



Homeland Security

Privacy Office DHS-D3

March 29, 2006

Melanie Sloan, Executive Director
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington
11 Dupont Circle, N.W.
2nd Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036

Re: **DHS/OS/PO 05-776/Sloan request**

Dear Ms. Sloan:

This letter is the first partial response to your September 7, 2005, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). You requested any and all records relating to the DHS's response to Hurricane Katrina, for the specified time frames of January 1, 2001, to the present for Items 1 through 6, and August 26, 2005, to the present for Items 7 through 19. Please note that DHS was created January 24, 2003; therefore, no DHS records exist prior to that date. Records created prior to the establishment of DHS by any of the component DHS agencies would be maintained by those components and FOIA requests for those documents should be sent directly to the FOIA Officer for that DHS component. The list of DHS FOIA contacts can be accessed via www.DHS.gov. Specifically, you requested documents that reveal:

1. What portion of the \$3.1 billion appropriated to DHS in fiscal year 2005 for emergency preparedness to "support the Nation's ability to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to and recover from natural and manmade disasters" was spent to prepare for potential hurricanes on the Gulf Coast of the U.S. and on potential flooding in New Orleans;
2. the amount of money diverted from emergency preparedness for and response to natural disasters to emergency preparedness for and response to acts of terrorism and the rationale behind any such diversions;
3. studies, assessments, presentations, or scenarios of the potential devastation a powerful hurricane could wreck on the Gulf Coast, including, but not limited to the eight-day tabletop exercise conducted in July 2004, and intended to prepare DHS for a catastrophic hurricane in New Orleans;
4. plans created regarding the Federal Government's response to such scenarios;
5. the potential breaching of the levees that would lead to Lake Pontchartrain flooding New Orleans and the response to such breaches;
6. communications from anyone employed by or associated with the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the problems with and weakness of the levees surrounding New Orleans, the potential breaching of the levees and the consequences of such breaches, as well as proposed repairs or other construction to the levees;
7. requests for emergency assistance from local government officials in Mississippi and Louisiana in response to Hurricane Katrina, including but not limited to Secretary Chertoff's communications with such officials;
8. requests from local government officials in Mississippi and Louisiana for assistance in preparing for Hurricane Katrina, including, but not limited to communications requesting assistance in evacuating residents of Mississippi and Louisiana from the areas in the hurricane's path;
9. communications between the White House and DHS regarding the preparations for and response to the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina;
10. communications between DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff and FEMA Director Michael Brown regarding the preparation for and the response to the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina;
11. communications regarding the conditions in the New Orleans Convention Center;
12. communications regarding the need for transportation to evacuate victims of the hurricane from the city of New Orleans as well as communications regarding the need for food and water for victims stranded in New Orleans;

13. communications from Congressman Charles W. Boustany, Jr. (R-LA) requesting federal assistance and any response to Cong. Boustany;
14. communications regarding offers by corporations and foreign governments to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina and DHS's response to such offers;
15. communications between DHS and cabinet officials, either before or after the hurricane, regarding the potential and actual devastation wrought by the hurricane and the Federal Government's response to the devastation;
16. communications regarding the plan to evacuate victims of the hurricane to Charleston, South Carolina and the misrouting of the plane carrying the evacuees to Charleston, West Virginia;
17. communications regarding the deployment of the National Guard to New Orleans to assist in evacuation and relief efforts;
18. communications regarding the inclusion of Operation Blessing, a Virginia based charity run by evangelist and Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson, on DHS's list of charities to which people were asked to donate money to assist hurricane relief efforts; and
19. communications regarding the limitations placed on journalists and photographers, including, but not limited to, efforts to prevent photographers from taking pictures of the corpses of hurricane victims in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Our November 29, 2005 letter summarized our processing of your request to-date. As detailed in our September 14, 2005 acknowledgement letter, our response to your request only pertains to DHS Headquarters' documents. It is our understanding that you have already directed a similar request to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA will respond for the Department as it relates to Item 10. In addition, we referred your request to the FOIA Officer for the United States Coast Guard (USCG), Donald Taylor, for processing and direct response to you. You may contact USCG via telephone at (202) 267-6929 or in writing at 2100 Second Street, SW, Washington, DC 20593.

Our September 14, 2005 letter also explained that if you desire a search of other DHS offices or components, you should send an additional request to the component(s) of interest, or request that our office broaden the scope of our search by providing sufficient details to target the specific documents of interest. A listing of DHS disclosure contacts may be found at www.DHS.gov. In processing the remaining portion of your request, this office sought a search of the files within the Office of State and Local Coordination and the Office of Domestic Preparedness, with the understanding that any responsive documents located by those offices would be reviewed and released through this office. However, due to an administrative reorganization, those offices now fall under the Office of the Under Secretary for Preparedness, which is authorized to respond directly to FOIA requests for records under its cognizance. Therefore, as advised on November 29, 2005, our office referred portions (Items 1 through 4, and Items 7 & 8) of your request to the FOIA Officer for the Undersecretary for Preparedness, Sandy Ford Page, for processing and direct response to you. You may contact Ms. Page via email at Sandy.FordPage@dhs.gov or at (202) 282-9077.

A search was directed to all DHS employees that might have records deemed responsive to any request for Katrina-related records. That search produced approximately 1,472 pages responsive to your request. Out of those 1,472 pages, we have enclosed 13 pages as detailed below.

As it relates to Item 9 of your request, our search produced approximately 1,418 responsive pages. We are referring all 1,418 pages to the Undersecretary for Preparedness for processing and direct response to you. Should you wish to do so, you may contact Sandy Ford Page at the above e-mail address or phone number.

As it relates to Item 14 of your request, our search produced 23 responsive pages. We are referring 19 of those pages to the Undersecretary for Preparedness for processing and direct response to you. Enclosed are the remaining 4 pages with excisions made pursuant to Exemptions 2, 5 and 6 of the FOIA.

As it relates to Item 15 of your request, our search produced 4 responsive pages. That 4-page document is enclosed in its entirety.

As it relates to Item 17 of your request, our search produced 27 responsive pages. We are referring 4 of those pages to the Undersecretary for Preparedness (contact information is above), and 7 pages to the Federal

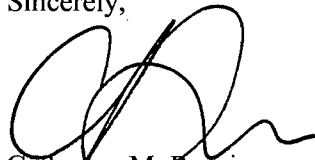
Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for processing and direct response to you. You may contact the FOIA Officer for Emergency Preparedness and Response (EP&R)/FEMA, Jeff Oval, via telephone at (202) 646-3051 or in writing at 500 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20472. In addition, we have enclosed 5 pages with excisions made pursuant to Exemptions 2, 5 and 6 of the FOIA, while 3 pages are being withheld in their entirety pursuant to Exemption 5. Furthermore, a 1-page September 3, 2005 letter from Governor Blanco to President Bush regarding the need for a Federal Coordinating Officer is available online. Should you wish to obtain a copy of that letter, you may do so at www.gov.state.la.us. Likewise, a 4-page August 30, 2005 DHS Press Release, and a 3-page August 31, 2005 DHS Press Release, both entitled "United States Government Response to the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina" are available online. Should you wish to obtain copies of those press releases, you may do so at www.DHS.gov.

Enclosed are 13 pages with certain information withheld pursuant to Exemptions 2, 5 and 6 of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. §§ 552 (b)(2), (b)(5) and (b)(6). Exemption 2 (low) exempts from disclosure records that are related to internal matters of a relatively trivial nature, such as internal administrative tracking. Exemption 5 protects the integrity of the deliberative or policy-making processes within the agency by exempting from mandatory disclosure opinion, conclusions, and recommendations included within inter-agency or intra-agency memoranda or letters. Exemption 6 exempts from disclosure records the release of which would cause a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

You have a right to appeal withholding determinations within 60 days of the date of this letter. Should you wish to do so, you must send your appeal to the General Counsel, Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC 20528, following the procedures outlined in Subpart a, Section 5.9, of the DHS regulations. Your envelope and letter should be marked "FOIA Appeal." Copies of the FOIA and regulations are available at www.DHS.gov.

Our office continues to process your request. Please refer to **DHS/OS/PO 05-776/Sloan request** in any future correspondence. We appreciate your patience as we proceed on your request.

Sincerely,



Catherine M. Papoi

Deputy Director, Departmental Disclosure & FOIA

Enclosures: 13 pages

Item 14

From: Arcos, Cresencio [/O=DHS ORG/OU=FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=CRESENCIO.ARCOS]

Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2005 3:43 PM

To: Jackson, Michael (DepSec); Wood, John (COS)

Cc: Stephan, Bob; Isles, Adam; Fujimura, Paul; Gong, Ted; Marmaud, Karen; Weber, Scott; 'Long, Casey'; Mayer, Matt; 'Cannatti, Ashley'; 'Thompson, Carol'; '(b6)

Subject: Singapore Airlift in Katrina Disaster Relief Ops

I just received a call from the Singapore Embassy in Washington from Samuel Tan, Acting DCM. He said that Ambassador Chen wants Secretary Chertoff to know that Singapore has deployed to Ft Polk Louisiana three Chinook helicopters which were in training with the Texas Air National Guard. They will be part of the Texas Air National Guard contingency being deployed to help out in the Katrina disaster relief operations. The heli-crew will consist of 38 Singaporean airmen and 12 Texas Air Guard airmen. The deployment is initially for two weeks. I profusely thanked Mr. Tan on behalf of DHS and the Administration and expressed the American people's gratitude. Cris

From: Arcos, Cresencio [/O=DHS ORG/OU=FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=CRESENCIO.ARCOS]

Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2005 10:25 AM

To: Jackson, Michael (DepSec); Wood, John (COS)

Cc: Isles, Adam; Marmaud, Karen; Mayer, Matt; 'Cannatti, Ashley'; Weber, Scott; 'Thompson, Carol';

(b6)

Subject: Israel's offer of Assistance

Israeli Ambassador Daniel Ayalon called this morning to express his condolences on the Katrina disaster. He also offered Israel's assistance in search and rescue operations. I suggested that his embassy staff contact FEMA International Affairs Office and discuss the feasibility of such aid. He asked that I pass on this message to Secretary Chertoff and DepSec Jackson. Cris

Jason:

Thanks for the message. I had an excellent conversation with Jim Loy this evening and have tasked two folks from DHS to investigate. Appreciate very much the tip, and I appreciate very much all the terrific help that your boss has been with this crisis. Understand clearly the importance of the communications issues.

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

From: Matthews, Jason (Landrieu) (b6)
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2005 8:29 PM
To: mjackson
Subject: FW: communications interop

Dear Mr. Secretary, below is the e-mail traffic I referenced earlier. Admiral Loy is (b6) and interested in speaking with you. His home number is (b6)

Many Thanks,

Jason

Jason D. Matthews
Deputy Chief of Staff
Senator Mary L. Landrieu
(202) 224-5824
(202) 224-9735 fax
<http://landrieu.senate.gov>

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

From: Sabiston, Norma Jane (Landrieu)
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2005 8:21 PM
To: Matthews, Jason (Landrieu)
Subject: FW: communications interop

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

From: Declan Ganley (b6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2005 7:41 PM
To: Sabiston, Norma Jane (Landrieu)
Subject: RE: communications interop

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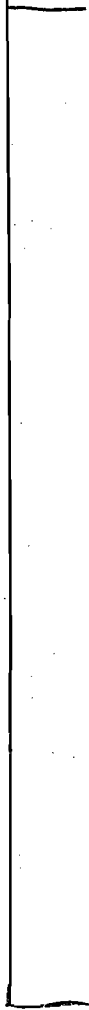
b5 & b6

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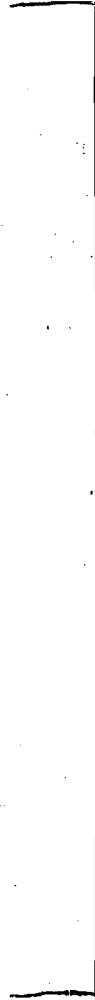
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b2

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b5



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Declan.

(b2)

Item 15

