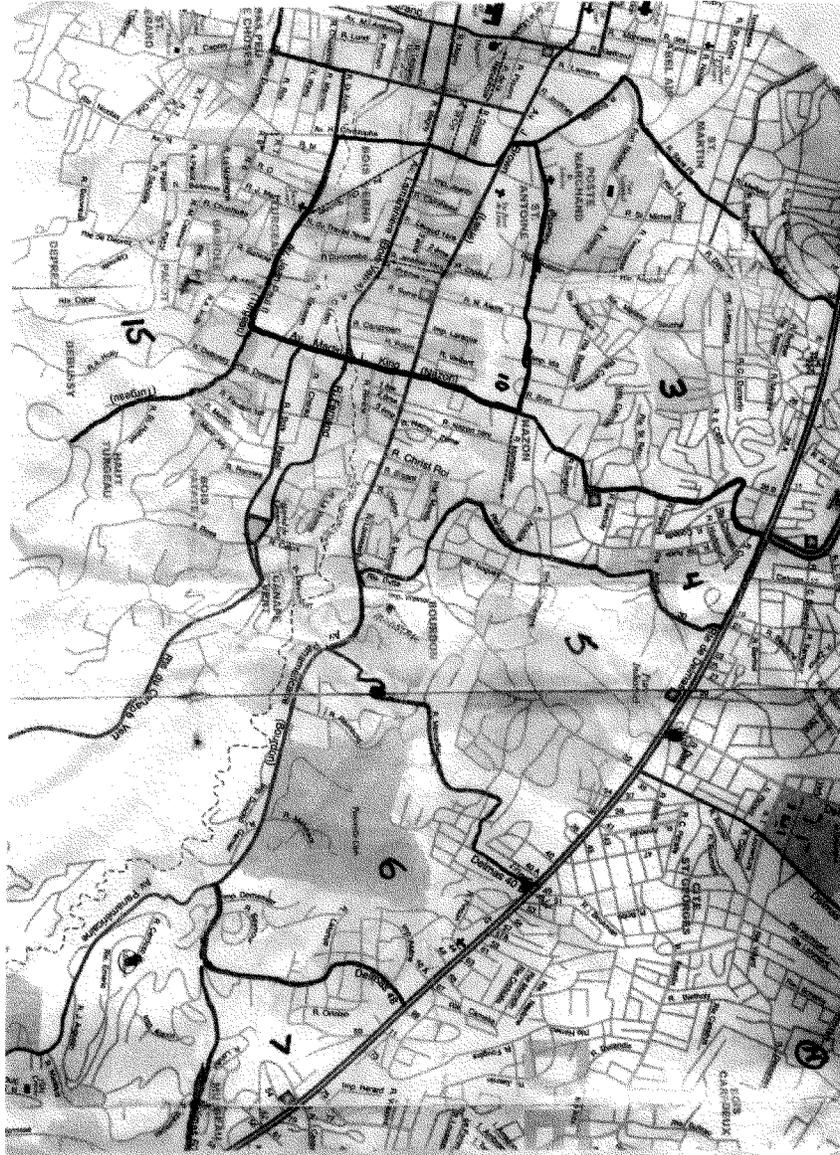
The efforts of the six US&R task forces from the United States coupled with the other 40-plus teams from around the globe resulted in the largest number of survivors rescued in history. We should all be proud of this achievement.

During collapse search and rescue, besides the type of construction we are confronted with, our greatest enemy is time. To be successful, we must be able to get the right resources to the right place as quickly as possible in order to save as many lives as possible. To this end, task forces must ensure operational readiness and the implementation of pre-established transportation assets is essential.

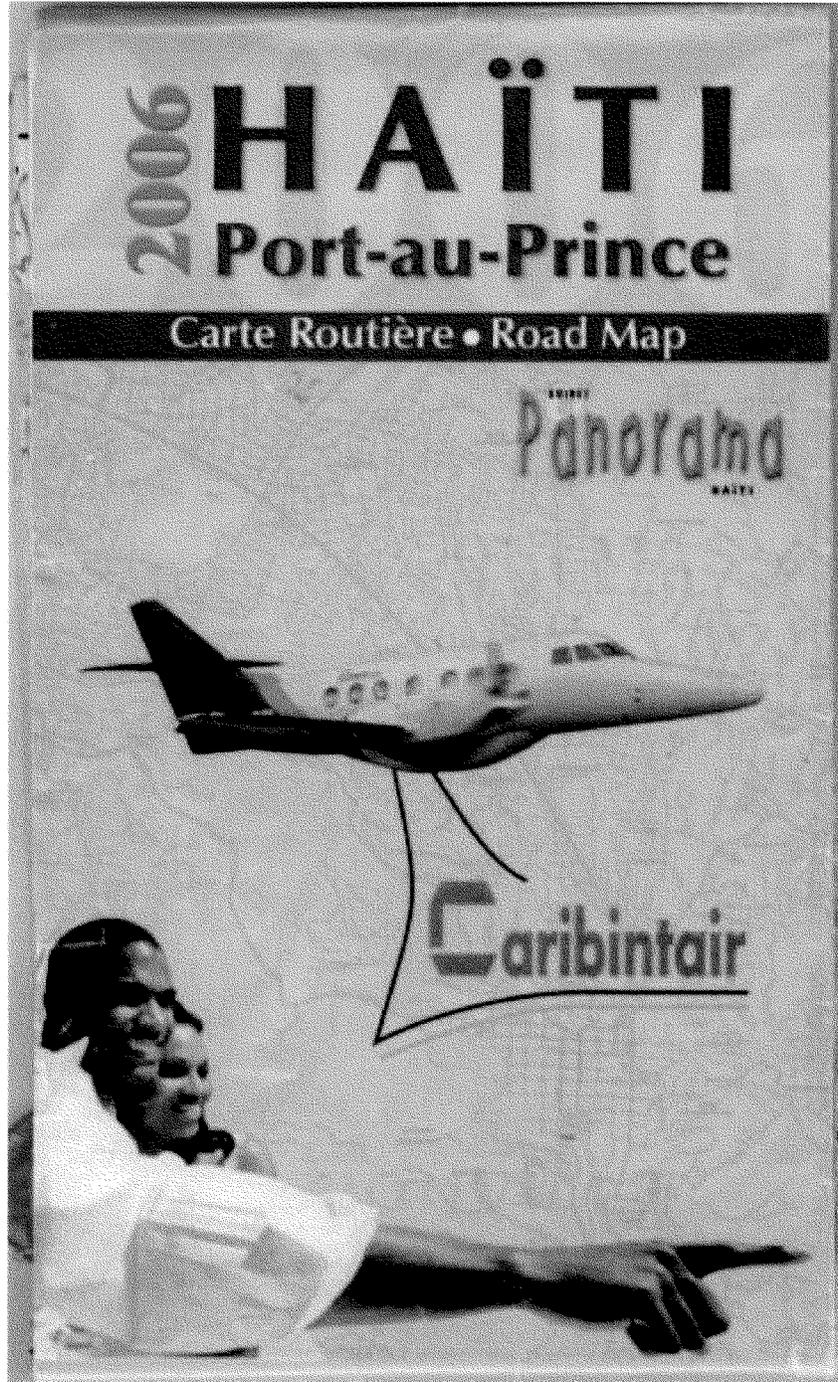
This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mexico City earthquake and the first organized US&R response to such a disaster from the United States. Since that time, the United States has developed a robust national US&R capability that today we know has incorporated the equipment, training and most importantly personnel to be successful. This capability is built on a foundation supported by the 28 sponsoring agencies, countless participating agencies, and affiliated personnel that collectively provide the 6,000 member ready reserve that we know as the National US&R Response System. These agencies support this national system sometimes at the expense of local service and this cannot continue. Supportive legislation as defined in Chairmen Oberstar's HR 3377 coupled with adequate funding is necessary for the National US&R program as well as for essential companion elements, such as the NGA, to sustain current capabilities as well as to explore new opportunities.

Again I would like to thank Chairwoman Norton, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and the distinguished members of this Subcommittee for the privilege of appearing before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.









**Dave Downey**  
**Division Chief – Training and Safety**  
**Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department**  
**March 8, 2010**  
**Page 1**

- *You indicated that you were notified your team might be needed in Haiti on January 12, 2010, and that you later arrived at Port-au-Prince at 8:30 pm on January 14, 2010. Would characterize the time period between notification and arrival as quick, slow, or somewhere in between? What circumstances would have allowed you get there sooner?*

Response from Dave Downey – As a point of clarification, based on the proximity of South Florida to Haiti we (FL-TF1) made the assumption shortly after the news of the earthquake on 12 January that there may be a request for assistance. There was never a formal notification. Miami-Dade Fire Rescue's FL-TF1 was officially activated by DHS/FEMA on 13 January at 1345 hours and arrived in Port-au-Prince at 1030 hrs on 14 January 2010.

Because FL-TF1 is not a team designated by USAID for international deployment (currently Fairfax County, VA and Los Angeles County, CA are the only ones) there was a delay in executing the inter-agency agreement between USAID and DHS/FEMA for the use of FL-TF1. This resulted in a delay in the team moving forward with securing transportation. Additionally, it is my opinion that had pre-established air transport means been in place before this incident that we could have been in the air much sooner.

- *You mentioned the difficulty that you faced getting transportation for your team and its equipment to Haiti. Have you ever experienced or would you expect to experience these problems on a FEMA deployment here in the United States? What lessons can we learn from this experience?*

Response from Dave Downey – While each of the 28 task forces that comprise the National US&R Response System has transportation assets that will enable them to move their equipment over-the-road, there are still shortfalls on pre-established air transport assets and coach carriers (buses). With a recent initiative by DHS/FEMA to secure busses for evacuation, there is a possibility that these same carriers may not be able to provide busses to move the 80-person task force over-the-road. Therefore if we continue operating under the current conditions and procedures, yes, we could encounter the same problems again. I also would like to suggest again as well that we should look into funding for appropriate maintenance and support for the current vehicles that were bought into the system several years ago.

**Dave Downey**  
**Division Chief – Training and Safety**  
**Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department**  
**March 8, 2010**  
**Page 2**

- *You stated that importance of a standardized equipment cache and training. Do these standards apply to non-FEMA US&R teams either in the U.S. or abroad? If not, do you think these standards should be harmonized?*

Response from Dave Downey – For the teams in the U.S. whether they are FEMA or a State/regional asset, the training and equipment is the same as the National standard. As for teams abroad no, however there is an initiative by the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) under the United Nations to standardize qualify US&R assets as far as “kind” and “type”. This initiative will cover basic qualifications, team make-up, and size and doesn’t speak to the specifics of equipment as we have in the U.S. The INSARAG initiative is a long-term solution that is well underway.

- *Do you believe that the difficulty in obtain transportation in Haiti would be repeated in a disaster here in the United States? What steps do you think can be taken to prevent this problem in the future?*

Response from Dave Downey – In relation to transportation in and around the disaster area I am confident that the infrastructure here in the US coupled with each of the 28 National task forces having their own transportation assets that we would not experience a similar issue here in the continental U.S.

- *In light of the challenges faced in Haiti, what type of training would you recommend for US&R Teams for future missions?*

Response from Dave Downey – Of all the issues we had with transportation as previously stated, the one shining light from this mission was the fact that the training and equipment we currently have in place works. I am proud of the fact that the years we have put in to this aspect of urban search and rescue has paid off and I would not change a thing. We will need to look at the make-up of some of the elements of the team (reconnaissance, rescue, medical, etc.) but this is something that can be addressed within the system.

For the record, when I testified my rank with Miami-Dade Fire Rescue was Division Chief and I was assigned to the Training and Safety Division. Since the time of my testimony I have been promoted to the rank of Assistant Fire Chief and am now responsible for department wide technical and support services including the following areas; logistics, training and safety, fire prevention and communications.

99

**Fred Endrikat**

**Special Operations Chief, City of Philadelphia Fire Department  
and Federal Emergency Management Agency Urban Search & Rescue Program  
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**Testimony before the United States House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**Regarding**

**The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search & Rescue Program in Haiti:  
How to Apply Lessons Learned at Home**

**Fred Endrikat  
Special Operations Chief, City of Philadelphia Fire Department  
and Federal Emergency Management Agency Urban Search & Rescue Program  
National Task Force Leaders Representative**

**February 3, 2010**

Thank you Chairwoman Norton, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management for this opportunity to discuss the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search & Rescue Program in Haiti: How to Apply Lessons Learned at Home.

I have been a Philadelphia firefighter for 35 years, and I am currently assigned as the Special Operations Chief for the Philadelphia Fire Department's Special Operations Command. I also serve the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) National Response System in concurrent duty assignments as the National Task Force Leader's Representative, Incident Support Team member, and Task Force Leader for Pennsylvania Task Force 1.

I have served in various capacities at the local, state, and federal levels in disaster response operations, including a 40-day field assignment as the FEMA US&R Incident Support Team Operations Chief at the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack and collapse of the World Trade Center in New York City, a 30-day field assignment as the FEMA US&R Incident Support Team Operations Chief for Hurricane Katrina (Mississippi theater of operations) and Hurricane Rita, and most recently a 7-day field assignment in Haiti in response to the 7.0 magnitude earthquake as the FEMA US&R Incident Support Team Operations Chief.

I am speaking today as a first-responder in relation to my duties in Philadelphia and as a FEMA National US&R Response System member who arrived in Haiti on January 19, 2010. I also have the responsibility and privilege to speak on behalf of the nearly 6,000 members of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search & Rescue National Response System.

**Background**

In previous testimony before the Subcommittee on Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response - Committee on Homeland Security, on May 6, 2007, I provided the following background information (with some minor / current updates as follows):

Similar to the rapid advances and extensive development of emergency medical services and hazardous materials response capabilities during the 1970's and 1980's, the field of technical rescue has seen significant improvement in terms of organization and training during the 1990's through today. New performance standards and accompanying training and legislative initiatives for technical rescue operations have recently been developed and teams have been assembled with all of the capabilities that are needed for the most complex and challenging incidents. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search & Rescue National Response System is the product of these efforts.

In 1990, following the Federal Government's responses to the disasters of Hurricane Hugo and the Loma Prieta earthquake, Congress tasked the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop a national civilian urban search & rescue capability. Several advanced Urban Search & Rescue teams had already been developed by individual fire departments and within regions where special risks had been recognized, such as California with its well-known earthquake potential. FEMA, with support from federal, state, and local authorities, fire departments, the nation's top technical rescue specialists, and other interested groups, developed the National Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Response System.

As you are aware, during a disaster, the Federal Government implements the National Response Framework to provide state and local government with technical expertise, equipment, and other resources. These resources are provided by one or more federal agencies. The primary agency responsible for Urban Search & Rescue is FEMA, under Emergency Support Function #9 (ESF #9) of the National Response Framework.

The primary purpose of this system is to provide a nationwide network of heavy search and rescue teams that can be rapidly deployed to disaster incidents. The individual teams are established at the local-jurisdiction level and can be federalized and deployed by FEMA as needed for nationwide response. The US&R teams provide an organized system of resources to locate, extricate, and provide immediate medical treatment to victims trapped in collapsed structures and to conduct other life-saving operations. The US&R National Response System is responsible for the coordination, development, and maintenance of the Federal effort in providing these resources to augment state and local resources in disaster situations.

The twenty-eight Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Task Forces are the fundamental units of FEMA's national response system, and are strategically located throughout the country. Each Task Force is sponsored by a State or local government jurisdiction and deploys with technical specialists who are divided into management and operational elements. FEMA has the ability to deploy the Task Forces in one of two operational configurations: as a Type I Task Force with 70 personnel (with a full equipment cache that includes specialized Weapons of Mass Destruction capabilities), or as a Type III Task Force with 28 personnel (with a modified smaller equipment cache) that is primarily designed to operate in weather-driven disasters such as hurricanes.

To ensure the ability to deploy at any time with the required number of personnel, teams are staffed in all positions “three-deep”, and carry a total rostered personnel complement of 210 members. A significant number of the sponsoring agencies are municipal fire departments, and firefighters comprise the largest percentage of the rostered members within the system.

The FEMA US&R National Response System also provides an overhead management capability for field operations known as the Incident Support Team (IST). The IST provides Federal, state, and local officials with technical assistance in the acquisition and utilization of Federal US&R resources through advice, incident command assistance, management, and coordination of US&R Task Forces, and obtaining logistical support. The FEMA US&R Program rosters three 21-member Incident Support Teams (the Red, White, and Blue teams). Each IST is on call one out of every three months, and members must be able to deploy within two hours of receiving their activation orders.

Each Task Force maintains extensive capabilities within seven major functional elements.

- Search Specialists utilize canines and technical electronic search equipment to locate trapped victims.
- Rescue Specialists are skilled in shoring operations, lifting, and cutting and breaching all types of building materials including structural steel and reinforced concrete to extricate trapped victims.
- Physicians and Medical Specialists (at the paramedic or equivalent level) provide advanced life support capability and pre-hospital and emergency care for Task Force members. They also provide crush syndrome medicine and confined space medicine for rescued victims.
- Rigging Specialists work in conjunction with heavy equipment, such as large hydraulic cranes, to remove heavy debris and expose collapse voids where victims are buried.
- Structural Engineers (some of them firefighters also licensed as professional engineers) perform structural integrity assessments of structures in rescue operations.
- Hazardous Materials Specialists and Technical Information Specialists provide support to the overall search and rescue mission including planning, hazards evaluation, hazardous materials assessments in rescue operations, and technical documentation.
- Logistics Specialists support the overall search and rescue mission by providing supplies, equipment, communications, and transportation for the Task Force and managing the mobilization and demobilization processes.

In addition to having the above listed capabilities, Task Forces are structured to be able to operate under the following guidelines:

- 24-hour around-the clock operations
- Self-sufficiency for 72 hours
- Report to the Point Of Departure within 4-6 hours of activation, and to be able to deploy all personnel and the entire equipment cache by ground or air (as required)
- Cross-trained personnel
- Standardized equipment and training
- Standardized operating procedures
- Operate under the Incident Command System (ICS)

The National US&R System has played an essential role in the federal response to natural disasters and terrorist attacks. During the response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, all 28 of the Task Forces were activated, with ten being activated a second time for the extended operations encountered. These US&R Task Forces were credited with the search of thousands of homes and buildings and the rescue of 6,587 victims. As evidenced by the FEMA US&R Program's response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and as highlighted by then-Department of Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff in his Report to Congress in 2006, the FEMA US&R Program was one of the federal response entities, along with the United States Coast Guard, that was acknowledged for successful response operations.

Eleven of the then 25 Task Forces and one management team took part in the federal response to the bombing of the Alfred R. Murrah Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on April 19, 1995, and 25 of the current 28 Task Forces and two of the current three standing management teams took part in the response to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

The FEMA US&R National Response System is a proven response entity of the Federal government, and is available to provide immediate response to natural disasters or a terrorist attack. Since 1991, this system has responded to over 30 major disasters, and has also been deployed to support 15 National Security Special events (to include Presidential Nominating Conventions, the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, the G-8 Summit, etc.).

### **Lessons Learned from the Response to the Haiti Earthquake**

With all due respect and condolences to the people of Haiti in the aftermath of this devastating disaster, it is important to look at the international emergency response to this incident and determine how to apply lessons learned in Haiti to our future operations at home.

The following observations and recommendations are in no way intended to serve as a criticism of the response operations in Haiti – they are submitted with the thought that we have an obligation to use this experience and leverage what we learned in the sole interest of better preparing our nation and serving our citizens.

### **Tiered Response**

All disasters start as local-level events. As the response requirements build in scope and complexity, additional resources are deployed and engaged. The more quickly we can engage technician-level rescuers after a sudden-on-set event, the more likely it is that we will save many more lives, particularly in the early operations (first 2-3 days after the event occurs) where the survivability profile is high. Haiti did not have a fully-developed technical rescue / US&R capability at the local, regional, or national level, and precious time was lost in the immediate hours after the initial earthquake as a sufficient number of skilled rescuers were not immediately able to engage in rescue operations.

It is important for the DHS / FEMA's National US&R Response System to continue our outreach to other responders including the State Urban Search & Rescue Alliance to assist them in building upon their good work as they continue to develop technician-level response capabilities at the local,

regional and state levels. It is important for us to increase our opportunities to share our FEMA US&R training curriculum and train and exercise together.

In the United States, we have developed a much more robust local-level technical response capability, especially since the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. It is vital for us to continue to fund local government technical rescue / US&R initiatives via the Homeland Security Grant Program, Urban Area Security Initiative grants, Maritime Port Security Grant Program, and possibly other related federal funding mechanisms that are not tied specifically to response to terrorism.

As we prepare to respond to any type of disaster, far-reaching benefits will be achieved by consistently training together, sharing information, and building relationships at all levels of government and all tiers of response (from first-responders to fourth-tier stand-alone, self-sufficient resources). Integrating common doctrine, a common concept of operations, similar equipment and techniques for individual response disciplines, and interoperable communications through all these tiers of response in the preparedness phase will allow for the most effective service delivery to our citizens during the response phase.

This will enable our nation to put rescuers trained to the highest technical levels to work in the shortest amount of time possible.

### **Command & Control**

The Command & Control structure for US&R operations in Haiti was somewhat different than what we might encounter at a similar event in the United States. Overall US&R operations were directed/coordinated by the United Nations On-Site Operations Coordination Center (OSOCC). The United States US&R Task Forces came under the direct coordination of the United States Agency for International Development Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID DART) Operations Coordinator.

At a similar event in the United States, operations would be directed by the local Authority Having Jurisdiction, with assistance from the Federal Government, with the FEMA US&R Incident Support Team (IST) having a significant role. The IST provides critical links between the Federal Government, State and local governments, and the FEMA US&R Task Forces during US&R response operations.

As observed during operations in Haiti, a strong unified command and control element is essential for successful rescue operations. The FEMA US&R System needs a structured, formal Mentoring/Shadowing Program for our less-experienced IST members, and for those members of our system that have begun training to become IST members. We have an obligation to fully train and exercise these field managers before we assign them to critical roles at an actual disaster (as has occurred in the past).

We have identified this in many previous post-disaster formal After-Action Reports and subsequent Corrective Action Plans, yet we have not been able to accomplish this critical training due to a lack of funding for this specific purpose. Dedicated funding sources need to be identified to accomplish this training.

In Haiti, international US&R Teams were given assignments by the OSOCC. The composition and make-up of the international rescue teams varies widely (from teams that are staffed and equipped similar to the 70-member FEMA Type I US&R Task Forces all the way down to 8 – 10 member teams with a small complement of rescue tools and minimum logistical support).

One of the many observations that was communicated to me by FEMA US&R System Task Force Leaders operating in Haiti was that international teams of widely-varying staffing and capability were assigned to similar-sized large operational areas (called “sectors” by the OSOCC), and that certain sectors did not have enough resources assigned to adequately perform prioritized search operations in a given operational period.

Another significant lesson learned and reinforced is that we should continue to develop and implement the National Incident Management System (NIMS) uniform resource-typing standard. This standard sets certain benchmarks in relation to the operational expectations and capabilities of different-sized response elements. By utilizing this standard, an Incident Commander can make informed decisions when assigning resources to an impacted area, and ensure that enough resources are assigned to critical areas in priority order for rescue operations.

To take this one step further, it is recommended that someone or some agency be tasked with the responsibility to develop a comprehensive national catalog of all US&R resources in this country, and to somehow catalog them in relation to the NIMS typing standard and validate their readiness (via an assessment tool similar to the FEMA US&R National Response System “Operational Readiness Evaluation” program). We must continue to formally educate local and state fire and emergency management officials specifically about the typed-US&R resources and the tiered-response assets available to them (through mutual-aid agreements, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, and the National Response Framework), and we must find funding to train and exercise these resources together.

### **Reconnaissance and Search Operations**

The foundation of our concept of operations for effective search and rescue actions at large-scale catastrophic events is effective reconnaissance. Simply stated, the faster and more accurately we can assess damaged buildings, perform structural triage, and prioritize search opportunities, the better chance we have of successfully locating buried victims and initiating successful rescue operations.

As Chief Dave Downey has described in his written testimony, sector assignments and corresponding mapping in Haiti presented a significant challenge. In the first days of operations, FL-TF 1 and some of the other FEMA US&R Task Forces deployed to Haiti were using tourist maps provided by the US Embassy; search assignments were developed along geographical borders rather than like-sized grids.

The FEMA US&R System has a strong working relationship with the National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency (NGA). Their analysts and technicians are able to provide sophisticated mapping that contains detailed grid references with corresponding up-to-date satellite images, as well as Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) graphics soon after a sudden on-set disaster occurs.

Before this technology was available to us, the only way we could accomplish this initial reconnaissance of large devastated areas was “on the ground”. This is basically what occurred in Haiti.

This technology has dramatically changed the way the FEMA US&R IST and Task Forces are able to go to work in the critical early stages of the response. In essence, it allows us to electronically view actual images of an impacted area, determine the status of critical infrastructure, quickly prioritize target hazards, and assign adequate resources for reconnaissance and search operations. As operations progress, the NGA team deployed with the FEMA US&R IST is able to produce accurate working maps (with a standardized grid reference and reporting system) that assist greatly in planning for future operational periods, and also for documentation of completed and pending search operations.

Our experiences at the earthquake in Haiti reinforce lessons that we have previously learned: we must continue to build our relationship and train with the NGA, and we must continue the practice of deploying an NGA team at the same time a FEMA US&R IST or FEMA US&R Task Force is deployed to a disaster. Their technology and their work in the early stages of operations save us a significant amount of time, the most critical factor in rescue operations.

At my initial operations briefing upon my arrival in Haiti, I was told by a member of the USAID DART that building and search marking systems were being used sporadically by the rescue teams operating throughout the disaster sites. The FEMA US&R System utilizes three distinct marking systems at disaster sites: the Structural Assessment marking system, the Search marking system, and the Victim Location marking system. These marking systems serve the purpose of leaving an accurate portrayal of a building in relation to rescue operations, and give follow-on rescue teams a “summary” of the status of what has been assessed and accomplished at a given point in time.

Ideally, the initial first responders that gain access to a building would be familiar with these marking systems and would mark each building that they operate in. For other rescue teams that subsequently arrive and begin to operate in a specific area, these marking systems “tell a story”, and ultimately would prevent the duplication of search efforts that is common at disasters where marking systems are not employed. Critical time is wasted when search operations are duplicated, especially in the early stages of a disaster.

The FEMA US&R System must continue to educate local, regional, and State US&R assets as well as first responders regarding the importance of the use of the three marking systems.

### **Force-Multiplier Concept**

FEMA Administrator Fugate has recently shared his vision of a Force-Multiplier concept with the leadership of the FEMA National US&R Response System. This Force-Multiplier concept would use the current 28 FEMA US&R Task Forces to assist impacted local and state governments (when requested) at disasters, and build upon their operational capabilities and expertise by training selected Department of Defense assets to assist in initial operational-level search and rescue activities.

This concept would also be applied to non-FEMA US&R assets from the local, regional and state levels. By pairing these trained resources with the 28 FEMA US&R Task Forces, reconnaissance and initial search operations at complex events could be accomplished in a much more efficient, uniform manner. Based on the operations observed in Haiti, a similar Force-Multiplier concept applied in the early stages of operations would have made a significant positive impact on field operations, especially in the areas of reconnaissance, search documentation, and operational planning.

It is critical that we have a detailed plan in place, with adequate funding committed to design and deliver the appropriate training programs to identified personnel in order to fully develop Administrator Fugate's vision.

### **Summary**

Planning for response to earthquakes of significant magnitude is not some other country's problem; we face all of the same risks here in our country with the significant seismic zones that we have in heavily-populated areas that contain a high number of unreinforced masonry buildings.

Even though the memory of the devastation caused by the earthquake in Haiti is at the forefront of our current thoughts, I believe that our focus should not be on the triggering mechanism that causes a disaster. The stronger our foundation in the concept of All Hazard preparedness, the more likely we will successfully and safely resolve any incident to which we respond.

When I departed Haiti on January 26<sup>th</sup>, statistics provided by the United Nations OSOCC indicated that a total of 134 people were rescued from collapsed structures by rescue teams that responded from all over the world; 47 of those people were rescued by the efforts of the six US&R Task Forces from the United States. Some of those rescue operations were extremely complex, with one of them taking 30 hours to complete. Those rescues did not occur "by chance". They were the direct result of the dedication of our personnel, the extensive training that is provided to them, the specialized equipment cache and logistical support package that the Task Forces deploy with, the framework of the National US&R System that enables them to operate in a uniform and efficient manner, and the unwavering support of the Sponsoring Agencies and Participating Agencies that furnish all of the approximately 6,000 members of our national system.

It is vital that we continue to support and further develop our National US&R System which also serves as a best-practices model for our local, regional, and state US&R teams. The National Program has consistently reached out by sharing policies, procedures, training curricula and technical expertise. We stand ready to increase our efforts in this realm.

As we continue to work to improve the National US&R System, there are a number of administrative and funding concerns that need to be addressed. As an administrative creation of Congress, the US&R System is currently operated by FEMA under authority drawn from different sections of the Stafford Act. This has caused some significant concerns for Sponsoring Agencies and Task Force personnel in relation to Tort liability, Workers Compensation insurance coverage, and re-employment rights.

In previous years, a US&R Advisory Committee provided essential guidance and a balanced viewpoint to FEMA concerning the operation and administration of the US&R National Response

System. The Advisory Committee was historically comprised of members representing FEMA, Sponsoring Agency Chiefs, technical experts, labor officials, and emergency response professionals. Since the Advisory Committee was disbanded, the National US&R System has been functioning for many years without the formal input of the Sponsoring Agency Chiefs.

There have been wide variations in annual funding provided for the program since its inception. In 2006, FEMA estimated the current annual cost to maintain a Task Force for ready deployment to be approximately \$1.7 million. At the current level of funding, each of the 28 Task Forces faces a deficit of approximately \$700,000 to well over \$1 million each year, which is largely made up by Sponsoring Agencies and Participating Agencies who absorb both "hard" costs (such as the payment of vehicle insurance, maintenance, and operating costs), and "soft" costs (such as the payment of salaries for members to maintain specialized rescue skills during training exercises) related to Task Force expenses.

Chairman Oberstar's House Resolution 3377 addresses the current administrative concerns involving the National US&R program. This Resolution would consolidate the statutory authority for the System under the Stafford Act and would explicitly authorize the US&R System. Both the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the International Association of Firefighters fully support this legislative initiative and the corresponding funding requirement that would ensure a strong federal Urban Search & Rescue response capability. Based on our lessons learned and reinforced during the response to the earthquake in Haiti, I would respectfully ask that the Committee consider the continued support of the FEMA US&R National Response System.

Thank you Chairwoman Norton, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee for the privilege of appearing before you today.

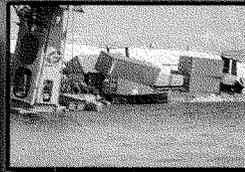
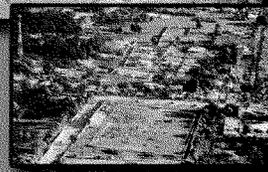
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# USAR

Urban Search and Rescue

## Port-au-Prince Central

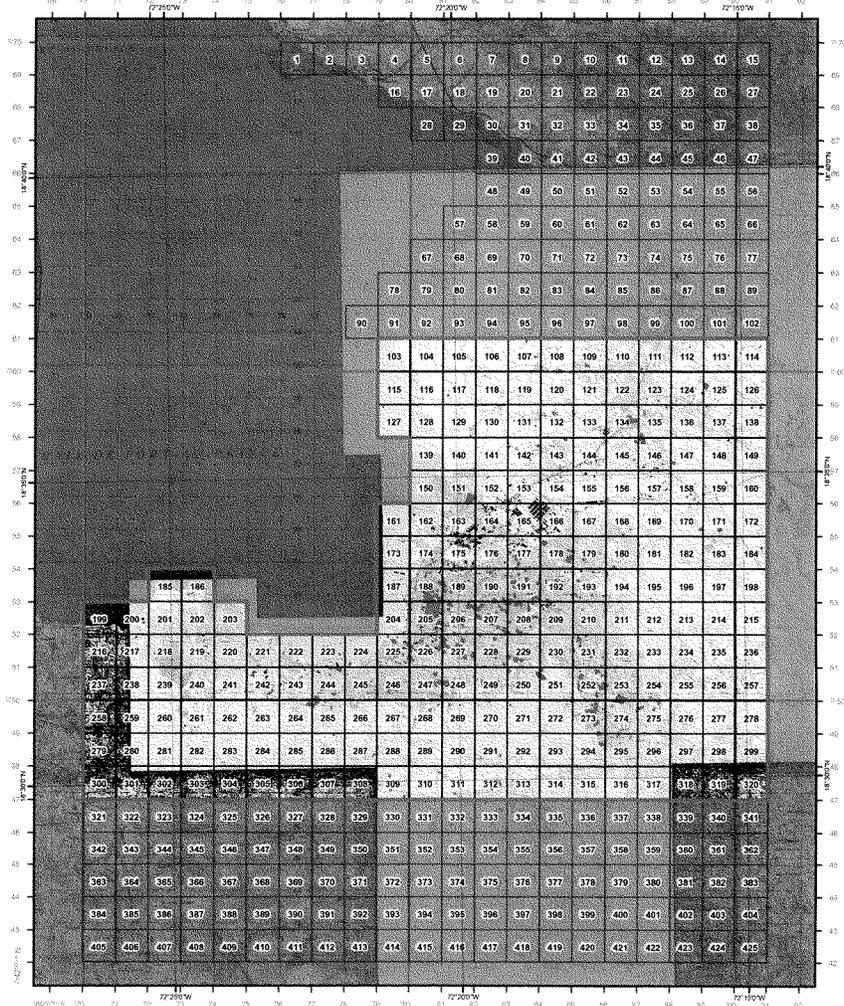
Map Sheets 105-520



UNCLASSIFIED

**PORT AU PRINCE, HAITI GROUND SEARCH MAP**

**VECTOR PAGE INDEX PORT AU PRINCE CENTRAL (MAP SHEETS 103 - 320)**



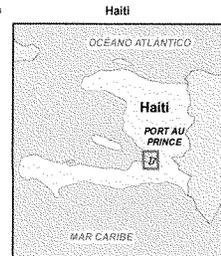
10,000 meter GRID, 1000 meter Ticks, MGRS  
 World Geodetic System 1984 Datum  
 Grid Zone Designation: YF  
 100,000-m Square Identification: 18Q

How to use identify map sheets using MGRS  
 Use bottom left 2 digit coordinate as  
 1K grid cell. Map sheet 205 is 18QYF8052.  
 Map sheet 135 is 18QYF8138

MGRS
100,000-m Square Grid
YF
Grid-Zone Designation
18Q

- Legend**
- Port au Prince Central
  - 1 km x 1km search box
  - Damage Level as of 15 Jan 2010
  - Catastrophic
  - Extensive
  - Moderate
  - Limited

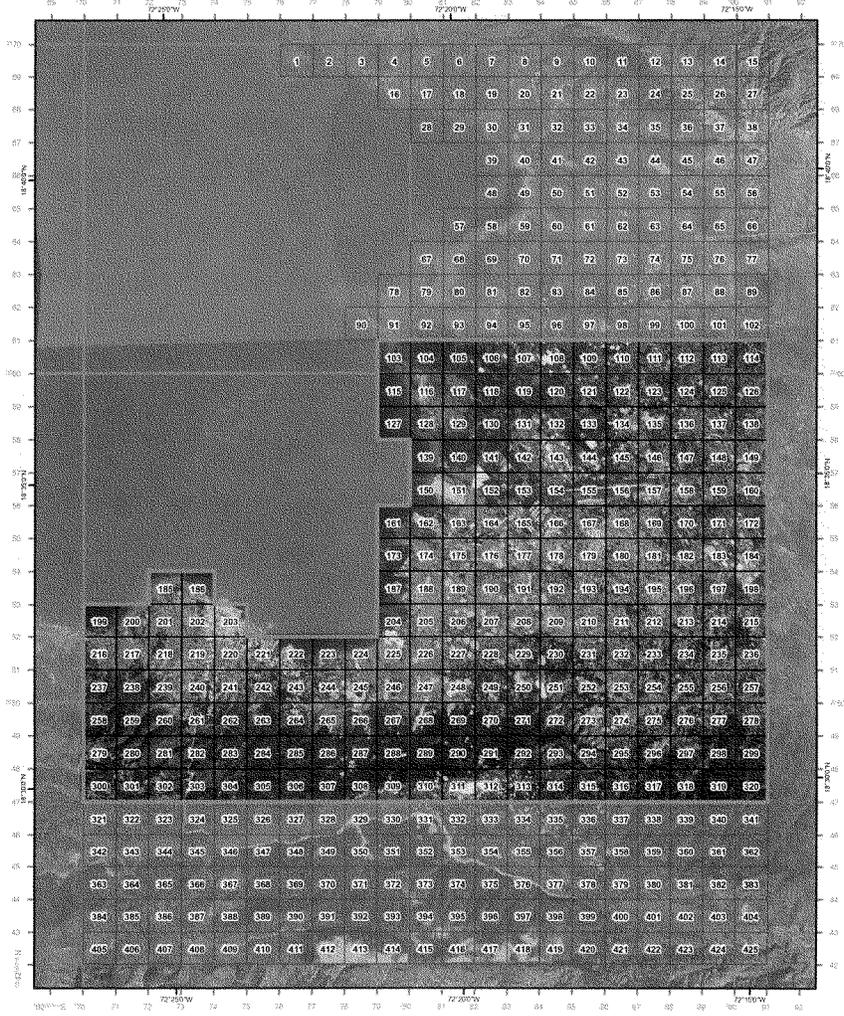
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PORT AU PRINCE, HAITI GROUND SEARCH MAP

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IMAGERY PAGE INDEX PORT AU PRINCE CENTRAL (MAP SHEETS 103 - 320)

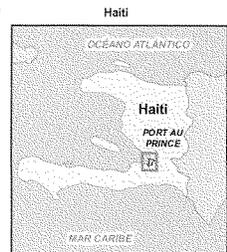


10,000 meter GRID, 1000 meter Ticks, MGRS  
 World Geodetic System 1984 Datum  
 Grid Zone Designation: YF  
 100,000-m Square Identification: 18Q  
 1:100,000 Scale  
 0 1 2 3 4 5 Kilometers  
 0 1 2 3 4 Meters

Image Sources:  
 Quickbird (C) 2010 Digital Globe Licensed Under Nextview  
 Quickbird (C) 2008 Digital Globe Citysphere Licensed Under Nextview  
 NaturalView

How to use Identify map sheets using MGRS  
 Use bottom left 2 digit coordinate as  
 1st grid cell. Map sheet 205 is 18QYF8052.  
 Map sheet 130 is 18QYF8750.

**Legend**  
 Port au Prince Central  
 250 1 km x 1km search box  
 Damage Level as of 15 Jan 2010  
 Catastrophic  
 Extensive  
 Moderate  
 Limited

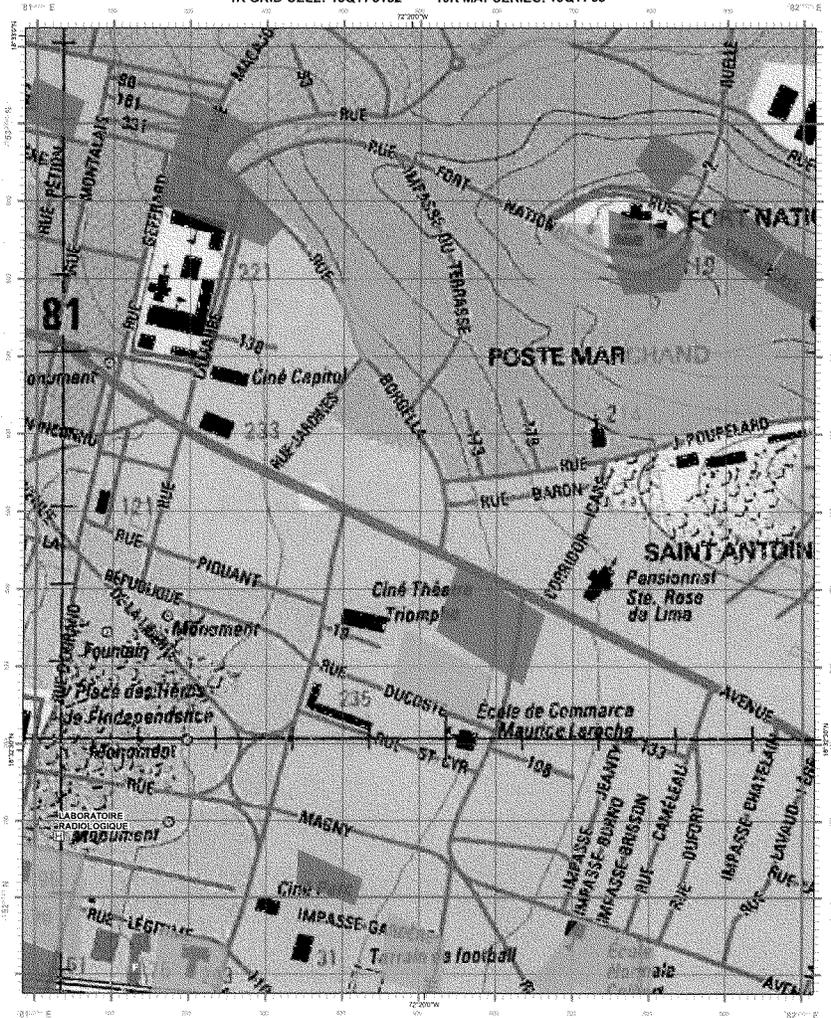


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PORT AU PRINCE, HT GROUND SEARCH MAP

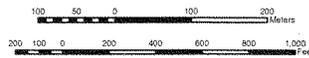
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1K GRID CELL: 18QYF8152 10K MAPSERIES: 18QYF85

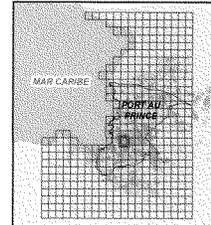


100 meter GRID, 15 meter Ticks, MGRS  
World Geodetic System 1984 Datum  
Grid Zone Designation: 18Q  
100,000-m Square Identification: YF

1:4,000 Scale

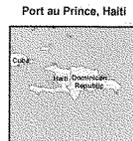


Map 206 of 425 INDEX MAP



MGRS
100,000-m Square Grid
YF
Grid-Zone Designation
18Q

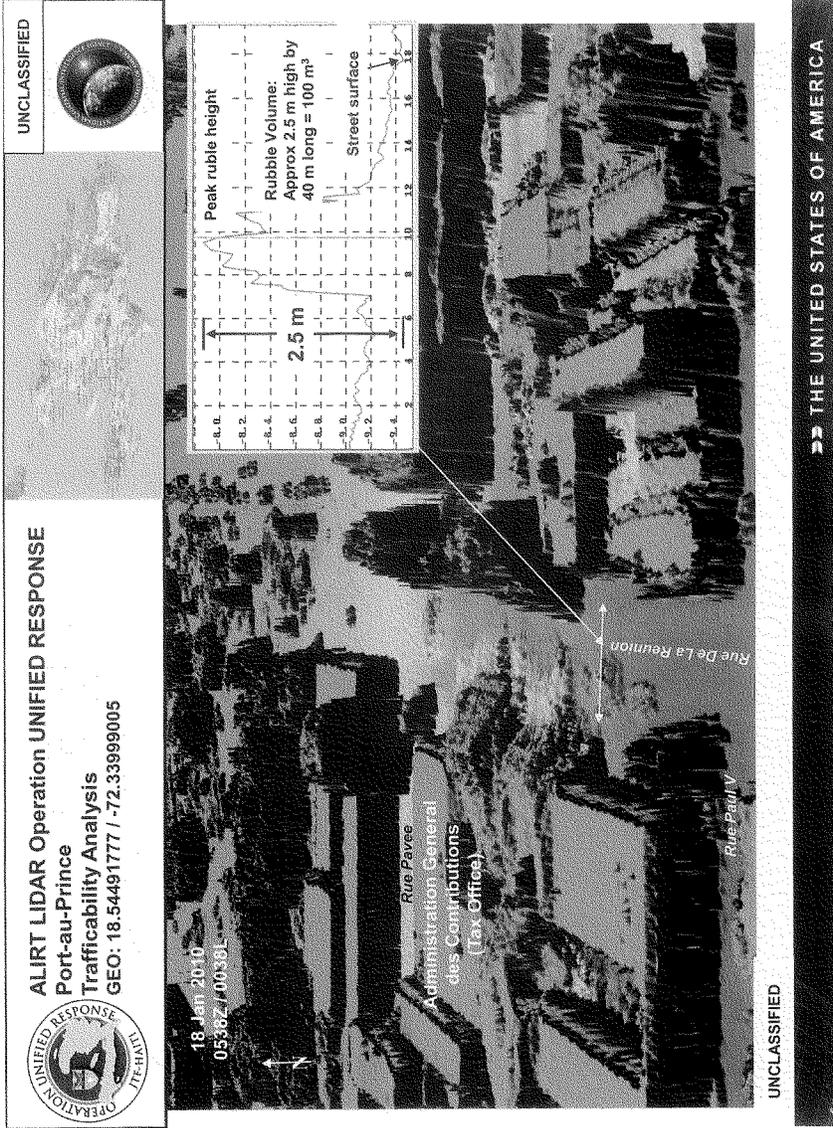
LEGEND		DAMAGE LEVEL as of 15 JAN 2010	
	Hospital		Catastrophic
	Law Enforcement		Extensive
	Fire Station		Moderate
	Embassy		Limited
	Vertical Obstruction		
	Search Grid		
	Cemetery		
	Green Zone		
	Restricted Zone		
	International Airport		
	Military Zone		
	Park Zone		
	Spring Zone		
	Swamp Area		
	Port Au Prince Fuel Tank/CS Processing		



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Vector Data Source: GEBCO International NAVTEQ  
Image Source: GeoEye/IGI 2010 Digital Globe License Under Review  
Date of Imagery 15 January 2010





115

**Fred Endrikat**

**Special Operations Chief, City of Philadelphia Fire Department  
and Federal Emergency Management Agency Urban Search & Rescue Program  
National Task Force Leaders Representative**

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717-554-4094**

**Response to Supplemental Questions received on February 23, 2010  
regarding:**

**Testimony before the United States House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency  
Management  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**Regarding**

**The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search & Rescue Program in  
Haiti: How to Apply Lessons Learned at Home**

**[ Testimony Date: February 3, 2010 ]**

- **In your testimony you discuss the command and control structure that was used in Haiti. The Incident Command System (ICS) was not used by USAID or other entities through which assistance was channeled. Do you think that ICS should be used for command and control on foreign disaster operations?**

Answer: There was a different form of “overhead” used during operations in Haiti, more a form of coordination than command and control. I only have basic knowledge of the field management structure protocols and the political considerations that are in place for disaster response on catastrophic foreign events, but I can reference my experiences at a number of disasters (particularly the responses to the World Trade Center and Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi).

The Incident Command System that we use domestically is a proven management system that has been validated at a significant number of large-scale events. It provides organizational structure, a process to break the incident down into manageable areas (divisions), demands accountability, and is driven by a planning process that enables a “uniform” approach to important phases of (and documentation of) operations at disasters.

For those reasons, I believe that an Incident Command System similar to what we use here in the United States should be used for command and control on foreign disaster operations – I am just not sure how that change could be implemented within the confines of the political and diplomatic constraints that may exist.

- **Please explain how H.R. 3377 addresses current concerns about the US&R System?**

Answer: H.R. 3377 addresses significant organizational gaps that currently exist concerning administration of the National US&R System.

- This Resolution would consolidate the statutory authority for the System under the Stafford Act and would explicitly authorize the US&R System.
- This Resolution would reduce the actual cost or exposure to the Sponsoring Agencies of US&R Task Forces in three critical areas:
  1. Workers Compensation

State worker compensation protection varies from state to state. If a state’s worker’s compensation is greater than the Federal Government’s, the sponsoring or participating agency of a US&R Task Force is required to make up the difference to protect their employees. H.R. 3377 addresses

this exposure and corresponding financial burden to the local governments that sponsor FEMA US&R Task Forces. It also offers the appropriate protection to individual Task Force members that may be injured in the line of duty.

## 2. Protection of Professional Licenses

Several of the 19 functional positions on FEMA US&R Task Forces require personnel to have professional licenses. These Task Force members are not protected from Tort Liability while performing in accordance with the Task Force mission. Members serving as Task Force physicians and structural engineers are examples of personnel that are affected. H.R. 3377 addresses this vulnerability.

## 3. Reemployment Rights

Many members assigned to the 28 FEMA US&R Task Forces are employed by or formally associated with Sponsoring or Participating government agencies that participate in the National US&R Response System. Other members (“Affiliated Personnel”) such as Task Force Physicians, Structural Engineers, Canine Handlers, and Heavy Riggers are often civilians and are at risk of losing their employment while deployed. H.R. 3377 addresses the safe guards necessary to protect the jobs of these personnel deployed to disasters in the service of the federal government.

- This Resolution would provide for a return to the formal decision-making process and organizational structure that existed when the US&R Advisory Committee was seated and functioning, and would provide a “voice” for the 28 Sponsoring Agency Chiefs / Heads. Since the Advisory Committee was disbanded, the National US&R System has been functioning for many years without the formal input of the Sponsoring Agency Chiefs.

- This Resolution recommends a funding amount that is more realistic in relation to the actual costs of maintaining this national emergency response capability.

### ➤ **How does your City use the resources and training from the US&R Task Force when not deployed? Can you give examples of incidents where these were used?**

Answer: The City of Philadelphia Fire Department Special Operations Command does not use the US&R equipment cache for response to incidents within the city. The Pennsylvania Task Force 1 (PA-TF 1) equipment cache is housed in Harrisburg, PA (approximately 2 hours away) and is maintained in a ready state exclusively for

Federal deployment. Certain tools from the PA-TF 1 US&R equipment cache are used periodically for training exercises by Philadelphia.

Members of the Philadelphia Fire Department that area also assigned to PA-TF 1 have received training in the following functional FEMA US&R courses: Structural Collapse Technician, Technical Search Specialist, Logistics Specialist, Planning Team, and Heavy Equipment & Rigging Specialist. Other members have received training in the following FEMA US&R courses that deal with command and control: Task Force Leader and Incident Support Team.

This training has allowed the Philadelphia Fire Department to develop standardized operating procedures and a uniform approach to building collapse rescue operations. This training has proven to be invaluable in technical rescue incidents in the city. A significant example of the benefit of this training occurred in April of 1997 at a fire in a three story boarding home of brick and wood-joist construction with five civilian fatalities. During secondary search operations, the building collapsed, burying seven firefighters. The ensuing successful rescue operations of all seven trapped firefighters were complex and time-sensitive. The extensive training, the common operating procedures, and the practical skills learned from the FEMA US&R System literally made the difference between life and death.

119

**Mark Kramer**

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**and Federal Emergency Management Agency Urban Search & Rescue Program**

**California Task Force 5**

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**Irvine, California 92619**

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**Testimony before the United States House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**[Regarding]**

**The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search & Rescue Program in Haiti:  
How to Apply Lessons Learned at Home**

**Mark W. Kramer  
Operations Chief, Orange County Fire Authority, Orange County, California  
Past Program Manager and Past Federal Emergency Management Agency Urban Search  
& Rescue Program Western Regional Task Force Leaders Representative**

**February 3rd, 2010**

Chairwoman Norton, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management; Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search and Rescue Program in Haiti: How to Apply Lessons Learned at Home.

I am the Operations Chief for the Orange County Fire Authority, one of California's largest all-risk fire service agencies as well as the Sponsoring Agency of The Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Urban Search And Rescue (US&R) Response Programs' California Task Force 5.

As a professional firefighter for the past 31 years, I have been involved in the Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) program since its inception in the early 1990's. I have worked at the local, State and National levels to increase the strength, operational capabilities and effectiveness of the many facets of Urban Search and Rescue. I am here today to speak on behalf of Federal and California US&R Task Force Five, the nine task forces in the Western Region and by request of the entire US&R system. As a sponsoring agency the Orange County Fire Authority is proud to be associated with the other twenty-seven teams that comprise the National Urban Search and Rescue Response Program.

As one of the original US&R teams, we have seen this program evolve and transform from responding to natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes to an “all hazards” mitigation response; as evidenced by diverse, all risk incidents such as:

- The terrorist bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City
- The Columbia Space Shuttle recovery
- The terrorist events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 (Pentagon and World Trade Center)
- National Significant Security Events (NSSE) such as political party conventions, Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Presidential Inaugurations
- Planning for WMD/CBRNE and unplanned for satellite reentry

Our National Urban Search and Rescue Response Program has been able to adapt primarily due to its 28 groups of first responder professionals from across our great nation, who work together seamlessly to address the needs of the nation. They do so with the intent to mitigate the impact and consequences of the event.

Last month California Task Force Five was one of the US&R Task Forces activated but not deployed to Haiti. Although disheartening for my Task Force, we understood the magnitude of the mission and the need to be ready to ship out or to stand down as required.

Tremendous operational readiness benefits come from each opportunity to practice and prepare for response. In this occurrence the rapid recall of Task Force Five and assembly of our response equipment at March AFB in a short time frame, as was mirrored across the United States by other Task Forces and allowed for valuable practice and lessons learned.

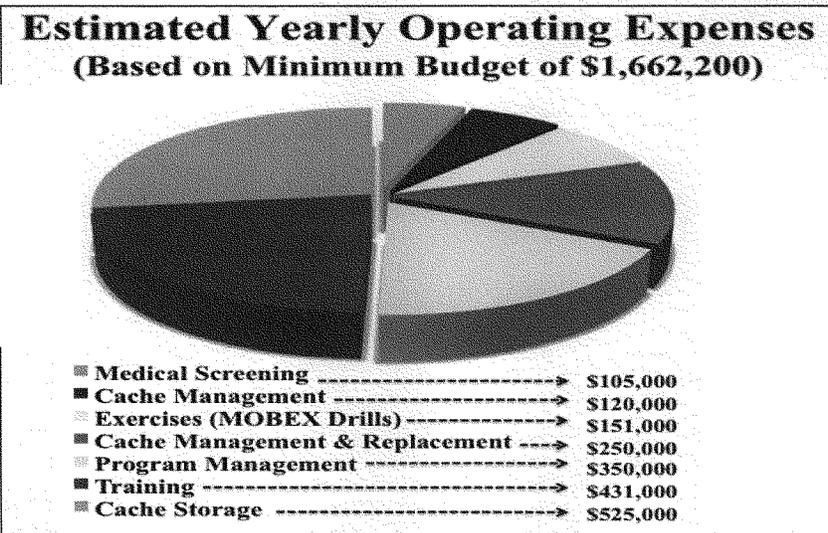
This activation although unique, did not occur by accident. It was the result and evolution of preparation, training, and dedication of personnel along with support from the Federal, State and local government. I strongly believe that without this support the Urban Search and Rescue Program could not exist as does today. However, we are facing fundamental challenges which need to be addressed if we are to continue to be the nation’s Federal first responders.

In these difficult financial times we are asking you to consider:

- What is the cost to the sponsoring agencies local taxpayers in support of this Federal program? And,
- What is the impact to civilian professional personnel that make up these Task Forces?

### Program Costs

On January 31, 2006 at the US&R Task Force Leaders / National US&R Conference, the FEMA US&R Program Office provided an overview of their "Report to the Congress on the Status of the Urban Search and Rescue Program". This Report to Congress was originally scheduled to be submitted to Congress on February 10, 2006. Although the report has yet to be made public, it did provide a conservative estimation of the cost to manage and maintain a Federal US&R Task Force. This briefing of the report divided the annual and recurring costs into the following elements that are consistent with all 28 Task Forces:



Based on the figures above, the DHS/FEMA US&R Program Office estimated the annual and recurring cost for each task force to be \$1,662,200 in 2006 dollars. Although the sponsoring agencies believe that this amount is below the actual costs – (for example, important elements such as funding for eventual replacement vehicles is missing as well as worker compensation costs) – the US&R Program Office did an exceptional job in determining an "average" cost.

The sponsoring agency's contributions to this national program have continued to exceed the cooperative agreement funds provided by DHS/FEMA. Task Force program managers evaluated each of their sponsoring agencies' contributions and found the national average to be \$863,695 in 2006. When these averages were taken, the cooperative agreement funding was at an all-time high. Since this survey was conducted, the cooperative agreements have increased to approximately one million dollars in 2009. However, if Federal funding is reduced, sponsoring agencies will need to make up the difference or the readiness of the teams will suffer.

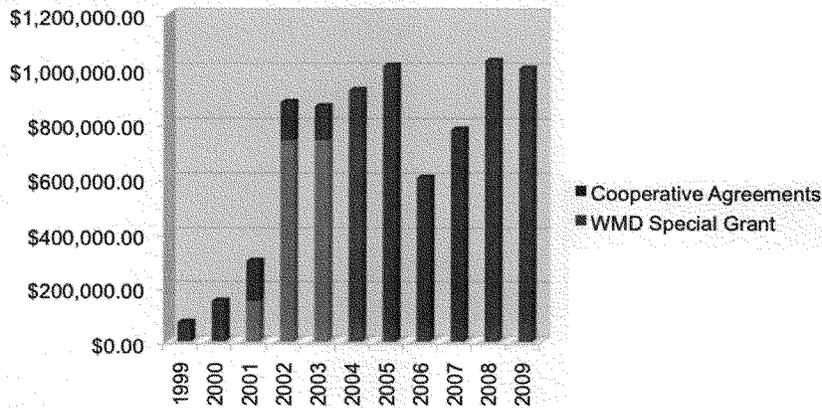
*Funding*

The US&R program relies on a partnership between the Federal, State and local governments. Throughout program history, funding for US&R has been consistently inconsistent. These inconsistencies are reflected in the table below.

In the early years, funding received by each Task Force was minimal. This funding was used to cover the purchase of cache equipment. However, the Federal Government relied on sponsoring agencies to offset the majority of program personnel and administrative costs.

After September 11, 2001, the program funding increased significantly to purchase vehicles, provide yearly medical screening, increase training to meet the mandated Weapons of Mass Destruction response capability, and increase full-time staffing to manage the Task Forces at the sponsoring agency level.

**Cooperative Agreement / Grant History by Fiscal Year**



In 2001 six Task Forces received \$149,600 to begin preparing for WMD capability. In 2002, five Task Forces received \$740,600 to become WMD capable. The balance of the Task Forces received the same amount in 2003.

Based on the "Report to Congress", presented by the US&R Program Office, the average cost to maintain a national US&R Task Force was **\$1,662,200.00** in 2006. In contrast, the actual project funding for 2006 was \$592,000 per Task Force; leaving a balance of approximately \$1,070,200

for the sponsoring agencies and local tax dollars to subsidize a nationwide program. Therefore, if this national program is to continue, funding from the Federal government must be increased to reduce the burden on local governments and the sponsoring agencies.

*Agency Specific Costs*

The costs of the Federal US&R Program incurred by sponsoring agencies vary regionally; however, the response requirements are the same for every Task Force. Cooperative Agreement funds only cover a portion of the true requirements of a Federal Task Force.

Today I would like to share with you the direct and indirect costs the Orange County Fire Authority is burdened with to support the US&R program. Direct cost to the Sponsoring and Participating Agencies include much of the overtime needed to comply with the FEMA training requirements. During the 2008/2009 cooperative agreement, the Task Force budgeted \$96,000 for training. Within the US&R system there has been and continues to be a critical need for canine search teams. Understanding the critical need and the requirement for each Task Force to maintain 12 canine search teams, the Orange County Fire Authority selected four firefighters to participate in this program at a cost of approximately \$152,000 above the \$96,000 allotted for Task Force Training. This \$152,000 was covered within the Fire Authority's overtime budget.

Acknowledging that the administration and management of the Task Force cannot be fully funded out of the cooperative agreement, the Fire Authority has dedicated fifty percent of a finance manager's time to administer the agreement and fifty percent of one fire station's workload to the manage the US&R Task Force equipment cache. Combined the cost of the finance manager and the fire station personnel is approximately one million dollars.

In addition, with the current funding California Task Force Five has been unable to secure a dedicated warehouse to meet the recommended 30,000 sq. ft for each Task Force (est. \$219,000, yearly in Orange County). Therefore, my Task Force uses 5 different Fire Stations to store the Federal cache and vehicles. I cannot place a cost on this, but several of the Fire Authority's surge capacity and reserve apparatus are stored outside to make room for the federal cache.

**Cost to Personnel**

The tangible cost or exposure to Task Force personnel fall into three categories:

1. Workers Compensation
2. Protection of Professional Licenses
3. Reemployment Rights

*Worker's Compensation*

Worker's Compensation protection varies between States. If the task force member's state worker compensation protection is greater than the Federal Government's, the sponsoring or participating agency is required to make up the difference to protect their employees. This not

only becomes additional financial burden to the local governments but impacts the individual task force members.

*Protection of Professional Licenses*

Several members essential to the mission of the Task Force are required to have professional licenses. Although these licenses have been recognized by state and local governments requesting Task Force assistance, these individuals are not protected from Tort Liability while performing in accordance with the Task Force mission. Two examples are Task Force physicians trained in emergency medicine and structural engineers whose technical expertise is invaluable for the safe extrication of victims.

Under the current system, each is risking their livelihood with every response. During the response to the World Trade Center a CA-TF-5 structural engineer responded with the incident management team. He was one of the first structural engineers on scene with the technical expertise to deal with structure collapse of this magnitude. Afterwards he expressed his concerns that this type of incident was so far outside of the box, causing him to wonder if he be covered if anyone were to seek legal action against him.

*Reemployment Rights*

The last issue I would like to address is the reemployments rights of the civilian Task Force members. While many of the members are associated with government agencies some individuals such as Task Force Physicians, Structural Engineers, Canine Handlers, and Heavy Riggers are often civilians and are at risk of losing their employment while deployed. As we were forming our task force and asking these technical experts to participate, the thought of losing their livelihood while deployed wasn't even a consideration. As the program manager during the Hurricane Katrina deployment I was shocked when a CA-TF-5 heavy rigger who deployed to Louisiana returned home to find he had been fired. We need to provide the safe guards necessary to protect this valuable responders.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the local government participants represented by the Sponsoring Agency's who commit to the DHS/FEMA National US&R Response Program urgently request that the Federal Government codify this important National emergency response program; and in so doing provide necessary protections and adequate recurring funding by sponsoring and passing HR 3377. In twenty-two days I will be retiring after thirty-one years as a professional firefighter. It has been my honor to serve the public and the nation. Although I will not be involved at this level after my retirement date, it is important to me, on a selfish level, that the members of this great system are provided the protections they desire, as my son Kyle is a member of Nevada Task Force One.

**Written Testimony before the United States House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency  
Management  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**[Regarding]**

**The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search & Rescue Program in  
Haiti:  
How to Apply Lessons Learned at Home**

**Mark W. Kramer**

**Operations Chief (ret), Orange County Fire Authority, Orange County, California  
Past Program Manager and Past Federal Emergency Management Agency Urban  
Search & Rescue Program Western Regional Task Force Leaders Representative –  
Representing Western Regional FEMA Task Forces and Sponsoring Agency Chiefs.**

The following is in response to Chairwoman Norton's question regarding my written and verbal testimony.

Chairwoman Norton's Question:

*You discussed the gap between the cost of maintaining an Urban Search & Rescue Team and annual FEMA grant? Can you explain the annual operating costs for a US & R team? Particularly the cost for cache management and cache storage? How does Orange County cover costs not provided for by FEMA?*

The annual operating expense for all Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Task Forces are dictated by the FEMA US&R Program Office through the Grant Guidance document that addresses the elements of the Readiness Cooperative Agreements (RCA) or through the issuance of US&R Program Directives. The costs related to a deployment are covered through a Response Cooperative Agreement and are not normally considered part of the annual operating expenses.

The requirements for Task Force Coordination; Administrative Support; Training Coordination; Instruction and Support; and Logistics Management and Accountability are provided to each Task Force yearly as part of the Grant Guidance for the RCA. This is the principle document that drives the annual costs of operating a US&R Task Force. Although some elements within the Grant Guidance document change based on new concepts such as Weapons of

Mass Destruction (WMD) preparedness, for the most part they have remain the same through each of the Cooperative Agreements. These elements are:

- Administrative and Task Force Program Management
- Training
- Equipment
- Storage and Maintenance

Although the Grant Guidance document details the requirements of the readiness cooperative agreements, it does not specify and only suggests the amounts for each of the categories within the agreement. Therefore, if a sponsoring agency is able to meet a requirement within their organization without expending funds those funds may be moved elsewhere to meet the needs of the Task Force.

Another factor that may affect the operating cost of the Task Force is the issuance of Program Directives. These directives come from the FEMA US&R Program Office and can address any issue within the US&R program. These directives could be as simple as identifying a victim marking system to requiring annual operational readiness evaluations; the latter having cost impacts. These directives allow the FEMA Program Office to provide guidance to all twenty-eight Task Forces throughout the year and these directives transcend the calendar constraints of the Grant Guidance. Funding to meet the requirement of a directive may be borne by the existing Cooperative Agreement or could be borne by the Sponsoring Agency.

#### **Administration**

After 9-11, the FEMA US&R Program's funding increased greatly from approximately \$80,000 annually to just under a million dollars. With this influx of funding the FEMA US&R Program Office required additional requirements of the Task Forces to insure the readiness of the program. The Program Office identified key Task Force positions to manage the readiness of the Task Force and asked each Task Force to identify an individual for each of the following positions:

- Program Manager
- Cache Manager
- Excess Property Manager
- Grants Manager
- Reimbursement Manager
- Non-Department Manager
- Medical Manager
- Training Manager

The expectation to provide adequate staffing to meet the management and administrative needs of the Task Force is still found in the Grant Guidance document:

*Provide sufficient staff for management and administration of the US&R Task Force day-to-day activities. This staff shall be responsible for program management, grants management, financial management, administrative support, training coordination and instruction, logistics management and property accountability. These management responsibilities include, but are not limited to, Task Force salaries and expenses coordination; record-keeping; inventory and maintenance of the US&R Equipment Caches; communicating with Task Force members and parties who support Task Force activities; and similar management and administrative tasks.*

**2010 Grant Guidance Document**

While some Task Forces might be able to fill most of the positions with the Readiness Cooperative Agreement funds others, particularly those on the west coast, can not fiscally fulfill all positions and therefore fill only the most essential positions. For CA TF5 and its Sponsoring Agency, the Orange County Fire Authority, the only positions of the eight listed above that are funded out of the Cooperative Agreement are the Program Manager and the Cache Manager positions. The allocated amount to fund these two positions within the Readiness Cooperative Agreement is \$337,957 approximately one third of the entire grant. CA TF5 also utilizes part-time or extra-help personnel to assist the Cache Manager in maintaining the readiness of the equipment at an additional cost of \$64,355. The responsibilities of other positions are assigned to other personnel within the sponsoring agency and are not reimbursed by the Cooperative Agreement.

Within the Orange County Fire Authority personnel from the finance section are responsible for grants management in conjunction with the Program Manager. The Fire Authority's Medical Director, Dr. Miller, is responsible for Task Force medical issues. The Fire Authority's purchasing section is responsible to comply with all the governmental purchasing requirements and restrictions within the Grants Guidance Document

The most significant impact/cost of personnel to the Orange County Fire Authority is the assignment of personnel from OCFA Fire Station 54 to the US&R program. While this station is responsible for emergency responses within its' geographical area their main focus within the Fire Authority is to support the FEMA US&R Program. The nine individuals assigned to this station, three per day working a 24hour shift, spend over fifty percent of their energy supporting CA TF5. The responsibility for tracking non-department personnel, excess property and training are some of the assigned responsibilities of the individuals assigned to this station. This station is supported by the community through property taxes within the geographical area.

There are many administrative costs that are not reimbursed by the cooperative agreement but borne by the Sponsoring Agency or the Participating Agencies. These costs range from insurance for the transportation assets to fuel for daily operation of the vehicles to insure readiness. As mentioned earlier within this document although the Grant Guidance Document details the requirements of the readiness cooperative agreements, it does not specify and only suggests the amounts for each of the categories within the agreement. Given this latitude Sponsoring Agencies have reallocated funds to meet the obligations of the RCA. As one example, the majority of the costs of medical screening required by a FEMA Program Directive and within the Statement of Work are borne by the member's home agency if the member is employed by a fire department. Since fire department members of CA TF5 are provided medical screenings within the course of their employment the added costs for the more in-depth FEMA required screening are absorbed by the sponsoring or participating agencies. Although this is the situation for CA TF5 fire department personnel, this is not necessarily the case for other Task Forces, as most do not require physicals after employment. The medical screenings for approximately 24 civilian personnel are covered by the cooperative agreement.

### **Training**

One of the major incentives for a sponsoring or participating agency to be involved in the US&R program is the ability and opportunity to receive the training developed through the cooperation between the FEMA US&R program office and the twenty-eight Task Forces. It was for this reason that many of the sponsoring and participating agencies have been willing to absorb some of the costs not covered by the RCA. Where possible, CA TF5 provides training to personnel while on their normally scheduled shift to eliminate the overtime or backfill costs. While this does reduce the cost of training it does impact, however, not severely, the service levels to the communities we served.

California Task Force 5 budgeted \$244,598 for training within 2009 RCA. Within this amount, \$60,000 was budgeted for travel to ten FEMA held meetings and ten individuals to attend five FEMA sponsored training courses, and \$30,000 for other FEMA authorized travel for specialized training. As the majority of the training provided for Task Force personnel is conducted locally the balance of \$154,598 is used for local training. Although these budgeted amounts may seem adequate at first glimpse it does not cover the costs of training. As an example, within the \$154,598; \$96,000 was to cover the overtime and backfill this amount could not come close to covering the actual costs. As stated in my previous testimony the Orange County Fire Authority absorbed over \$150,000 in overtime and backfill for just four members attending canine training.

To illustrate a training cost, the Readiness Cooperative Agreement (RCA) requires that each Task Force conduct at least one mobilization or deployment exercise each performance period. To mobilize the seventy member team and

the ten support personnel to comply with the RCA requires several members, a minimum of twenty, from the sponsoring agency to complete the necessary tasks to deploy. The overtime and backfill cost to plan, administer and attend an eight hour mobilization/deployment exercise for 110 personnel is approximately \$70,000. This amount would not include any expendables used during any training conducted during this exercise; only personnel cost. Where the RCA does not cover the personnel costs associated with training the sponsoring or participating agencies absorb overtime and backfill.

### **Equipment**

The equipment cache for each Task Force is set forth within FEMA US&R Program Office's Program Directives. The directive relating to the equipment cache provides a very specific amount, type and manufacture of equipment within the cache. This specificity allows Task Forces working together to utilize each others equipment or expendables to meet the mission.

A complete Task Force cache cost approximately \$3,000,000. When the program began in the early 1990's each Task Force would use a portion of its RCA to purchase equipment. However, as the grants could not come close to purchasing an equipment cache each Task Force would amass requisitions for needed equipment and when deployed the equipment could be purchased through the Response Cooperative Agreements. Because the deployments were normally short in duration only a portion of the equipment could be purchased. For years the response status of the program's Task Forces was directly related to if a Task Force had been deployed. Prior to 9/11 only about half of the Task Forces had ever been deployed. With deploying all but two of the FEMA Task Forces and changes in the funding the practice of purchasing new equipment through the Response Cooperative Agreement was eliminated. CA TF5 was one of the two Task Forces not deployed; we elected to give our position in the rotation to a Task Force (CA TF4) who had never been deployed so they could amass their equipment cache.

After 9/11 and the majority of Task Forces being deployed and unavailable it was realized that the Nation was at risk with only two Task Forces able to respond to a subsequent event. As each Task Force could have three deep in each position a decision was made at the FEMA US&R Program Office to authorize a second cache to each Task Force thereby doubling the Nation's US&R capability. With the addition of the second cache the time needed to maintain the Task Force's caches has doubled. The total cost for the two equipment caches and the vehicles and trailers is approximately \$8,000,000.

As CA TF5 does not have the expense of cache storage, which will be addressed in the next section, the Task Force has been able to purchase the majority of the second cache. While having two caches benefits the national system it does little

for the sponsoring or participating agencies on a daily basis, as the Readiness Cooperative Agreements strictly prohibit its use:

*Equipment and prime mover vehicles purchased with Federal funds or provided by DHS/FEMA shall be for the use of the US&R Program and **shall not be used for normal day-to-day operations of the Sponsoring or Participating Agency**. However, this requirement does not preclude the Sponsoring Agency from using this equipment or vehicles on a local, regional or State disaster response or under other exceptional circumstance.*

Although the statement above seems somewhat harsh we understand that the primary mission of the Task Force is for national response and must be in a state of readiness at all times and using the equipment for local responses would reduce and impact the readiness of the Task Force.

#### **Cache Storage and Maintenance**

##### *Cache Storage*

Every year each Task Force is required to complete a self-evaluation of their readiness and approximately every four years a FEMA evaluation team physically inspects each Task Force to ensure compliance. Although CA TF5 by the score of the self-evaluations and physical inspection has rated as one of the highest, the one point were we receive minimal points is Cache Storage. Currently the cache is stored in several of the Orange County Fire Authority's fire stations. From a security point of view not having the entire cache in one location is probably wise; however, from a maintenance and inventory standpoint it makes the job of the cache manager more difficult.

The Task Force is located in Orange County where property values are very high the cost of leasing a commercial building to store the cache has been cost prohibitive. An additional factor that makes leasing a building for any Task Force is the Grant Guidance document does not allow Task Force to enter into lease agreements for longer than the term of the grant. While the housing market was growing and before the collapse of the market the Orange County Fire Authority had been planning to use two and a half acres valued at several million dollars and construct a warehouse for the storage of the Task Force's cache then lease the building back to CA TF5 for a minimal cost just to release the space needed in the fire stations for fire department apparatus.

##### *Cache Maintenance*

A US&R equipment cache is made up of items that require frequent maintenance, testing and certification; in addition to the yearly inventory required by the RCA. The cache is comprised of gasoline and diesel powered tools,

battery powered tools and gas and vapor monitors that require frequent calibration and certification. As stated earlier, one of the most important positions to be filled is that of the cache manager. It is this person responsible to ensure that all equipment is properly maintained. CA TF5 employs non-firefighter extra-help/part-time employees to assist in the maintaining the several thousand elements of each cache in an effort to reduce the cost of managing the equipment.

There are other additional costs with ensuring that the equipment is in a constant state of readiness. Service contracts for cellular phones and computer air-cards, satellite phone service and for maintenance and calibration services that cannot be preformed by Task Force personnel. Another aspect that consumes a portion of the grant funds is the replacement of equipment and expendables that have reached an expiration date; and this does not account for changes in technology.

### **Conclusion**

As stated in the past and current Grant Guidance documents: *There is no required cost sharing, matching, or cost participation for the FY 2010 US&R Cooperative Agreements.* Although the intent of the program was not for the sponsoring or participating agencies to subsidize this federal program this has been clearly the case. The cost to support a US&R Task Force is over one and half million dollars with the only one million being provided through the RCA. How each Task Force makes up the difference varies. As for CA TF5 the additional costs are made up from either through the overtime and backfill budget or by allocating the workload to personnel not compensated through the RCA.

The US&R program benefits the Nation by being ready in a moments notice to respond to natural and man-made disasters. The US&R program also benefits the State and Local response by providing the training and experience through responding to national disasters that can and is used at the local lever. While the fire service was selected for this program because of the training and day-to-day experience we have in dealing with emergencies it has been the FEMA US&R program that has increased the knowledge and training of not only the twenty-eight Task Forces but the Nation's fire service.

#### **Attachments:**

2010 Grant Guidance Document

CA TF8's Annual Cost Breakdown provide by Chief Gerry Brewster

Estimated Unreimbursed Sponsoring Agency and/or Participating Agency Costs in support of the National US&R System	
Unreimbursed costs for supporting a National Urban Search & Rescue Task Force. The Sponsoring and Participating Agencies absorb these costs without comment. All costs are based on \$50.00 per hour. With the current economic conditions that local governments are facing many of these costs can no longer be covered locally	
40 8 hr days labor for annual readiness by TF members on duty	\$28,800.00
Warehouse space for TF rolling stock not stored at TF facilities (5,000 sq ft) \$4,200/month	\$50,400.00
Readiness warehouse space (20000 sq ft) \$1.25 per square foot \$25,000 per month	\$300,000.00
Cost for 5 Fire Department Companies (Engine, Truck and Rescue) to participate in 6 drills per quarter, 4 hours per drill @\$450/hour/company	\$60,000.00
Classroom space and training facility space for Structure Collapse Technician class 5 days@\$1500/day	\$7,500.00
Classroom space and training facility space for Confined Space Operational class 5 days @\$1500/day	\$7,500.00
Classroom space and training facility space for Trench Rescue Operational class 3 days @\$1500/day	\$4,500.00
Classroom space for WMD considerations for Medical Specialists and Physician Specialists. 2 days@\$200/day	\$400.00
Classroom space and training facility space for WMD considerations for HAZMAT Specialists. 2 days @\$1000/day	\$2,000.00
Classroom space and training facility space for GPS Awareness. 2 days @\$1000/day	\$2,000.00
Classroom space and training facility space for WMD Enhanced Operations class. 2 days @\$500/day	\$1,000.00
Auditorium for Mandatory Annual Membership Meeting. 2 days @\$500/day	\$1,000.00
Classroom space and training facility space for 6 quarterly drills per quarter. 24 4-hour sessions @750/session	\$18,000.00
Grant Manager 1/2 day per week for 26 weeks @\$200 per 1/2 day.	\$5,200.00
Unreimbursed time for Chief Financial Officer	\$26,000.00
Unreimbursed time for fiscal/accounting support	\$13,152.00
Fitness for Duty screening for 150 Firefighters @\$900/per member	\$135,000.00
SCBA and O2 filling and support	\$5,000.00
Telephone notifications system	\$10,000.00
Usage/maintenance fees for US&R fleet	\$110,000.00
Task force personnel uncompensated for required training off duty i.e. overtime	\$456,000.00
CPR certification and recertification. 100@\$75/person	\$7,500.00
EMT certification, continuing education and recertification. 150@\$1,500	\$10,000.00
Paramedic certification, continuing education and recertification. 15@\$5,000	\$75,000.00
Hazardous Materials Specialist certification and continuing education. 30@\$2,500	\$75,000.00
First Responder Operations for Hazardous Materials certification and continuing education. 180@\$500	\$90,000.00
<b>Total Unreimbursed expenses</b>	<b>\$1,500,952.00</b>