

Statement of Daniel Craig
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Department of Homeland Security
Before the
Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations
House Committee on Government Reform
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Good morning Chairman Shays, Representative Maloney, distinguished members of the Committee. My name is Daniel Craig and I serve as the Regional Director of FEMA Region I. On behalf of Secretary Ridge and Under Secretary Brown, it is a pleasure and privilege to be with you today and discuss FEMA's role in emergency preparedness and response.

As you know, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) transitioned into the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in March of this year. That transition has strengthened FEMA's core mission of preparing for and responding to natural disasters and acts of terrorism. It has also provided a closer working relationship with other Federal agencies as well as state and local governments.

On February 28, 2003, the President signed Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) on the Management of Domestic Incidents to establish a single, comprehensive national incident management system and integrate separate Federal response plans, including the current Federal Response Plan, into a single all-discipline, all-hazards national response plan. The Secretary of Homeland Security is responsible for developing and implementing both initiatives. FEMA is actively participating in the task force created by Secretary Ridge to develop the National Response Plan (NRP) and a framework for National Incident Management System (NIMS). As directed in the Department of Homeland Security Act of 2002, FEMA will play a key role in the management and maintenance of NIMS once it is developed.

To ensure better coordination and management of disaster relief, FEMA currently utilizes the Federal Response Plan. The FRP establishes FEMA as the lead coordinating agency for all Federal disaster relief. A total of 27 separate Federal departments and agencies have signed on as partners and under the plan work with FEMA to deliver disaster services in Presidentially-declared emergencies and disasters that overwhelm State and local resources. One of the FRP's unique features is that it divides Federal disaster relief efforts into distinct functional areas called Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). These 12 functions are based on the types of direct Federal assistance that a State is most likely to need in the case of a disaster. Each ESF is headed by a primary agency designated on the basis of its authorities, resources, and capabilities in that functional area. These functions include transportation (DOT), communications (NCS), public works and engineering (DOD/COE), fire fighting (USDA), information and planning (FEMA), mass

care (ARC), resource support (GSA), health and medical services (HHS), urban search and rescue (FEMA), hazardous materials (EPA), food (USDA), and energy (DOE).

FEMA operates an Emergency Support Team at our Headquarters in Washington, D.C., to coordinate and manage the initial response to major disasters, deploy assets, locate needed relief supplies, and provide the full range of disaster assistance 24 hours a day in 12-hour shifts until field teams can take over the response.

At the same time we begin disaster response operations in Washington, our regional staff activate Regional Operations Centers, which serve as the contact point for state governments seeking disaster assistance. Staff in our regional offices are key to our disaster operations and they are among the first on the scene of a disaster. At the request of the state, the region will deploy a response liaison officer to act as an intermediary to address any issues and act as a representative to the FEMA regional office. When an act of terrorism or a natural disaster strikes and overwhelms state and local capabilities, the Governor of the affected state can petition the President through FEMA for disaster assistance. A Senior FEMA official known as the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) is appointed to head up disaster response and recovery operations for FEMA and coordinate delivery of assistance with individuals and with State and local governments (State Coordinating Officer-SCO).

In a Presidentially-declared disaster, individual citizens may be eligible for assistance to help them recover from damage to residences, businesses, or personal property. This assistance could include temporary housing, unemployment assistance, food coupons, family grants, low interest loans, legal aid, and crisis counseling. Assistance may also be available to state and local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations for repair of infrastructure and public facilities. This assistance can include emergency protective measures, clearance of debris, and the repair, restoration, and replacement of damaged facilities, equipment and contents.

FEMA operates ten regional offices. Boston is the location for FEMA Region 1, which oversees operations for all of New England. Our regional staff get to know the state and local representatives who are responsible for all phases of emergency management, and this partnership, coordination, and friendship pays off when disaster strikes because our staff are working with people they already know and trust, and who know and trust them. Last month FEMA hosted Operation Yankee, a six-state exercise focusing on a bio-terrorism event and the landfall of a hurricane in Connecticut. The three-day exercise brought together Federal agencies, state emergency managers and tribal representatives for exercise planning and coordination at all government levels. Nearly 300 people participated and, in the future, the exercise will include the states of New York and New Jersey, as well as emergency managers from Canada.

Partnerships among the Federal departments and agencies, among the various levels of government, among emergency managers and first responders, and among public, private, and volunteer entities are key to successful disaster response operations and maintenance of the nation's comprehensive emergency management system. Partnerships

also help us prepare for all potential hazards. Our preparedness mission is to provide the technical expertise, guidance, and assistance necessary to establish, maintain, improve, and ensure the success of this comprehensive emergency preparedness system. We accomplish this mission through activities and programs in the broad functions of emergency planning, training, exercising, partnership, and outreach to all levels of government and to all people. For example, FEMA's Emergency Management Institute and U.S. Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland play a vital role in training state and local emergency managers and firefighters, while building strong cooperative relationships among all levels of government. In addition, this year Congress appropriated \$745 million to FEMA for grants to fire departments. These grants are helping communities purchase firefighting equipment, and support fire-related training, safety, and public education programs. As Secretary Ridge seeks to ensure that these grants are well-coordinated with the Department's other first responder programs, the Department is proposing to place these grants in the Office of Domestic Preparedness.

And now as a major component of the Department of Homeland Security, FEMA's mission will only become more important in the years to come. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.