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MEETING MINUTES FOR THE  
LOUISIANA MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
HELD AT  
CAPITOL PARK WELCOME CENTER  
702 NORTH RIVER ROAD  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA  
ON THE 13TH DAY OF MAY, 2015  
COMMENCING AT 10:10 A.M.

REPORTED BY: ELICIA H. WOODWORTH, CCR



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ADVISORY COUNCIL

- 1    **Appearances:**
- 2    **Clarence Beebe**
- 3    **MG. Glenn Curtis**
- 4    **William Hill**
- 5    **David LaCerte**
- 6    **Bennett Landreneau**
- 7    **Deborah Randolph**
- 8    **Mike Reese**
- 9    **Leonardo (Ben) Russo, Jr.**
- 10   **Don Pierson**
- 11   **Edwin Stanton**
- 12   **Murray Viser**
- 13   **Mayor Lorenz (Lo) Walker**
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1                   SECRETARY LACERTE:

2                   The time on deck is 10:08. I'd like to  
3 call the meeting to order. If you don't mind all  
4 standing and joining me in the pledge.

5                   (Whereupon the Pledge of Allegiance was  
6 recited.)

7                   MR. LACERTE:

8                   Please be seated.

9                   Mr. Pierson, if you don't mind calling  
10 the roll.

11                  MR. PIERSON:

12                  All right. Correct me if there's some  
13 titles that I don't have properly reflected.

14                  Mayor Beebe.

15                  MAYOR BEEBE:

16                  Here.

17                  MR. PIERSON:

18                  Jack Bergman.

19                  (No response.)

20                  MR. PIERSON:

21                  General Campbell.

22                  (No response.)

23                  MAYOR BEEBE:

24                  General Campbell has been sick. Is that  
25 the Charles C. on there? He's been ill and he's out of



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1 the country, or at least he is being treated at the  
2 Cleveland Clinic, the last I heard.

3 MR. PIERSON:  
4 Thank you.  
5 General Curtis.

6 GENERAL CURTIS:  
7 Here.

8 MR. PIERSON:  
9 Bill Davis.

10 (No response.)

11 MR. PIERSON:  
12 General Elder.

13 (No response.)

14 MR. PIERSON:  
15 Jim Hill.

16 MR. HILL:  
17 Here.

18 MR. PIERSON:  
19 Jack Humphries.

20 (No response.)

21 MR. PIERSON:  
22 Brian Jakes.

23 (No response.)

24 MR. PIERSON:  
25 Steve Jordan.



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1 (No response.)  
2 MR. PIERSON:  
3 Secretary LaCerte.  
4 MR. LACERTE:  
5 Here.  
6 MR. PIERSON:  
7 General Landreneau.  
8 GENERAL LANDRENEAU:  
9 Here.  
10 MR. PIERSON:  
11 Representative Lorusso.  
12 (No response.)  
13 MR. PIERSON:  
14 Stan Mathes.  
15 (No response.)  
16 MR. PIERSON:  
17 Chance McNeely.  
18 (No response.)  
19 MR. PIERSON:  
20 Secretary Moret.  
21 (No response.)  
22 MR. PIERSON:  
23 Deborah Randolph.  
24 MS. RANDOLPH:  
25 Here.



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1 MR. PIERSON:  
2 Michael Reese.  
3 MR. REESE:  
4 Here.  
5 MR. PIERSON:  
6 Ben Russo.  
7 MR. RUSSO:  
8 Here.  
9 MR. PIERSON:  
10 Don Pierson. Here.  
11 Senator Smith.  
12 (No response.)  
13 MR. PIERSON:  
14 Edwin Stanton.  
15 MR. STANTON:  
16 Here.  
17 MR. PIERSON:  
18 David Thomson.  
19 (No response.)  
20 MR. PIERSON:  
21 Don Vinci.  
22 (No response.)  
23 MR. PIERSON:  
24 Murray Viser.  
25 MR. VISER:



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1                   Here.

2                   MR. PIERSON:

3                   Mayor Walker.

4                   MAYOR WALKER:

5                   Here.

6                   MR. PIERSON:

7                   That concludes the rollcall. I believe  
8 we have a quorum.

9                   MR. LACERTE:

10                  Thank you, Mr. Pierson.

11                  Has everyone had a chance to review the  
12 agenda today?

13                  Do we have a motion to approve the  
14 agenda?

15                  So moved. Second.

16                  Any opposed?

17                  (No response.)

18                  MR. LACERTE:

19                  Motion carries.

20                  Opening remarks here, as Don stated, I  
21 think we've had a period of transition as we've had Paul  
22 leave us in the cold dead of the night there to join our  
23 new congressman up there in Washington DC to go back to  
24 the dark side, but that does nothing but help our pilot  
25 course, you know. There's very few people in our state



1 that's as educated on our issues as Paul was. We're  
2 very happy. We've got a great, competent replacement in  
3 that with Don. So he's been with the Department of  
4 Economic Development for a while, knows the ins and  
5 outs, knows the state's politics and the political kind  
6 of issues that we face. He also knows the kind of  
7 political military spectrum as well.

8 Don, why don't you go ahead and speak a  
9 little bit about yourself in case somebody had, you  
10 know, by chance missed that.

11 MR. PIERSON:

12 Well, thank you for that kind  
13 introduction.

14 Don Pierson. I came to Baton Rouge  
15 about a little over 10 years ago. I've got seven years  
16 of service as the Assistant Secretary for the Department  
17 of Economic Development in a move that kind of freed me  
18 from a lot of the administrative responsibilities.  
19 During the governor's second term, I became the Senior  
20 Director for Business Development, so I worked in all 64  
21 parishes across the United States and internationally to  
22 recruit business and to support our communities,  
23 specific assigned responsibilities for interfacing with  
24 elected officials, for interfacing with our major  
25 corporations and just basically a problem solver.



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1 Worked with our eight regional economic development  
2 organizations, so I'm the person that can identify  
3 resources and help solve issues.

4 Upon Paul's departure, I was formally  
5 asked by the Secretary to take the role here at the  
6 Louisiana Military Advisory Council, and as a passionate  
7 mind, I'm a '76 West Point graduate where I served five  
8 years in the 82nd Airborne Division as a general  
9 officer.

10 So a little bit about my education with  
11 what's going on here. I got to serve in Bossier on the  
12 doorsteps of Barksdale Air Force Base for 17 years. And  
13 it looks like Mayor Walker and Murray Viser work closely  
14 with Barksdale Forward, so I've had a great deal of work  
15 with other outfits like Fort Polk Progress. And we'll  
16 talk a little bit more about our efforts to build  
17 support for all of the presence of the military federal  
18 operations in the City of New Orleans later this  
19 morning.

20 So thanks for the welcome on board.  
21 Appreciate it.

22 MR. LACERTE:

23 Thank you, Don.

24 So I think that we couldn't ask for a  
25 better replacement for Paul, if there is such a thing,



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1 than Don, so I want to thank him for all of his efforts  
2 over the past several months since Paul's left. I think  
3 it's a good chance to recirculate some of the core  
4 mission of this board, I think, as to advocate and  
5 organize and centrally kind of develop resources both  
6 from a monetary perspective, from a personnel  
7 perspective in order to accomplish our mission as a  
8 state in order for us to make sure our footprint and our  
9 interest in Louisiana is maintained and fostered and  
10 developed.

11 So I think we've done some strong  
12 things, and I think the Fort Polk issues out there is a  
13 prime case study of that. We've done a great job of  
14 circulating our talking points and circulating our  
15 positions and making sure all of the applicable parties  
16 are educated in that. I think we can replicate that and  
17 move forward to tackle some of the issues at Barksdale  
18 and, of course, kind of fill the gap and fill the void  
19 for the New Orleans region or Southeast Louisiana.

20 I think GNO, Inc. is going to talk a  
21 little bit about that today, about how we can help  
22 foster and maintain and grow our footprint in that  
23 region. So that being said, I think that General Curtis  
24 is first up on the stump here. I think he's got a  
25 function to go to later on this afternoon in New



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1 Orleans. We want to get him out the door quickly.

2 General Curtis.

3 GENERAL CURTIS:

4 Thank you, Secretary. I appreciate you  
5 letting me go first because I'm meeting with City of New  
6 Orleans. It's the annual meeting we have getting ready  
7 for hurricane season just to do our checks and make sure  
8 that we know what levels of support we can and will  
9 provide, which is a good thing. Kind of shake hands  
10 with some federal partners there, too, so...

11 But before I get into the main subject,  
12 there's just some updates I wanted to provide to you on  
13 the Louisiana National Guard. Our deployments, as we  
14 stand, are probably the lowest they've been since we  
15 first got in this war fight. We have one engineering  
16 company with about 150 soldiers who are employed to  
17 Kuwait out of the Monroe area, and they are going  
18 forward into Afghanistan and into Jordan trying to do  
19 engineer operations, supporting war fight in Afghanistan  
20 and just setting conditions in Jordan in case something  
21 breaks loose over there. And they will be home probably  
22 in about seven or eight months.

23 In the all hazard world, we just had our  
24 big disaster rehearsal exercise last month. We had nine  
25 fellow agencies, 10 or 12 state agencies and numerous



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1 local parish and city agencies working with us just to  
2 make sure that the focus was around hurricane season.  
3 But a lot of the things we do inside that allows us to  
4 respond to whatever, whether it's an oil spill, as Ed  
5 remembers, you know, floods, some type of terrorist  
6 attacks. A lot of our missions are the same, too. So  
7 we're ready for this hurricane season if and when it  
8 comes calling.

9 And we'll continue to work with our --  
10 we have two partners, international partners. One is  
11 Belize, the other one is Haiti. We continue to work  
12 with them really on a monthly basis. Tomorrow, for  
13 example, the ambassador of Haiti will be in New Orleans.  
14 I'll be welcoming her with a contingent from Haiti.  
15 We're going to take them through kind of our all hazards  
16 piece of business, which they are growing in. We will  
17 bring them up to Baton Rouge to GOHSEP, and Kenneth  
18 Davis and company will kind of give them their view of  
19 the land from there. We've worked with them since the  
20 earthquakes in previous emergency operations, and so we  
21 continue to do that.

22 Belize, we've been partners with them  
23 for almost 20 years now. It's a very material  
24 relationship, and we're always working everything from  
25 helping them with their defense plans down to teach them



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1 how to do personnel databases or maintain equipment, et  
2 cetera. So we continue to work with that.

3 Our Youth Challenge Program, we have  
4 three of them in the state. We graduate over 1,400 kids  
5 a year from that program. I was very concerned that  
6 their funding may start to be cut, but so far this year,  
7 at the federal level, it looks like that funding is in  
8 the National Defense Authorization Act and appears to be  
9 moved through okay. So we'll be able to keep really the  
10 same level of students. We did take a little bit of a  
11 cut on the state side in that program, but we've been  
12 able to rearrange things so that we keep it as a focus  
13 area.

14 The other thing we do in the education  
15 department is StarBase. Some of you may be familiar  
16 with that program. We bring in 5th grade students to  
17 teach them for a week on the science technology and the  
18 math, basically learn how to build a rocket and fly a  
19 flight simulator, but in that, they learn all of the  
20 math and science behind it. We just received federal  
21 funding two months ago to open our third program. So we  
22 have one in Camp Beauregard for the Alexandria/Pineville  
23 area, we have one in Jackson Barracks for the New  
24 Orleans area and we just opened one here in Baton Rouge.  
25 But they actually did what the local superintendents of



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1 about four or five parishes wanted us to do, was down  
2 I-10 in West Baton Rouge Parish was the -- Gramercy  
3 closed down and so they were willing to provide security  
4 for us, so it's more centralized to bring those kids to  
5 that location, and so it's up and running and we're  
6 starting to take kids to that program.

7 The main thing that I wanted to touch  
8 with you on today is the Budget Control Act and  
9 Sequestration that I know all of you have heard some on  
10 and some of you are very intimately involved with. So  
11 the Budget Control Act started on us this year. We took  
12 a -- Louisiana National Guard and the National Guard  
13 Zone took a 13-percent cut in our federal budget that  
14 we're living with currently. It has pretty good  
15 impacts. You know, make sure you pay your utility  
16 bills, keep armories and units open and training year  
17 open, but beyond that, training our soldiers, their  
18 two-week annual training. Now, if they need to go to  
19 school, that's what they go to, and there's really no  
20 backup money for them to go train with their units. So,  
21 I mean, it is starting to impact us. We are living  
22 through it and will live through it.

23 My larger concern is sequestration,  
24 which kicks in October this year, the fiscal year '16.  
25 What's currently working in the House takes the National



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1 Guard, Army National Guard nationally from 350,200  
2 soldiers down to 342,000 soldiers, and that starts a  
3 guide path over the next two years, three years that  
4 will take us down to 315,000. And the so what factor,  
5 so what in Louisiana is, if we go to 315 -- I already  
6 know the numbers. It's 1,030 soldiers that we will lose  
7 out of Louisiana National Guard, so we would go from an  
8 Army National Guard of about 9,600 -- and then when you  
9 combine our Air with us, we're a little over 11,000, but  
10 on the Army Guard side, we go from 9,600 down to 8,600.  
11 Inside of that is about 200 full-time positions, almost  
12 700 pieces of equipment, and all of this is equipment  
13 that we use during hurricanes and emergencies, to  
14 include, we will lose four to six helicopters that we  
15 use in search and rescue in the immediate aftermath of  
16 storm or we use to transport bodies to places that are  
17 flooded out or we can't drive them to. And in a  
18 combination of all of that, we will see our federal  
19 budget cut another 20 percent. So essentially by 1  
20 October of 2018, if we stay on the flight path we're on,  
21 our Louisiana National Guard federal budget we will cut  
22 one-third. So I'm trying to help people. And the  
23 moment of truth is now. The House is -- the NDAA will  
24 be on the floor, I think, early, like the 18th of May,  
25 but it's -- in the next couple of weeks, it will be on



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1 the floor to be voted on. The senate is starting to  
2 hear it and the Armed Services Committee, and it will be  
3 voted on towards the end of May.

4 And so, you know, I'm all about being  
5 physically responsible, but my opinion is, I know for a  
6 fact the Louisiana National Guard will cut 1,000 people  
7 in that type of budget cut. We will not be able to  
8 deliver to the people of Louisiana what they have come  
9 to expect. We will lose engineering units out of it.  
10 We will lose two of our headquarters. We will lose  
11 transportation assets. We will lose signal companies.  
12 We will lose helicopter assets, which I've already  
13 mentioned, so it is very, very concerning.

14 Now, will we still answer the bell when  
15 it rings? Absolutely, but it will certainly change the  
16 way in which we do that, and we'll have to learn how to  
17 address that.

18 As I mentioned, I'm all about being  
19 physically responsible. I take -- you know, one of our  
20 greatest risks is our national debt and deficit that we  
21 run every year, but, as equally, I'm concerned with what  
22 we're about to do, and I don't mean this to be stoic,  
23 but particularly about what we're going to do to our  
24 Army, all three components of it.

25 In my humble opinion and listening to



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1 the leadership at the senior Army level -- and some of  
2 you may have heard them, you know, if you ask us to go  
3 today, we can still go. If you ask us to go two years  
4 from year now or a year from now, we're going to go  
5 anyway, but we're not going to be able to deliver the  
6 same capabilities in a war fight or in our homeland that  
7 people have grown accustomed to. So my ask is, our  
8 congressional deligation has been very friendly. I've  
9 been burning up their phone lines with them and their  
10 staffers, however -- I tell people all of the time, one  
11 call is good, 100 is very good, 1,000 is great, you  
12 know, and anything beyond that starts giving them the  
13 ammunition that they need to hopefully try to stay this  
14 thing off. So, you know, I've written letters, called  
15 our congressmen and our senators and really boil this  
16 thing down to Louisiana and the impacts on them, but I  
17 need some help, and I won't make any bones about it.  
18 The Army at Fort Polk needs some help if we want to keep  
19 close to the military that we have today.

20 So, anyway, that's my information to  
21 you. I'm asking you to help me. Help us make our way  
22 through this thing. And, really, it boils down to  
23 what's in the best interest of the nation and will we be  
24 able to defend ourselves first. Secondly, will we be  
25 able to come to our citizens' needs if something



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1 happens, whether it's manmade or natural, whatever, will  
2 we be able to answer the bell. That's where we are.

3 I'll be glad to try to answer any  
4 questions you may have.

5 MR. SILBERT:

6 General, in the numbers that you were  
7 sharing with us, was the Air National Guard included in  
8 that?

9 GENERAL CURTIS:

10 No, sir. The Air National Guard, as we  
11 currently speak, is very, very secure. We went through  
12 a -- you know, the Army and the Army National Guard  
13 are -- let me be more specific, the Army and the adjunct  
14 general right now are at odds with each other. They  
15 don't agree with the cuts they're trying to place on us  
16 because of cost factors. We went through this about two  
17 years ago, three years ago with the Air Force, and a  
18 commission looked at it and the commission came back  
19 with the recommendation that it was the best value for  
20 the country was to put it in the reserves, the Air  
21 National Guard and the Air Force reserve. So our Air  
22 Guard is actually very secure, and it looks -- the  
23 current Chief of Staff of Air Force and Secretary are  
24 both looking at growing the Air Guard, so they're not in  
25 that mix, no, sir.



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1 MR. SILBERT:

2 Okay. Thank you.

3 MR. LACERTE:

4 Why don't you give an update on your  
5 state budget as we go through the cycle.

6 GENERAL CURTIS:

7 Our state budget, the general funds is  
8 about a 33 or \$34-million budget. This year, you know,  
9 in my opinion, they probably took about as soft a blow  
10 as we could on this and were cut on the state side  
11 1.7-million and for a lot of reasons I just explained.  
12 The governor's office and the legislature knows we need  
13 some capabilities to be able to answer the bell when it  
14 rings. So that's kind of where we stand on the state  
15 budget side.

16 MR. REESE:

17 General, would it be appropriate, I  
18 guess, maybe ask Mr. Chairman, I think that the LMAC  
19 needs to take the position of one of the legislature  
20 members of congress. I think it would be appropriate  
21 for the LMAC to either issue a resolution or something  
22 of that form that talks about, you know, details of the  
23 whereas of the impact as to the active component, the  
24 National Guard component and the Reserve component  
25 asking our Louisiana delegation, you know, to continue



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1 their efforts to address the budget sequester and its  
2 impacts on the State of Louisiana.

3 MR. LACERTE:

4 I think that's a good action item. I  
5 think that due to the short fuse, we're not going to be  
6 able to get a draft back to you-all before they start  
7 taking votes on it. I think maybe if we can take a vote  
8 to authorize LMAC to generally codify the talking points  
9 generally from the General's perspective, I think that  
10 might be an appropriate measure.

11 MAYOR BEEBE:

12 I make that motion.

13 MR. VISER:

14 Second.

15 MR. LACERTE:

16 We've got a motion to send a letter of  
17 support as discussed from the NDAA. Seconded.

18 Do we have any opposed?

19 (No response.)

20 MR. LACERTE:

21 Motion carries. So we'll go ahead and  
22 I'll work with Don on writing a draft and we'll  
23 circulate it for this discussion. Of course, as a  
24 public body, we can't vote via e-mails or telephone, so  
25 it's probably good to authorize us to disclose it, so I



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1 think that's good enough.

2 GENERAL CURTIS:

3 Are there any other questions?

4 (No response.)

5 GENERAL CURTIS:

6 Now, the last thing I have to tell you  
7 is, regardless of where we end up at, we will answer the  
8 bell. I mean, if it happens, we're going to be there.  
9 We're going to bring whatever -- we have some of the  
10 best soldiers and airman that are out there, so I don't  
11 want to leave you with the impression that we are going  
12 to back off of our responsibilities. We're going to  
13 bring as much humph as we can to wherever the governor  
14 asks or the President asks us to do, so please do not  
15 leave with that impression.

16 MR. REESE:

17 When we draft our response, could you  
18 provide us the impacts that you say, for helicopters,  
19 four out of how many?

20 GENERAL CURTIS:

21 Four out of 40.

22 MR. REESE:

23 Okay. So a ten percent cut, and that's  
24 what I'm talking about. What you just described with  
25 the airlift assets, transportation assets and common



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1 engineering, which are the three things you rely on the  
2 most in a disaster response, which is one of your  
3 primary missions.

4 GENERAL CURTIS:

5 Exactly.

6 MR. LACERTE:

7 Our equalization rate for those assets  
8 is probably a good factor, probably more so than any  
9 other state guard systems I've seen because we use our  
10 assets a lot more than Connecticut National Guard or  
11 those types.

12 GENERAL CURTIS:

13 Well, then if you look back when  
14 Landreneau was still doing this, the position I'm in  
15 now, from Katrina forward, we had 11 major, if not  
16 catastrophic, events from Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Isaac,  
17 an ice storm, oil spill, Mississippi River flood --

18 MR. LACERTE:

19 That's enough. Stop talking about --

20 GENERAL CURTIS:

21 I can almost -- but I think that's a  
22 good strategy. That's a good talking point moving  
23 forward, so if you look at this from instead of an  
24 across-the-board-cut perspective from a do you use your  
25 assets or human resources or don't you, I think that we



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1 can paint a strong picture as to we need to keep what  
2 we've got.

3 MR. RUSSO:

4 Excuse me, General?

5 GENERAL CURTIS:

6 Yes, sir.

7 MR. RUSSO:

8 When you deploy from a hurricane or  
9 something from that standpoint, in the utility business,  
10 we go in and sometimes we're called on to go to other  
11 areas and help other states and so forth. I mean, do  
12 y'all deploy similar to that? Do you go like in an ice  
13 storm or do you go to things --

14 GENERAL CURTIS:

15 Yes, sir.

16 MR. RUSSO:

17 So that does cut down, not just from a  
18 Louisiana standpoint, but it does cut down on the  
19 overall national response, not just from the regional of  
20 that end.

21 GENERAL CURTIS:

22 It absolutely does -- from the General  
23 Landreneau -- maybe more, but we have what we call an  
24 Emergency Management Systems Compact, and so we sit down  
25 every year with the states and say, you know, if we have



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1 a hurricane, if Louisiana National Guard is tapped out,  
2 here are the capabilities we need: We need engineers;  
3 we need aviation assets; we need -- whatever it is, and  
4 the other states say, "Yes, we'll be there." "We'll be  
5 there." "We'll sign up and come to you," and we do the  
6 same thing for them.

7 MAYOR BEEBE:

8 And it is a commitment from the  
9 governors of those other states, but your point is well  
10 taken because, you know, as a governor of another state  
11 says, "Yes, I agree. I'll send all of these assets to  
12 Louisiana if you have a catastrophic event," which they  
13 really do, all 50 states and territories, but the  
14 problem is, you know, their governor might start  
15 thinking, "Well, you know, if I'm committing these  
16 assets, what happens if something occurs here in my  
17 state and if I'm down to bare bones on the  
18 capabilities?"

19 GENERAL CURTIS:

20 That's right. And an example of one of  
21 the instances that's going to be impacted by this, for  
22 years, since Katrina, Arkansas has had a unit come to  
23 Louisiana at the general level, advanced general level,  
24 that they have an infantry brigade up there, the 39th  
25 Brigade Combat Team. They will send them in pre-storm



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1 to North Louisiana to relieve us of some of our  
2 responsibilities in North Louisiana so we can move  
3 further south, our assets further south. That brigade  
4 is one of the two that are on the chopping block to go  
5 away over this period of time. Matter of fact, in '17,  
6 they will dissolve. So, again, it's going to change the  
7 way we do things.

8 MR. REESE:

9 General, somebody e-mailed me this, as a  
10 side note, getting back to Fort Polk, there's a piece of  
11 legislation in this section, looks like 15 RS 1374, that  
12 would prohibit us from burning or detonation of waste  
13 explosives, I guess House Bill 590. I'm assuming that's  
14 something directed at the Camp Minden area. We have  
15 some concerns that it may exempt Fort Polk out of that  
16 because of some impact or some training. Are you  
17 familiar with that?

18 GENERAL CURTIS:

19 A little bit. I know that  
20 Representative Reynolds from the Minden area is the one  
21 that sponsored that, and it is aimed primarily at the  
22 Minden issue right now, which we are dangerously close  
23 to closing out and being able to contract. But on a  
24 larger scale, he is trying to stop that entirely in the  
25 State of Louisiana. Some other states have done that.



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1 And it will impact Fort Polk and some of the things that  
2 I hear that it does over at that installation.

3 MR. LACERTE:

4 I think there might be some federal  
5 issues there. I'd have to look at them later.

6 MR. REESE:

7 Yes. I just got that e-mail this  
8 morning from somebody at Fort Polk. Do we think this is  
9 going to impact us heavily? What do you know about it?

10 GENERAL CURTIS:

11 I know we're trying to talk to him about  
12 maybe pulling it or modifying it specifically around  
13 Fort Polk, but I'm not sure what it is.

14 MR. LACERTE:

15 I'll deal with that.

16 MR. REESE:

17 Yes. I'll follow up on that later.

18 MR. LACERTE:

19 Any questions for the General?

20 (No response.)

21 MR. LACERTE:

22 Thank you, sir. Appreciate your time as  
23 usual.

24 GENERAL CURTIS:

25 Absolutely. Good seeing everybody, and



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1 I apologize for having to run off, but y'all take care  
2 and have a good day.

3 MR. LACERTE:

4 I want to thank General Curtis again.

5 We'll open up the floor to Mike Reese to  
6 talk about our advocacy at Fort Polk. I know we  
7 recently had a listening session out there a few months  
8 ago. I don't think we've met since then, so I want you  
9 to go ahead and speak a little bit about that, and we'll  
10 roll into your advocacy week up on the Hill.

11 MR. REESE:

12 So to give everybody an update, we're  
13 currently threatened by a potential cut of about 6,500  
14 troops at Fort Polk, which is about 70 percent of the  
15 military base, and it is part of the progressions of  
16 bringing the military down to 490,000 active, then  
17 coming down to 450 and as low as 420. So one of the  
18 steps in the process was a listening session we held on  
19 March the 3rd, and I believe, without exception, just  
20 about everybody in the room was involved in some way,  
21 shape, form or fashion and we very much appreciate that.  
22 Couple thousand people involved in simultaneous sessions  
23 in Leesville, Alexandria and Lake Charles. Thirty-five  
24 thousand written comments. More than any other base of  
25 the community and in the country out of the 30. So Fort



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1 Polk is at the top, again, in terms of its engagement  
2 with these decisionmakers. I just want to say thank you  
3 to everybody that got involved in that because we seem  
4 to be -- as General Poche told us several weeks ago in  
5 Washington, who is the corps' management general,  
6 putting these courses of action together, we continue to  
7 be most informed, the most vocal, the most active-based  
8 community that he's engaged with out of the entire  
9 country, more persistent. So that's what we're battling  
10 today is the loss of the 310 Brigade.

11 You know, in reality, we have all  
12 soldiers. We've lost 152nd Infantry Brigade. We've  
13 lost 1st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. None of those  
14 were announced by the Army, so it's a death by 1,000  
15 cuts. The Army is talking about this brigade combat  
16 team, but in the meantime, they have stripped other  
17 units out of Fort Polk and out of the corps' structure,  
18 so we have had our cuts at Fort Polk. I think we are  
19 currently leading the nation in terms of protection  
20 measures around Army corps structure.

21 I'm very passionate about that, as I  
22 think General Curtis is as well. We were comparing  
23 notes before we walked in. We had people from  
24 legislation up. We had ten other representatives  
25 cosponsoring in the NDAA to say to hold Army corps



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1 structure at 490,000 for an additional year if provided  
2 the funding because they flushed us overseas to an  
3 contingency account, an OCO account, about \$35-million,  
4 which is basically the republican way of providing  
5 additional funding to our defense above sequester levels  
6 and allowing them to spend that in other base budget  
7 areas. So we get about 1.8-million of that and we were  
8 paid to hold corps structure at 490, but in the  
9 meantime, they would have gotten the results of this  
10 Army corps structure and commission, which is something  
11 the Guard has advocated for and it's doing its work now.  
12 But we're going to make additional cuts, additional  
13 announcements of where those cuts are going to be before  
14 we have the results from the Army corps structure  
15 commission that congress made last year. Furthermore,  
16 it requires that the Army to report back to congress in  
17 90 days the impacts on our ability to meet our strategic  
18 defense guidance after those cuts so that the congress  
19 has a better understanding of the different risks  
20 they're accepting by continuing to allow these cuts to  
21 occur and what is it that we can do at 475 that we can  
22 do and can't do at Fort Polk and what is it that we can  
23 and cannot do in terms of getting our defense strategic  
24 guidance, because the problem is -- and this is where we  
25 get passionate about it, is that we are building our



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1 Army's corps structure based on an arbitrary budget  
2 sequester number. We're not building the Army's corps  
3 structure to meet our defense strategic guidance and our  
4 defense guidance, so we cannot do that. We have to  
5 create that disconnect. I'm alarmed that we only found  
6 about 15 supporters in the House Armed Services Committee  
7 and the chairman itself was against this measure, and I  
8 think with the general idea that the Army could get  
9 smaller, but be better trained and then, thereby, be  
10 more lethal at a lower cost. And I just simply don't  
11 believe that's not a paradigm that exists. So when you  
12 talk about dwell time and other factors play into that,  
13 we're entering very dangerous territories if we go below  
14 490.

15 On the other side, we believe the  
16 Congress is kind of acquiescing around a budget fix, but  
17 I think this is -- you know, I don't think we're there  
18 yet, so if we make the cuts now, we're not likely to go  
19 back, so we've got to kind of stall that out. So we're  
20 going to make that another shot in the House floor. Our  
21 work is trying to build delegations in other base  
22 communities, which has been a very difficult task, as  
23 you would be surprised at how other base communities are  
24 a little -- naive is not a good word. They're not  
25 tracking the tool of the NDAA as a good tool to try to



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1 prevent these further sequestered cuts. So we have  
2 language in the House and language in the Senate we're  
3 going to try to get on the floor. We have the entire  
4 Louisiana delegation fighting for this. WHIPP is  
5 involved as well.

6 So we're continuing -- we were out there  
7 a couple weeks ago with good defense decisionmakers, and  
8 I'm glad that Don was with us. He can attest, I think,  
9 as to the significant nature of the meetings we had with  
10 the guys that are doing the corps structure stations.  
11 General Cloutier and his staff and Senator Vitter,  
12 Senator Cassidy, Congressman Fleming joined us in those  
13 meetings, which also brings a great deal of prominence  
14 to the message that we're giving, and when you ask for  
15 things, they're more compelled to give us the  
16 information we're seeking.

17 So through that process, we received the  
18 military value analysis data. We wanted to scrub that  
19 data again. It gets used for -- we found several  
20 errors, so we're fixing those and we're getting those  
21 resubmitted in time to be considered.

22 You know, we have a number of other  
23 things underway in the way of education. Chief of Staff  
24 of the Army was at Fort Polk three weeks ago. The  
25 Chief's parting comments were basically, you know, "Four



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1 years ago I came into this position very critical of the  
2 town of Leesville and the surrounding community for its  
3 support of Fort Polk, especially in terms of education,  
4 but I'm here to tell you today that we should never  
5 apologize to a soldier for being stationed at Fort Polk.  
6 It ought to be a station of choice, both on the base and  
7 off, and this community has done each and every thing I  
8 asked them to do four years ago. I came without a doubt  
9 that they met my standards when other bases needed" --  
10 so he recognizes the significant amount of work that  
11 went into building two schools and the fact that we  
12 completely bonded the school system out. In order to do  
13 that, we offered 50,000 acres out of our tax base in the  
14 Army's only successful land purchase program, and he  
15 truly recognizes the disconnect between gutting out 70  
16 percent of our soldiers while we finish closing on the  
17 last pieces of property on this property acquisition  
18 program. I think that's going quite well. I think the  
19 message has gotten to the command at the top and I think  
20 that those other strategic considerations that we will  
21 absolutely apply to this. So I feel better today about  
22 the decision that will happen this summer than I have  
23 previously in terms of keeping the 310.

24 So, you know, we have a lot of outreach  
25 to continue to do in FORCECOM. FORCECOM has a vote in



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1 this. Obviously General Milley, we're working with him.  
2 You know, Fort Polk has done a terrific job of educating  
3 all of those military stakeholders of the potential  
4 impacts for the removal of that 310, and I won't get  
5 into all of those details, as many of you have heard  
6 many times over. But we can articulate very clearly the  
7 standing military value Fort Polk gives the Army. I  
8 think when it comes to those measures, we are on top. I  
9 think that we are doing the best job to lead the country  
10 in terms of protecting Army corps structure, and the key  
11 players in the Army, from the Secretary of the Army to  
12 Chief of Staff in the Army, recognize that we are  
13 continuing to be the delegation in the state that  
14 continues to sponsor legislation to address their major  
15 concerns, which is further force cuts. So we'll get a  
16 decision at the end of June that will say what their  
17 next steps are.

18 So just two other items that I might  
19 mention, one is that -- and I don't think we have to  
20 really hash it out today, but I went last week to  
21 Raleigh to what is called a Ready Conference, so it's an  
22 OSD-level activity that -- it's the pot of money they  
23 use to do mitigation, endangered species mitigation,  
24 encroachment mitigation. The Army has a program called  
25 ACUB that comes from those dollars. It's a big pot of



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1 money. They're interested in Louisiana using it better,  
2 and I think ultimately we're going to need to create a  
3 working group out of LMAC because it's one of those  
4 solutions where if we can get all of the military  
5 installations in Louisiana and all of the DOD activities  
6 together to talk about what our deviation needs are,  
7 whether those are coastal in nature, whether it's the  
8 Louisiana Pine Snake or the Woodpecker or just property  
9 encroachment, planning dollars for prohibiting  
10 encroachment on our training lands. If we organize  
11 ourselves as a state, then there's the defense funding  
12 that can come with that to help us, so I think that's an  
13 area that LMAC can get involved.

14 And then lastly, I would just say that  
15 we are working on funding similar to what we had last  
16 year to support our base communities. We were really  
17 happy the legislature recognized the important work of  
18 Barksdale Forward and Fort Polk Progress and the need to  
19 set up a similar structure in the New Orleans area for  
20 those assets. Going to need some help with that this  
21 year if we're going to get it at the same level. We've  
22 got a placeholder in, but it's not the same amount that  
23 we had last year. I'll talk to you later offline about  
24 some of the members of our legislature you may want to  
25 talk to to remind them how we use those funds



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1 responsibly.

2 MR. LACERTE:

3 And while you're on the topic, why don't  
4 you explain what you've used to leverage those moneys  
5 for.

6 MR. REESE:

7 So in Fort Polk, for instance, one of  
8 our biggest things this year is our education action  
9 plan. So the Chief of Staff of the Army said we're  
10 going to engage the quality of education for our  
11 military installations and use these as a stay factor  
12 moving forward, and so we built this education action  
13 plan. It took a lot of people, a lot of committees, a  
14 lot of time. It involved everybody from state  
15 government down to the local school systems, outside  
16 education experts that we brought in, and we've been  
17 able to fund certain things in that particular plan  
18 already with some of those dollars that immediately  
19 raised the bar on some of those chief measures.

20 Advanced placement courses, we've almost  
21 doubled the number of advanced placement courses, and we  
22 have improved the scores of students who have received  
23 career training out of those AP classes through summer  
24 camps, through better educating the teachers that are  
25 putting training camps together to the teachers that are



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1 doing the teaching of those classes so we have more  
2 students actually receiving college credits. We've done  
3 some STEM camps and many, many other actions in that.  
4 So that's something unique for us.

5 In addition, we were able to maintain  
6 our outside experts in Washington that have been key and  
7 critical in this process, and as we get closer to a base  
8 realignment closure process, it's going to be very key  
9 for us to use those professional firms that have the  
10 expertise necessary to advocate for us to help us build  
11 our case, because in our case, the firm we're using is  
12 the firm Barksdale Forward uses and we've got to serve a  
13 BRAC commission and really get this understanding to  
14 take our game to a completely different level in terms  
15 of having to interface with the Army. So those are some  
16 of the ways that we're pursuing.

17 And the last, I guess, is really  
18 marketing. It's giving us the money to really market  
19 the accomplishments of Fort Polk and making it a station  
20 of choice. We're going to continue to suffer with  
21 distention within the Army, so it's important that we  
22 get all of these accomplishments out there and really  
23 make sure that our stakeholders nationwide are receiving  
24 them and really try to change to perception. So that's  
25 one of the ways that we --



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1 MR. LACERTE:

2 And I think that's a good point is that  
3 whenever we're advocating for the money, I think that's  
4 a good policy to be laser focused on we want to improve  
5 X, Y, Z metrics areas as a good yardstick for  
6 performance. I think anytime we can add more  
7 specificities as to what we need to move forward and  
8 make our case, we'll know better how we can advocate for  
9 our own little area neck of the woods.

10 And you mentioned the BRAC round. I  
11 know there was a recent decision on that, and why don't  
12 you talk a little bit how that impacts Fort Polk moving  
13 forward.

14 MR. REESE:

15 Well, the recent BRAC decision was that  
16 they've not approved it again, but the base realignment  
17 closure for Fort Polk give us the opportunity for  
18 growth. We used to live in fear of BRAC, but I think  
19 we've turned the corner because of the hard work of our  
20 team, which really includes everybody at this table and  
21 many others. You know, I think that we're in a better  
22 position than we've ever been in in the past to actually  
23 be an advocate for a base realignment closer, and  
24 predominantly, because of our access to training space  
25 to train. The Army's not going to give that up. The



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1 Army has 154 installations it's currently maintaining.  
2 We have 18 percent excess infrastructure capacity out of  
3 those 154 installations, and I think if BRAC will  
4 ultimately be authorized, I think the Air Force is  
5 sitting on 30-some-odd percent of infrastructure, and  
6 what it does, the bases that they're going to close are  
7 not going to be their big maneuver bases like Fort Polk,  
8 Louisiana, the fourth largest maneuver space in the Army  
9 inventory. They're going to be closing  
10 encroachment-armed bases that have limited encroachment  
11 capabilities, have great reuse capabilities, which is  
12 another thing that Fort Polk does not have. So I'm an  
13 advocate for it. I think we're cards all in. I think  
14 when the BRAC round occurs, I think we'll still grow  
15 Fort Polk.

16 MR. LACERTE:

17 What's the timeline on the next decision  
18 on BRAC round?

19 MR. REESE:

20 That would be the next NDAA, so that  
21 would be FY-17 or FY-18 possibly.

22 MR. SILBERT:

23 '17 is better because they try not to do  
24 it in an election year.

25 MR. LACERTE:



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1                   They try not to do anything in election  
2 year.

3                   MR. SILBERT:

4                   And then as we all know, too, the  
5 pressure is building every year. They keep pushing  
6 back, pushing back, but even the association defense  
7 team is -- the pressure is building, and a lot of  
8 communities are beginning to complain saying this death  
9 of 1,000 cuts thing going on, it's impacting BRAC'ing  
10 bases right now. You might as well make a political  
11 process and make decisions at a macro level instead --

12                   MR. REESE:

13                   The death by 1,000 cuts, that requires  
14 getting backup support, and the BRAC process comes with  
15 an awesome economic testament that at least comes in and  
16 provides millions of dollars into affected communities  
17 to help reduce plans to help mitigate the impacts on the  
18 communities, and this process has none of that.

19                   MR. LACERTE:

20                   No.

21                   MR. REESE:

22                   And General McGuire, he's been a good  
23 advocate from the day he stepped foot onto Fort Polk.  
24 He came in about a month early before he took command  
25 and attended our listening session, and after seeing



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1 thousands of people show up and see the combined support  
2 we have throughout Louisiana, he really has started day  
3 one as just this great team player. He wants to be part  
4 of this process. He really sees a bright future for  
5 Fort Polk, and he was really only a couple of weeks into  
6 command when Chief of Staff came down and all reports  
7 I've gotten are that he was just an absolute steadfast  
8 advocate for the need to keep this 310 brigade at Fort  
9 Polk because of all the deficiencies that we've listed.

10 MR. LACERTE:

11 Great. Do we have any questions for  
12 Mike?

13 (No response.)

14 MR. LACERTE:

15 Thank you again, Mike. I know you do a  
16 lot up there for Fort Polk, and we've definitely got a  
17 lot of kinetic energy. The support that we've given you  
18 in resources, and I thank you because you create a lot  
19 of strong venture for an increase in those funds and I  
20 want to thank you for that.

21 Murray, would you like to go in a little  
22 bit about Barksdale and what you're doing there?

23 MR. VISER:

24 Yes, sir. I'm going to just kind of  
25 dovetail on a little bit of BRAC.



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1 Phil is absolutely correct. I would  
2 much rather have a BRAC so I know where my enemy is than  
3 have my enemy creeping me all of the time, and that's  
4 exactly what's happening with the way the Military  
5 Department of Defense is being forced to operate. And  
6 Mike's absolutely correct. The Air Force has 25 to 30  
7 percent excess capacity, and that's just a horrible way  
8 to run a railroad or a military or anything else. So,  
9 eventually, I can't help but to believe we are going to  
10 have a BRAC whether it's '17, '18. '17 timeframe is  
11 probably as good as any, so at least we know where we  
12 stand.

13 We feel pretty comfortable at Barksdale  
14 for a number of different reasons, which I'll go over,  
15 about our position with BRAC. We feel we stand to be a  
16 net gainer as well as Fort Polk. We use our consulting  
17 folks up in DC extensively, and that's what we use our  
18 portion of the state money for. We use them extensively  
19 to help practice process, to help us understand how best  
20 to position Barksdale Air Force Base to be a net gainer  
21 rather than a net loser. We are more focused on --  
22 we're not terribly concerned that we are going to have a  
23 catastrophic failure at this stage of the game, but we  
24 believe that the secondary issue, the territory issues  
25 are going to be what's going to decide whether a base



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1 stays open or not or loses assets or not.

2 Schools; as Mike said, encroachment;  
3 affordable housing, and that's not -- affordable housing  
4 has a bad turn, but housing that is affordable for our  
5 military, I'll put it that way. Jobs for spouses, and  
6 just general quality of life. Those are all things that  
7 we look at. We work very closely with Bossier City as  
8 far as supporting lack of encroachment around Barksdale,  
9 so we try our best to stay on top of any issue that is  
10 concerned to the Wing Commander, the Air Force Commander  
11 or the Major Command Commander, so we try to keep them  
12 apprised of what we're doing and why we're doing what  
13 we're doing.

14 The number one priority right now for  
15 Bossier City, Bossier Parish and Barksdale Air Force  
16 Base is the new gate. The extension -- or actually the  
17 termination of Interstate 220 in the Barksdale Air Force  
18 Base and the construction of a new east gate. We  
19 finally got the Memorandum of Understanding signed by  
20 the Department of Transportation Development. We've  
21 been working on that since -- actually Bossier City and  
22 Bossier Parish have been working on that since 2008, I  
23 believe it is -- 2008, 2009. So we're at least getting  
24 past the environmental impact statement. I mean,  
25 believe it or not, it's just been the craziest thing



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1 I've ever seen. But, anyway, we're moving forward.  
2 That is the wing commander's number one priority; it's  
3 the community's number one priority as far as protection  
4 issues, as well as quality of life. So we are really  
5 excited about that.

6 MR. LACERTE:

7 That's going to take MILCON to get it  
8 off the ground?

9 MR. VISER:

10 That's going to take a combination of  
11 MILCON, federal highway funding and state funding and  
12 some DOD money. There's a pot of money that can be used  
13 for upkeep of roads out at the missile fields and the  
14 like, so we're going to try to tap into that as well.

15 MR. LACERTE:

16 Which one of these hurtles do you think  
17 would be the strongest?

18 MR. VISER:

19 Trying to bring them all together at one  
20 time I think is what's going to be the strongest, the  
21 strongest change. Now, the base is ready to go; the Air  
22 Force is ready to go. They need something that they can  
23 hang their hat on because we don't want to have a road  
24 or bridge to nowhere and we sure don't want to have a  
25 gate sitting out there with no access to it.



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1 Four-Star General coming in the Air  
2 Force Global Strike Command probably in the August  
3 timeframe. It's a general that's been identified. His  
4 name is Robin Rand coming out of the Air Education and  
5 Training Command in San Antonio. We were very concerned  
6 in the beginning because it was probably the worst kept  
7 secret in the Air Force that the Four-Star was going to  
8 come out of Air Education and Training Command to come  
9 into Barksdale. As I'm sure y'all know, the military is  
10 limited by statute to the number of general officers  
11 they can have, so you can't just create a new general  
12 officer. You've got to move it someplace else.  
13 Fortunately, San Antonio, Texas delegation were okay  
14 with moving that out of San Antonio and moving it up to  
15 Barksdale.

16 Other things that we're working on,  
17 we're working on a public/private partnership right now  
18 with the base library and the Bossier Parish Library.  
19 As I said, not a sexy thing, but it's a quality of life  
20 issue. The current library is in a building that was  
21 probably built in the mid-50s. It's a one-story,  
22 cinderblock-face-brick building, and it's just not  
23 terribly user friendly, so we are trying to come up with  
24 a creative way working with the Bossier Parish Library  
25 and the folks on base and the base librarian trying to



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1 not necessarily bring it into the 21st Century, but at  
2 least bring it into the late 20th Century.

3           Again, supporting Fort Polk and Green  
4 Flag East is a big issue for us. We are hoping at some  
5 point in the future to get F35s into the mix at  
6 Barksdale to replace the U10s that were lost. The  
7 interim to that is going to be F16s rather than having  
8 to bring assets in to support Green Flag East, which is  
9 effective about 50 percent of the time. The other 50  
10 percent is made up by either having B52 from Barksdale  
11 Support Green Flag East or having B1 out of Dyess Air  
12 Force Base to support Green Flag East.

13           Obviously the B52 and the B1s are not  
14 going to be terribly visible during Air Force Air  
15 Support missions doing their close-air support mission,  
16 but they're going to be high and it doesn't give the  
17 level of training to the troops that are going to deploy  
18 to actually see and hear the aircraft going over.

19           Those are some of the things that  
20 Barksdale Forward is working on. We appreciate the  
21 support of the state. We appreciate the support of  
22 support of this group. One of the other things -- and  
23 I'll close on this -- as Mike said, building support  
24 across the country. We're working with several  
25 organizations, the Long Range Strike constituency, which



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1 is a consortium of Boeing and Northrop Grumman to get  
2 the Long Range Strike communities to speak with one  
3 voice. That would be the other B52 community up in  
4 Minot, North Dakota, the B1 wings in Ellsworth, South  
5 Dakota and Abilene, Texas, and the B2 wings, Whiteman  
6 Air Force Base. So that's another way that we're  
7 working to further cause the Barksdale and it's support  
8 and defense of our great nation.

9 Mr. Chairman.

10 MR. LACERTE:

11 You mentioned previously we discussed  
12 the possibility of a weapons maintenance area at  
13 Barksdale.

14 MR. VISER:

15 Weapons storage area, yes.

16 MR. LACERTE:

17 Weapon storage area. Sorry.

18 I know Chris from the Roosevelt Group  
19 has discussed the possibility that that might have an  
20 uptake in momentum. Would you talk a little bit about  
21 that?

22 MR. VISER:

23 Yes, sir. There are nine weapons  
24 storage areas in the Air Force. At one time, Barksdale  
25 was number nine of nine. Now, Barksdale is number two,



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1 thanks to the hard work -

2 MAYOR BEEBE:

3 I don't think it's number two. It's  
4 number three.

5 MR. VISER:

6 Number three? Okay. Well, that's still  
7 better than at the bottom of the heap.

8 But we are very optimistic that we are  
9 going to see the weapons storage area be rebuilt. As of  
10 right now, it's probably about a program in 2018 or  
11 2019. It will be a three-year project, three-year  
12 provided no-cut project because of the expense. It's  
13 about a \$300-million project. It will not be the same  
14 size as the previous weapons storage area. It will, in  
15 all likelihood, be a smaller area, just as functional,  
16 but we'll just take fewer security folks, folks to  
17 protect the area. So we are very optimistic about that,  
18 and we've had some good views. That is going to be part  
19 are parcel to the Next-Generation Long-Range Strike  
20 Bomber, which the Air Force is supposed to get a  
21 contract on for development later this year, and we'll  
22 probably start building in the 2025 timeframe.

23 MR. LACERTE:

24 F16s or is it F35s? What's -- I know  
25 this is very fluid questions, but what are the



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1 timeframes on whether we get that reserve unit of F16s  
2 and how long they stay at Barksdale versus the rollout  
3 and kind of the split of the deck on F35s?

4 MR. VISER:

5 F35s are going to be a lot farther in  
6 the future. Even though they're planning on building a  
7 ton of them, 17, 1,800 of them, it's going to take some  
8 time before the units are populated. That's the reason  
9 our fallback position was F16s. We think the F16s, if  
10 they start to transition those out into the reserves  
11 from the active role, we think that's a much easier lift  
12 than the F35s at this stage in the game. The reason the  
13 F35 is important to us is we have the working  
14 relationship and working understanding of the scout  
15 codes and how they work, how they're maintained and how  
16 they're replaced. So that was our -- why we first went  
17 with the F35s. But as I say, that's part of the round  
18 of the future.

19 MR. PIERSON:

20 A lot of people underestimate the  
21 logistics of the F35 or -- the mechanics of maintaining  
22 the aircraft, but there's also the logistics  
23 infrastructure. The F35 requires essentially a skiff  
24 hanger. Very expensive, and a lot of people are  
25 beginning to realize that the secure, classified



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1 intelligence facility skips our hanger and park that bad  
2 boy into to work on it is extremely expensive, seven or  
3 \$8-billion, and so you have to build that infrastructure  
4 out there as well as support it. And that's what the  
5 marine corps reserves are having the same issues with  
6 it, too, is the parking.

7 MR. VISER:

8 And the Colonel is absolutely correct.  
9 These new aircraft that are coming down the line -- I  
10 can speak to F22 because I've seen this firsthand.  
11 There are several tech manuals that are about that big.  
12 If something breaks on the airplane, they go and find  
13 the page, but the F22, there is a box about that big and  
14 you roll it over on a cart, they open a panel, they plug  
15 it in and the airplane tells the computer everything  
16 that's done, everything that's wrong with it, gives you  
17 all of the cross references. So it greatly  
18 simplifies -- as long as the boxes talk to one another,  
19 it greatly simplifies the maintenance and upkeep on the  
20 aircraft, and those are the kind of things that we feel  
21 Barksdale needs to be a key player, that long-range  
22 strike. So, again, that's our logic in setting the F35  
23 up as a reserves Barksdale.

24 MAYOR BEEBE:

25 -- an 800 square foot area. That's not



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1 nearly big enough to put an F35 in.

2 MR. LACERTE:

3 And would you real briefly talk about  
4 the importance of getting that Four-Star on the ground?

5 MR. VISER:

6 Once General Rand is in place, Air Com  
7 Base Command has announced that not only the  
8 requirements piece, which is actually as stands right  
9 now, will stay there, but the cure piece will come out  
10 of Air Com Base Command and go into Air Force Global  
11 Strike Command. So now that Global Strike Command is  
12 not just telling you the requirements, but they will  
13 actually have the checkbook to be able to pay for the  
14 requirements. That will, in all likelihood, bring the  
15 personnel tail with it. Typically a business operating  
16 unit for something like this is around 1,500 people.  
17 Now, whether they actually bring 1,500 people in or not  
18 remains to be seen. It will bring probably 1,000 to  
19 1,500 billets, but it's unknown whether with the  
20 reduction in headquarters we'll see those people  
21 actually populate those billets. But it's a big deal.  
22 It gives much greater visibility to Barksdale Air Force  
23 Base with a Four-Star General in place. He has a much  
24 better ability to argue for funds, to have a seat at the  
25 table and say, "Okay. This is no kidding what we have



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1 to have," and, you know, it's just a much better  
2 position for Barksdale Air Force Base.

3 MAYOR BEEBE:

4 And the 337 that has been added to the  
5 Global Strike Command.

6 MR. VISER:

7 The 337 Air Base Wing at Kirkland Air  
8 Force Base is coming under the Global Strike Command  
9 umbrella, and then the two, come 1 October, two B1 wings  
10 will also come under Global Strike Command. And we  
11 won't see probably anymore people for that, but we will  
12 have control over these three different assets.

13 MR. LACERTE:

14 Great. And highlight how the  
15 disbursements from the LMAC and from LED helped  
16 Barksdale specifically.

17 MR. VISER:

18 It's allowed us to add on to our  
19 consulting folks work, give them some other projects,  
20 again, a strategic look at where we are and where we  
21 want to be, kind of a slide analysis of Barksdale  
22 basically. Very similar to what we saw a couple years  
23 ago from them. So it allows us to have a better feel  
24 for exactly what we need to do to position Barksdale.

25 Great. Anymore questions for Murray?



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1 (No response.)

2 MR. LACERTE:

3 Great. I want thank you. You know, Don  
4 has worked with you guys for a long time, couldn't ask  
5 for a better mayor up there in Bossier City. Have some  
6 great infrastructure for retirees, got some great  
7 infrastructure for our activities there. We definitely  
8 want to get better. We definitely want to hit all of  
9 those quality of life, you know, soft factors that you  
10 discussed and make sure we come as far to their side of  
11 where we should be as possible.

12 And Southeast Military Alliance, GNO, I  
13 want to thank you for coming in today. Why don't you  
14 start by giving a little bit of background who you are,  
15 who you serve and what you're here to do.

16 MR. SILBERT:

17 Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, council  
18 members.

19 My name is Gary Silbert. I'm the  
20 manager of Business Development in GNO, Inc. I am a  
21 34-year employee of Entergy. Retired about a year ago,  
22 and, you know, the CEO of GNO, Inc. invited me to come  
23 over and help out, which has been a wonderful transition  
24 into the somewhat a semi retirement, but it's taken on a  
25 new life and much busier than planned to be, but that's



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1 a good thing.

2 GNO, Inc., as Don Pierson mentioned, is an  
3 EEO. It's one of eight in the state. We represent ten  
4 parishes in Southeast Louisiana. We're primarily  
5 focused on business retention, business attraction.  
6 Very interested in good business climate in the state,  
7 so very interested in public policy as well, along the  
8 lines of what's happening to us in the legislature as we  
9 speak right now, but particularly business incentives  
10 and taxes, workforce, education, coastal restoration,  
11 things along those lines.

12 It became clear to us with our  
13 relationship with LED and before Don and Paul Sawyer  
14 that the military represents a huge portion of our  
15 economy in Southeast Louisiana. And, you know, you guys  
16 are probably familiar with the mission in Southeast  
17 Louisiana, but the economic impact in DOD and U.S.  
18 contracts alone, according to the Roosevelt study from  
19 2012, is 40 percent of the state, over 707-million  
20 military-related employment, almost 18,000, and the  
21 economic impact is about 2.9-billion. They say when it  
22 gets to be about three or four percent of our economy,  
23 it's significant, and it is for us. So we're a little  
24 late in terms of GNO, Inc. getting started. The state  
25 has been engaged all along, but now we're stepping up,



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1 and I'd like to describe some of the things that we're  
2 doing.

3 First of all, SEMA, Southeast Military  
4 Alliance, is our effort to identify community leaders in  
5 the ten-parish region to kind of just breathe life into  
6 your organization to help us identify and prioritize the  
7 direction that we're going to go in support of retaining  
8 our missions and growing opportunities. Beyond that,  
9 you know, SEMA is very interested. To make that work,  
10 we're going to need some money in terms of educating  
11 communities about these assets, so communications  
12 marketing is important. And certainly, as our  
13 colleagues at Barksdale and at Fort Polk were speaking,  
14 it's also critical to kind of have your eye on the puck  
15 in terms of consultants who really know how to engage  
16 and stay ahead and anticipate where things are going and  
17 have a voice.

18 So, yes, we're starting to stand up  
19 SEMA. They're interested there in creating more of a  
20 formal dialogue with the military to help identify  
21 what's happening with their issues. In the midst of  
22 that process, certainly one thing that jumped out at us  
23 is what's happening with the naval reserve at Belle  
24 Chasse at the naval air base there. As a matter of  
25 fact, we're able to engage. Jones Walker quickly was



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1 able to put some dollars in the allocation and the  
2 appropriations budget to attempt to fund some 12 to 24  
3 new airplanes for the naval reserve. It's very  
4 important for us. That represents up to 200 jobs and  
5 lots of contracting resources there as well. So that  
6 jumped out as us.

7 MR. PIERSON:

8 Gary, would you qualify Jones Walker did  
9 not fund the aircraft?

10 MR. SILBERT:

11 Oh, I'm sorry. Jones Walker did not  
12 fund the aircraft. They just swayed the people to get  
13 the --

14 MR. PIERSON:

15 I don't think their budget is quite that  
16 large.

17 MR. SILBERT:

18 So they were instrumental in helping us  
19 include those dollars in appropriations, and, of course,  
20 now the conflict begins. But in working with Belle  
21 Chasse and Skipper and through Skipper's regular  
22 meetings with Plaquemines Parish President, we became  
23 aware of an arrangement at Whiting Field, another naval  
24 installation, where some nine years ago or so, they  
25 attempted to begin a joint -- a limited use agreement of



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1 that airfield, and apparently we're in the very  
2 beginning of exploring such a relationship at Belle  
3 Chasse, which is pretty exciting. As part of that, we're  
4 planning a trip over to Whiting Field for a briefing.  
5 We plan to invite over the Eglin folks to talk to us.  
6 Everything is on the table. I mean, air freight is  
7 expensive, but we want to look at all other options that  
8 could present themselves. At Eglin, they actually have  
9 full commercial use. They have military personnel on  
10 the tower, but they also have TSA and commercial flight  
11 skills. Will that happen in Belle Chasse? Maybe not,  
12 but we think that by beginning and sustaining these  
13 communications with Plaquemines Parish and with the  
14 Skipper that we might be able to identify opportunities,  
15 and with the participation of SEMA as well. Whether  
16 it's the energy industry or whether it's human organs or  
17 whether it's who knows what in terms of commercial  
18 freight, we might be able to take advantage of some  
19 opportunities there.

20 But my point was that just in the  
21 efforts to stand up SEMA and really catch up with my  
22 colleagues at Fort Polk and Belle Chasse, this is the  
23 first thing that jumped out at us just with respect to  
24 getting airplanes at Belle Chasse at the navy base.

25 In terms of the next steps, it's very



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1 important to us. You talked about potential resources.  
2 We do want to more formally engage someone. I suspect  
3 it will probably be a firm like Jones Walker to help us  
4 in Washington. You know, it's important to begin to  
5 identify other opportunities and threats that are out  
6 there through this SEMA process so we can jump on top of  
7 those.

8 I talked about the trip to Whiting  
9 Field. That's something that's coming up that we look  
10 to do in June, and it's critical that none of this can  
11 happen without the collaboration with the state and with  
12 you folks. As my junior high algebra teacher used to  
13 say, "He that knows not and knows that he knows not is a  
14 wise man." So we're interested in all of the help that  
15 we can get.

16 MR. LACERTE:

17 Well, I think that there's a real  
18 obvious vacuum for advocacy down MARFORRES and with  
19 Belle Chasse and with all the military interest there.  
20 I think it's more painfully obvious since we have such a  
21 strong advocacy network at other installations. The  
22 absence of that and the void becomes clear, so we're  
23 happy GNO, Inc. is stepping up to the table, taking the  
24 bull by the horns and kind of recentralizing our efforts  
25 to make sure that, you know, we come to the table with



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1 all of our resources that we have. And in doing that, I  
2 think we pledge commitments from this body, from LED,  
3 from the governor's office to do everything we can to  
4 make sure that all of the threats to that facility are  
5 minimized. I know, as you know, at Barksdale, anytime  
6 you have empty hanger space, anytime you have  
7 capabilities that are not at capacity, it creates a big  
8 bullseye on your back for installation. What we want to  
9 do is, we want to make sure that all of those threats  
10 are removed from the table.

11 MR. DAVIS:

12 That's been a real big change as we  
13 worked with GNO, Inc. and having Gary step up with his  
14 team, it's going to help a lot. I mean, you know, the  
15 folks down in Plaquemines, their counter-commitment -- I  
16 forget all of the names of everyone here -- but the  
17 counter-commitments guys, you know, they're struggling.  
18 Their Military Advisory Committee isn't quite what it  
19 needs to be down there, so this is really a strong  
20 leadership team of regional folks to bring it together.  
21 And as we said before, there's a lot of different  
22 agencies with the Coast Guard down there, and this is  
23 going to be a big summer of turnover, too. So this is  
24 actually not a bad time to get some of this rolling and  
25 get it in place as the new commanders come on deck,



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1 because you're looking at district change of command is  
2 this Friday for our district. Next week, on the 22nd,  
3 is the Base NOLA, which is the Coast Guard base  
4 infrastructure support. He changes over next Friday.  
5 This Friday, the Red Dogs change over at Belle Chasse  
6 this Fall sometime, September, October. Captain Goody  
7 changes command for GRB, although the new exo is in  
8 place already. And MARFORRES changes over in September.  
9 General Mills will be retiring, and they're likely weeks  
10 overdue with his replacement, but we hear that's because  
11 General Dunford was tapped out.

12 MR. LACERTE:

13 General Dunford was tapped as Chairman  
14 of the Joint Chiefs, so there's going to be some  
15 backflow issues there from the marine side.

16 MR. DAVIS:

17 And we'll see how that goes.

18 And I have to add in that I am also in  
19 transition. I didn't get a chance to -- I was going to  
20 tell you guys. I tried to get here early to talk to you  
21 first. I've been asked to take over as the National  
22 Executive Director of the Young Marines Program in  
23 Washington, DC, and so I am going to move up in July to  
24 take over that program, but still retaining some  
25 Louisiana connections. I know it's totally -- on that



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1 one. I'm doing it open, so, you know.

2 You know, still have connections here  
3 because it's a pretty large program in place. We'll be  
4 tapping into some of that as well. So there is a lot  
5 turning there.

6 MR. LACERTE:

7 Thank you for all you've done here, by  
8 the way, Colonel, and I don't know why you want to  
9 continue to lose your hair like myself in dealing with  
10 all of these youngsters. If you haven't learned your  
11 lesson yet, you're never going to learn.

12 MR. DAVIS:

13 Not at all. In fact, I'm taking on  
14 more.

15 MR. LACERTE:

16 So thank you for your service here.

17 MR. DAVIS:

18 Thank you.

19 MR. REESE:

20 And I just want to say I really  
21 appreciate the work you've done. From the time you wore  
22 a uniform to the time you transitioned to civilian life,  
23 you've brought visibility to all of us and the rest of  
24 the state to what our military assets are and to  
25 Southeast Louisiana to the point where we recognized



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1 what our key assets were and how we needed to join  
2 together. So thank you very much for the work you've  
3 done.

4 MR. LACERTE:

5 Also improving your educational realm  
6 outside the post, I think has been paramount.

7 MR. REESE:

8 I think -- a couple weeks ago, Kathy,  
9 Fay, Don and their Chief of Staff, Jay -- I don't know  
10 what Jay's last name was, but they were very  
11 complimentary of the educational work down there.

12 MR. DAVIS:

13 I graduate my first class here this  
14 Saturday in front of the MARFORRES headquarters  
15 building.

16 MR. LACERTE:

17 That's great.

18 MR. DAVIS:

19 You talk about something that was  
20 started four years ago and now we're graduating our  
21 first class, and we will be almost at full capacity next  
22 year. Just the demand has been huge to fill out the  
23 school, people from all over the area.

24 MR. LACERTE:

25 Fantastic. Anything else?



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1 MR. SILBERT:

2 I'll just add that, I guess, we're a  
3 little different from Fort Polk and Barksdale in that  
4 we're ten parishes with lots of installations, so it's a  
5 little bit like herding cats, but we think by getting  
6 folks like Colonel Davis from throughout the region as a  
7 really strong core team can help us as well.

8 MR. LACERTE:

9 I think saying the Greater New Orleans  
10 Metro Area is a little different than Fort Polk is an  
11 understatement, but I think it has opportunities as  
12 well, as well as challenges.

13 MR. REESE:

14 I think there's some Louisiana solutions  
15 to some of these that are cross services. You know, we  
16 talk about the Air Force, you've got quick access to  
17 these great training agencies in the Gulf. Fort Polk's  
18 got one of the only two aerial moving target ranges.  
19 You know, the sharing of those air assets and those air  
20 training spaces makes Louisiana unique, and so I think  
21 as we try to engage Air Force bases, Fort Polk missions  
22 and the missions in the naval support activity down  
23 there in Belle Chasse, I think there's some real  
24 Louisiana solutions there.

25 MR. LACERTE:



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1           As we go to some of these combined-arms  
2 opportunities, you know, I didn't realize until sitting  
3 down with General Hickman that this is a  
4 commander-specific request that has to be made for a  
5 particular aircraft that can be accommodated. So it  
6 gets that minute that whenever a BCT commander comes in,  
7 he has to know that this specific capability is  
8 available to him to get to those low-flying, fixed-wing  
9 aircraft. If they want that real-world training  
10 experience, they've got to know, "Hey, we've got some of  
11 those aircraft nearby that we need to deploy."

12           MR. REESE:

13           I think off the record you had talked  
14 with Deborah and Ben who could get you on with John, the  
15 director of Eglin Air Park, which is a BRAC air base in  
16 Alexandria, Louisiana. They've got international guard  
17 guys in the tower. They've got TSA commercial flights,  
18 military flights, cargo flights, ICE immigrations.

19           MR. SILBERT:

20           That's our second trip. John has  
21 already --

22           MR. RUSSO:

23           I'll go to Whiting Field; you can go to  
24 Eglin Air Force Base.

25           MR. REESE:



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1                   But check them out because I think  
2 that's a great resource for you.

3                   MS. RANDOLPH:

4                   Yes. We'll be glad to help.

5                   MR. LACERTE:

6                   Anymore questions for the fine folks at  
7 GNO?

8                   (No response.)

9                   MR. LACERTE:

10                  Thanks. I want to let Don talk a little  
11 bit on the agenda item here, "Status of Military Support  
12 Funds."

13                  MR. PIERSON:

14                  That's where the rubber meets the road.  
15 It's great to have these high-level conversations about  
16 all of the great things happening, but, meanwhile, back  
17 at the ranch, where the attorneys and the contracts and  
18 the vision administration is assisting us in getting  
19 these resources to these important activation points  
20 throughout the state. I'm very pleased to be a part of  
21 that. I picked that up from Paul as he departed. Funds  
22 have been deployed already this year to Fort Polk  
23 Progress. We did all of the contractual work necessary  
24 to move other programs through. So for Barksdale  
25 Forward, just on Friday, the funding has been finalized



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1 by the Office of Contractual Review. We'll be issuing  
2 them a formal designation as all the required  
3 contractual elements are completed. We're in that  
4 process now with GNO. They need a little bit of time,  
5 as Gary correctly said, herd these cats to identify them  
6 on the things they want to accomplish in the contracts.  
7 But pleased to say all of that is now in process and  
8 under review at the Office of Contractual Review, which  
9 is kind of its final journey through the State  
10 administrative system. So hopefully in the future we'll  
11 be able to get that out.

12 MR. SILBERT:

13 Thank you for your support.

14 MR. PIERSON:

15 We talked about all of the things we had  
16 intended, but I didn't want to leave out also the  
17 important presence of the state's Major Warfare Systems  
18 Operation on the UNO campus. And the way I view this,  
19 part of our success at the Department of Louisiana  
20 Economic Development is we established a very important  
21 wing of the division, which is called Business Expansion  
22 Retention, and the work that's being handled here, much  
23 of which we've talked about today, is really military  
24 expansion retention strategy. It's a very similar mode,  
25 and you have to have this fluency with the military



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1 installations, those conversations and then the ability  
2 of the business side and the community side to go  
3 forward and enhance the process. So this model is  
4 working very effectively for us. I feel like there's  
5 three H Groups of Barksdale Forward organizations there  
6 quite some time that when it came time stand up around  
7 Fort Polk. I think y'all were instrumental in having  
8 conversations and help guide that organization, and now  
9 we have another one coming on board with the Southeast  
10 Military Alliance. So we look for that to be  
11 successful. I'm glad Gary's open to getting as much  
12 help as much as possible as he attempts to herd those  
13 cats, but certainly we will stay very involved in and  
14 helpful to help to move the process along.

15 So good news really to report to you on  
16 the allocation that the legislature was able to support  
17 of the governor to give us to manage our operations for  
18 this fiscal year. The state starts a new calendar 1  
19 July. While our new resources are very tight, but I  
20 will be hopeful that we can continue to support this  
21 absolutely critical funding mechanism that allows mostly  
22 volunteer organizations to go out and conduct a lot of  
23 important business, and without these resources, that  
24 would become very difficult to do and certainly not be  
25 as effective as what we're finding our efforts today.



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1 MR. LACERTE:

2 And like I said earlier, to Mike's  
3 efforts, in fact, if you can show that it is a tangible,  
4 value-added from those funds do nothing but give this  
5 body leverage to maintain if not grow our efforts in  
6 that corridor.

7 MR. REESE:

8 I think that Fort Polk alone, if we  
9 receive a cut of 6,500 troops at Fort Polk, the economic  
10 impact of the state is about \$24-million a year in state  
11 income tax alone, so fairly minimal, quite frankly, for  
12 having to leverage those funds in terms of tax dollars.

13 MR. LACERTE:

14 Sure.

15 Any other final thoughts? Let's go  
16 around the room? GNO, Inc., I know you just finished  
17 your spiel, but anything to take away?

18 MR. SILBERT:

19 No. Just very grateful to be at the  
20 table. Thank you.

21 MR. LACERTE:

22 Thank you, Gary.

23 MR. MATHES:

24 No comments. Thank you.

25 MR. RUSSO:



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None.

MS. RANDOLPH:

I'm going to continue to work with Mike  
and support Fort Polk.

MR. LACERTE:

Great. Colonel?

MR. DAVIS:

No, sir.

MR. LACERTE:

Mayor?

MAYOR BEEBE:

He said everything I told him to say.

MR. LACERTE:

That's the way it usually is.

Murray?

MR. VISER:

No.

MR. LACERTE:

Mike?

MR. REESE:

No, sir.

MR. LACERTE:

Don?

MR. PIERSON:

One last little thing to throw. I was



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1 very impressed when Fort Polk conducted the listening  
2 session, the support that came from Alexandria and the  
3 support that came from Lake Charles, two great  
4 neighbors, didn't have to stand up, didn't have to do as  
5 much heavy lifting as they did, but I found that to be  
6 very impressive. We worked with George Swift and the  
7 Southwest Economic Development Alliance, that's their  
8 regional group there. We worked with the Central  
9 Economic Group there under Jim Clinton and Rick Ranson  
10 and that crew and was very involved with them as well.  
11 And that was awesome. That really helped, I think, tip  
12 the balance and allow Fort Polk to be what was  
13 recognized by the senior leadership, the Army, as best  
14 in class in terms of supporting a military installation,  
15 but you do it by rallying those kinds of resources. So  
16 compliments to SEMA, to Southwest Louisiana for standing  
17 up and embracing that opportunity.

18 MS. RANDOLPH:

19 We were at the Central Louisiana  
20 Chamber. We were very pleased with the turnout because  
21 you just don't know how many people are going to come.  
22 It's not something you can gauge and get RSVPs other  
23 than the speakers that you line up. And I think even  
24 though we had the technical difficulties, that it did --  
25 it was an attention grabber to have three locations.



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1 And we, after the technical glitches occurred, taped  
2 everyone anyway, and so those were submitted, those  
3 comments, and we stayed till the bitter end, anyone who  
4 wanted to speak, and so we were very pleased with how  
5 many people took the time to come out and had them fill  
6 out cards as well.

7 MR. LACERTE:

8 And I think that goes back to Gary's  
9 point. Even though the areas that you serve are so  
10 different, from Fort Polk to Southeast Louisiana, really  
11 the military footprints are a vital importance all of  
12 they way from Port Fourchon all of the way up to St.  
13 Tammany Parish. I can definitely see a spread not so  
14 dissimilar to that should we ever need to go that route  
15 with any of our installations that we have covering your  
16 region most definitely.

17 So to wrap things up, we'll go ahead,  
18 Don and I will get together on a letter of support for  
19 NDAA and we'll disseminate a draft based on upon our  
20 conformability language that probably isn't so  
21 dissimilar from General Curtis' communications, and then  
22 hopefully we'll roll forward. We'll get a positive  
23 announcement coming in June of Fort Polk and their BCT  
24 and hopefully we'll move forward and push forward to  
25 have a chance to reconvene this body in the early Fall



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1 or late Spring -- excuse me, late Summer. I think  
2 that's probably a good step forward. We'll have a  
3 wrapped up legislative session, hopefully a new bankroll  
4 to help you-all support your missions and support  
5 Louisiana interests as we move forward.

6 So in that, I think I will -- do we have  
7 a motion to adjourn? Do we have a quorum still?

8 No.

9 MR. VISOR:

10 So moved.

11 MR. REESE:

12 Second.

13 MR. LACERTE:

14 So moved and seconded.

15 Any opposed?

16 (No response.)

17 MR. LACERTE:

18 We stand adjourned.

19 (Meeting concludes at 11:34 a.m.)  
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<u>\$</u>	<u>2</u>	<b>420</b> 27:17	<b>absolutely</b> 16:15 23:22 26:25 32:21 41:1,6 49:8 66:21
<b>\$24-million</b> 67:10	<b>2.9-billion</b> 53:21	<b>450</b> 27:17	<b>accepting</b> 29:20
<b>\$300-million</b> 47:13	<b>20</b> 15:19	<b>475</b> 29:21	<b>access</b> 37:24 43:25 62:16
<b>\$34-million</b> 19:8	<b>200</b> 15:11 55:4	<b>490</b> 29:8 30:14	<b>accommodated</b> 63:5
<b>\$35-million</b> 29:3	<b>2008</b> 42:22,23	<b>490,000</b> 27:16 29:1	<b>accomplish</b> 65:6
<b>\$8-billion</b> 49:3	<b>2009</b> 42:23	<u>5</u>	<b>accomplishments</b> 36:19,22
<u>1</u>	<b>2012</b> 53:19	<b>50</b> 24:13 45:9	<b>account</b> 29:3
<b>1</b> 15:19 51:9 66:18	<b>2018</b> 15:20 47:10	<b>50,000</b> 32:13	<b>accustomed</b> 17:7
<b>1,000</b> 16:6 17:11 28:14 39:9,13 50:18	<b>2019</b> 47:11	<b>590</b> 25:13	<b>acquiescing</b> 30:16
<b>1,030</b> 15:6	<b>2025</b> 47:22	<b>5th</b> 13:16	<b>acquisition</b> 32:17
<b>1,400</b> 13:4	<b>20th</b> 45:2	<u>6</u>	<b>acres</b> 32:13
<b>1,500</b> 50:16,17,19	<b>21st</b> 45:1	<b>6,500</b> 27:13 67:9	<b>across-the-board-cut</b> 22:24
<b>1,800</b> 48:7	<b>220</b> 42:17	<u>7</u>	<b>Act</b> 13:8 14:8,11
<b>1,800</b> 48:7	<b>22nd</b> 59:2	<b>70</b> 27:14 32:15	<b>action</b> 20:4 28:6 35:8, 12
<b>1.7-million</b> 19:11	<b>24</b> 55:2	<b>700</b> 15:12	<b>actions</b> 36:3
<b>1.8-million</b> 29:7	<b>25</b> 41:6	<b>707-million</b> 53:19	<b>activation</b> 64:19
<b>100</b> 17:11	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>	<b>active</b> 19:23 27:16 48:11
<b>11</b> 22:15	<b>30</b> 27:25 41:6	<b>8,600</b> 15:10	<b>active-based</b> 28:7
<b>11,000</b> 15:9	<b>30-some-odd</b> 38:5	<b>800</b> 49:25	<b>activities</b> 34:5 52:7
<b>11:34</b> 71:19	<b>310</b> 28:10 32:23 33:4 40:8	<u>9</u>	<b>activity</b> 33:22 62:22
<b>12</b> 55:2	<b>315</b> 15:5	<b>9,600</b> 15:8,10	<b>ACUB</b> 33:25
<b>13-percent</b> 14:13	<b>315,000</b> 15:4	<b>90</b> 29:17	<b>add</b> 37:6 51:18 59:18 62:2
<b>1374</b> 25:11	<b>33</b> 19:8	<u>A</u>	<b>added</b> 51:4
<b>15</b> 25:11 30:6	<b>337</b> 51:4,7	<b>a.m.</b> 71:19	<b>addition</b> 36:5
<b>152nd</b> 28:12	<b>34-year</b> 52:21	<b>Abilene</b> 46:5	<b>additional</b> 29:1,5,12
<b>154</b> 38:1,3	<b>342,000</b> 15:2	<b>ability</b> 29:17 50:24 66:1	<b>address</b> 16:17 20:1 33:14
<b>16</b> 14:24	<b>350,200</b> 15:1	<b>absence</b> 57:22	<b>adjourn</b> 71:7
<b>17</b> 25:5 38:23 41:10 48:7	<b>39th</b> 24:24	<b>absolute</b> 40:7	<b>adjourned</b> 71:18
<b>18</b> 38:2 41:10	<b>3rd</b> 27:19		<b>adjunct</b> 18:13
<b>18,000</b> 53:20	<u>4</u>		
<b>18th</b> 15:24	<b>40</b> 21:21 53:19		
<b>1st</b> 28:13			



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<b>administration</b> 64:18	<b>Alexandria</b> 27:23 63:16 69:2	<b>argue</b> 50:24	
<b>administrative</b> 65:10	<b>Alexandria/pineville</b> 13:22	<b>Arkansas</b> 24:22	<b>B</b>
<b>advanced</b> 24:23 35:20, 21	<b>algebra</b> 57:12	<b>Armed</b> 16:2 30:6	<b>B1</b> 45:11 46:4 51:9
<b>advantage</b> 56:18	<b>Alliance</b> 52:12 54:4 66:10 69:7	<b>armories</b> 14:16	<b>B1s</b> 45:13
<b>Advisory</b> 58:18	<b>allocation</b> 55:1 66:16	<b>Army</b> 15:1,8,10 16:24 17:1,18 18:12,13 28:14, 15,20,25 29:10,14,16 30:8 31:24 33:7,10,11, 12,24 35:9 36:15,21 38:1,8 69:13	<b>B2</b> 46:5
<b>advocacy</b> 27:6,10 57:18,21	<b>allowed</b> 51:18	<b>Army's</b> 30:1,2 32:14 37:25	<b>B52</b> 45:10,13 46:3
<b>advocate</b> 36:10 37:8, 23 38:13 39:23 40:8	<b>allowing</b> 29:6	<b>arrangement</b> 55:23	<b>back</b> 18:18 20:6 21:12 22:13 25:10 29:16 30:19 39:6 58:8 64:16 70:8
<b>advocated</b> 29:11	<b>ammunition</b> 17:13	<b>articulate</b> 33:6	<b>backflow</b> 59:15
<b>advocating</b> 37:3	<b>amount</b> 32:10 34:22	<b>asks</b> 21:14	<b>background</b> 52:14
<b>aerial</b> 62:18	<b>analysis</b> 31:18 51:21	<b>assets</b> 16:11,12 21:25 22:7,10,25 24:3,11,16 25:3 34:20 42:1 45:8 51:12 54:11 60:24 61:1 62:19	<b>backup</b> 14:20 39:14
<b>affected</b> 39:16	<b>announced</b> 28:14 50:7	<b>assisting</b> 64:18	<b>bad</b> 42:4 49:1 58:24
<b>affordable</b> 42:3,4	<b>announcement</b> 70:23	<b>association</b> 39:6	<b>balance</b> 69:12
<b>aftermath</b> 15:15	<b>announcements</b> 29:13	<b>assuming</b> 25:13	<b>bankroll</b> 71:3
<b>agencies</b> 58:22 62:17	<b>annual</b> 14:18	<b>attempt</b> 55:2	<b>bar</b> 35:19
<b>agenda</b> 64:11	<b>anticipate</b> 54:16	<b>attempted</b> 55:25	<b>bare</b> 24:17
<b>agree</b> 18:15 24:11	<b>Antonio</b> 44:5,13,14	<b>attempts</b> 66:12	<b>Barksdale</b> 34:18 36:12 40:22 41:13,20 42:8,15, 17 44:9,15 45:6,10,20 46:7,13,24,25 48:2 49:21,23 50:22 51:2,16, 21,24 54:13 58:5 62:3 64:24 66:5
<b>agreement</b> 55:25	<b>anymore</b> 51:11,25 64:6	<b>attended</b> 39:25	<b>base</b> 27:15,24 29:6 30:21,23 32:6,13 34:16 36:7 37:16,23 41:20,25 42:16,18 43:21 44:18, 25 45:12 46:6 50:7,10, 23 51:2,7,8 54:24 56:24 59:3 63:15,24
<b>ahead</b> 20:21 27:9 54:16 70:17	<b>anytime</b> 37:6 58:5,6	<b>attention</b> 69:25	<b>based</b> 30:1 70:19
<b>aimed</b> 25:21	<b>AP</b> 35:23	<b>attest</b> 31:8	<b>bases</b> 32:9 38:6,7,10 39:10 62:21
<b>air</b> 15:9 18:7,10,17,20, 21,23,24 38:4 41:6,20 42:10,15,17 43:21 44:1, 4,7,8 45:11,14 46:6,24 47:20 50:6,10,22 51:2,7 54:24 56:6 62:16,19,21 63:15,24	<b>apologize</b> 27:1 32:5	<b>attorneys</b> 64:17	<b>basically</b> 13:18 29:4 31:25 51:22
<b>aircraft</b> 45:18 48:22 49:9,20 55:9,12 63:5,9, 11	<b>apparently</b> 56:1	<b>attraction</b> 53:5	<b>Baton</b> 13:24 14:2
<b>airfield</b> 56:1	<b>appears</b> 13:8	<b>August</b> 44:2	<b>battling</b> 28:9
<b>airlift</b> 21:25	<b>apply</b> 32:21	<b>Authorization</b> 13:8	
<b>airman</b> 21:10	<b>apprised</b> 42:12	<b>authorize</b> 20:8,25	
<b>airplane</b> 49:12,15	<b>appropriations</b> 55:2, 19	<b>authorized</b> 38:4	
<b>airplanes</b> 55:3 56:24	<b>approved</b> 37:16	<b>aviation</b> 24:3	
<b>alarmed</b> 30:5	<b>arbitrary</b> 30:1	<b>aware</b> 55:23	
	<b>area</b> 13:13,23,24 25:14, 20 34:13,19 37:9 46:12, 15,17 47:9,14,15,17 49:25 61:23 62:10	<b>awesome</b> 39:15 69:11	
	<b>areas</b> 23:11 29:7 37:5 46:24 70:9		



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<b>BCT</b> 63:6 70:23	<b>bottom</b> 47:7		<b>Chamber</b> 69:20
<b>Beauregard</b> 13:22	<b>box</b> 49:13	<b>C</b>	<b>chance</b> 59:19 70:25
<b>BEEBE</b> 20:11 24:7 47:2 49:24 51:3 68:11	<b>boxes</b> 49:18	<b>calendar</b> 66:18	<b>change</b> 16:15 25:6 36:24 43:21 58:12 59:1, 5
<b>begin</b> 55:25 57:4	<b>boy</b> 49:2	<b>call</b> 17:11 23:23	<b>Charles</b> 27:23 69:3
<b>beginning</b> 39:8 44:6 48:25 56:2,12	<b>BRAC</b> 36:13 37:10,15, 18 38:3,14,18 39:14 40:25 41:2,10,15 63:15	<b>called</b> 17:14 23:10 33:21,24 65:21	<b>Chasse</b> 54:24 55:21 56:3,11,22,24 57:19 59:5 62:23
<b>begins</b> 55:20	<b>BRAC'ING</b> 39:9	<b>Camp</b> 13:22 25:14	<b>check</b> 64:1
<b>bell</b> 16:14 18:2 19:13 21:8	<b>breaks</b> 49:12	<b>camps</b> 35:24,25 36:3	<b>checkbook</b> 50:13
<b>Belle</b> 54:23 55:20 56:2, 11,22,24 57:19 59:5 62:23	<b>breathe</b> 54:5	<b>campus</b> 65:18	<b>chief</b> 18:23 31:23 33:12 35:9,19 40:6 61:9
<b>Ben</b> 63:14	<b>bridge</b> 43:24	<b>capabilities</b> 17:6 19:13 24:2,18 38:11 58:7	<b>Chief's</b> 31:25
<b>big</b> 33:25 38:7 45:4 49:11,13 50:1,21 58:7, 12,23	<b>briefing</b> 56:4	<b>capability</b> 63:7	<b>Chiefs</b> 59:14
<b>biggest</b> 35:8	<b>briefly</b> 50:3	<b>capacity</b> 38:2 41:7 58:7 61:21	<b>choice</b> 32:6 36:20
<b>Bill</b> 25:13	<b>brigade</b> 24:24,25 25:3 28:10,12,13,15 40:8	<b>Captain</b> 59:6	<b>chopping</b> 25:4
<b>billets</b> 50:19,21	<b>bright</b> 40:4	<b>cards</b> 38:13 70:6	<b>Chris</b> 46:18
<b>bills</b> 14:16	<b>bring</b> 13:16 14:4 21:9, 13 43:19 45:1,2,8 50:14,17,18 58:20	<b>care</b> 27:1	<b>cinderblock-face- brick</b> 44:22
<b>bit</b> 13:10 25:19 27:9 37:12 40:22,25 46:20 52:14 62:5 64:11 65:4	<b>bringing</b> 27:16	<b>career</b> 35:23	<b>circulate</b> 20:23
<b>bitter</b> 70:3	<b>brings</b> 31:13	<b>cargo</b> 63:18	<b>citizens'</b> 17:25
<b>block</b> 25:4	<b>brought</b> 35:16 60:23	<b>carries</b> 20:21	<b>City</b> 42:7,15,21 52:5
<b>blow</b> 19:9	<b>budget</b> 14:8,11,13 15:19,21 16:7 19:5,7,8, 15 20:1 29:6 30:1,16 55:2,15	<b>case</b> 36:11 37:8	<b>civilian</b> 60:22
<b>board</b> 66:9	<b>build</b> 13:18 30:21 36:10 49:3	<b>Cassidy</b> 31:12	<b>class</b> 61:13,21 69:14
<b>bodies</b> 15:16	<b>building</b> 29:25 30:2 32:11 39:5,7 44:20,22 45:23 47:22 48:6 61:15	<b>catastrophic</b> 22:16 24:12 41:23	<b>classes</b> 35:23 36:1
<b>body</b> 20:24 58:2 67:5 70:25	<b>built</b> 35:12 44:21	<b>catch</b> 56:21	<b>classified</b> 48:25
<b>Boeing</b> 46:1	<b>bull</b> 57:24	<b>cats</b> 62:5 65:5 66:13	<b>clear</b> 53:12 57:22
<b>boil</b> 17:15	<b>bullseye</b> 58:8	<b>Central</b> 69:8,19	<b>climate</b> 53:6
<b>boils</b> 17:22	<b>burning</b> 17:9 25:12	<b>centralized</b> 14:4	<b>Clinton</b> 69:9
<b>Bomber</b> 47:20	<b>busier</b> 52:25	<b>Century</b> 45:1,2	<b>close</b> 17:19 25:22 38:6 45:23
<b>bonded</b> 32:12	<b>business</b> 23:9 50:15 52:20 53:5,6,9 65:21 66:2,23	<b>CEO</b> 52:22	<b>close-air</b> 45:15
<b>bones</b> 17:17 24:17		<b>cetera</b> 13:2	<b>closed</b> 14:3
<b>Bossier</b> 42:7,15,21,22 44:18,24 52:5		<b>chairman</b> 19:18 30:7 46:9 52:17 59:13	<b>closely</b> 42:7
		<b>Challenge</b> 13:3	<b>closer</b> 36:7 37:23
		<b>challenges</b> 62:12	<b>closing</b> 25:23 32:16 38:9



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<b>closure</b> 36:8 37:17	<b>committees</b> 35:13	<b>Congressman</b> 31:12	<b>cosponsoring</b> 28:25
<b>Cloutier</b> 31:11	<b>committing</b> 24:15	<b>congressmen</b> 17:15	<b>cost</b> 18:16 30:10
<b>Coast</b> 58:22 59:3	<b>common</b> 21:25	<b>Connecticut</b> 22:10	<b>council</b> 52:17
<b>coastal</b> 34:7 53:10	<b>communications</b> 54:11 56:13 70:21	<b>connections</b> 59:25 60:2	<b>counter-commitment</b> 58:15
<b>codes</b> 48:15	<b>communities</b> 30:22,23 34:16 39:8,16,18 46:2 54:11	<b>considerations</b> 32:20	<b>counter-</b> <b>commitments</b> 58:17
<b>codify</b> 20:8	<b>community</b> 27:25 28:8 32:2,7 46:3 54:4 66:2	<b>considered</b> 31:21	<b>country</b> 18:20 27:25 28:9 33:9 45:24
<b>collaboration</b> 57:11	<b>community's</b> 43:3	<b>consortium</b> 46:1	<b>couple</b> 15:25 27:22 31:7 40:5 51:22 61:8
<b>colleagues</b> 54:13 56:22	<b>Compact</b> 23:24	<b>constituency</b> 45:25	<b>courses</b> 28:6 35:20,21
<b>college</b> 36:2	<b>companies</b> 16:11	<b>construction</b> 42:18	<b>covering</b> 70:15
<b>Colonel</b> 49:8 60:8 62:6 68:6	<b>comparing</b> 28:22	<b>consultants</b> 54:15	<b>craziest</b> 42:25
<b>combat</b> 24:25 28:15	<b>compelled</b> 31:15	<b>consulting</b> 41:16 51:19	<b>create</b> 30:5 34:2 40:18 44:11
<b>combination</b> 15:18 43:10	<b>complain</b> 39:8	<b>contingency</b> 29:3	<b>creates</b> 58:7
<b>combine</b> 15:9	<b>completed</b> 65:3	<b>continue</b> 13:2 19:25 28:6 32:25 36:20 60:9 66:20 68:3	<b>creating</b> 54:19
<b>combined</b> 40:1	<b>completely</b> 32:12 36:14	<b>continues</b> 33:14	<b>creative</b> 44:24
<b>combined-arms</b> 63:1	<b>complimentary</b> 61:11	<b>continuing</b> 29:20 31:6 33:13	<b>credits</b> 36:2
<b>comfortable</b> 41:13	<b>compliments</b> 69:16	<b>contract</b> 25:23 47:21	<b>creeping</b> 41:3
<b>command</b> 32:19 39:24 40:6 42:11 44:2,5,8 50:7,10,11 51:5,8,10 59:1,7	<b>component</b> 19:23,24	<b>contracting</b> 55:5	<b>crew</b> 69:10
<b>commander</b> 42:10,11 63:6	<b>components</b> 16:24	<b>contracts</b> 53:18 64:17 65:6	<b>critical</b> 32:1 36:7 54:14 57:10 66:21
<b>commander's</b> 43:2	<b>computer</b> 49:15	<b>contractual</b> 65:1,3,8	<b>cross</b> 49:17 62:15
<b>commander-specific</b> 63:4	<b>concern</b> 14:23	<b>contractural</b> 64:23	<b>cure</b> 50:9
<b>commanders</b> 58:25	<b>concerned</b> 13:5 16:21 41:22 42:10 44:5	<b>control</b> 14:8,11 51:12	<b>current</b> 18:23 44:20
<b>comments</b> 27:24 31:25 67:24 70:3	<b>concerns</b> 25:15 33:15	<b>conversations</b> 64:15 66:1,8	<b>Curtis</b> 18:9 19:6 21:2,5, 20 22:4,12,20 23:5,14, 21 24:19 25:18 26:10, 24 27:4 28:22
<b>commercial</b> 56:9,10, 17 63:17	<b>concludes</b> 71:19	<b>core</b> 62:7	<b>Curtis'</b> 70:21
<b>commission</b> 18:18 29:10,15 36:13	<b>conduct</b> 66:22	<b>corner</b> 37:19	<b>cut</b> 13:6,11 14:13 15:19,21 16:6,7 19:10 21:23 23:17,18 27:13 67:9
<b>commitment</b> 24:8	<b>conducted</b> 69:1	<b>corps</b> 28:20,25 29:8,10, 14 30:1,2 31:10 33:10 49:5	<b>cuts</b> 18:15 28:15,18 29:12,13,18,20 30:18 31:1 33:15 39:9,13
<b>commitments</b> 58:2	<b>Conference</b> 33:21	<b>corps'</b> 28:5,17	
<b>Committee</b> 16:2 30:6 58:18	<b>conflict</b> 55:20	<b>correct</b> 41:1,6 49:8	
	<b>conformability</b> 70:20	<b>correctly</b> 65:5	
	<b>congress</b> 19:20 29:15, 16,18 30:16	<b>corridor</b> 67:6	
	<b>congressional</b> 17:8		



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<b>cycle</b> 19:5	<b>demand</b> 61:22	67:12	<b>efforts</b> 20:1 56:21 57:24 66:25 67:3,5
<hr/>	<b>departed</b> 64:21	<b>Don</b> 20:22 31:8 52:3 53:2,13 61:9 64:10 68:23 70:18	<b>Eglin</b> 56:5,8 63:15,24
<b>D</b>	<b>department</b> 13:15 41:5 42:20 65:19	<b>doubled</b> 35:21	<b>election</b> 38:24 39:1
<hr/>	<b>deploy</b> 23:8,12 45:17 63:11	<b>doubt</b> 32:8	<b>elements</b> 65:3
<b>Dakota</b> 46:4,5	<b>deployed</b> 64:22	<b>dovetail</b> 40:25	<b>Ellsworth</b> 46:4
<b>dangerous</b> 30:13	<b>describe</b> 54:1	<b>draft</b> 20:6,22 21:17 70:19	<b>embracing</b> 69:17
<b>dangerously</b> 25:22	<b>designation</b> 65:2	<b>drive</b> 15:17	<b>emergencies</b> 15:13
<b>data</b> 31:18,19	<b>details</b> 19:22 33:5	<b>due</b> 20:5	<b>Emergency</b> 23:24
<b>databases</b> 13:1	<b>detonation</b> 25:12	<b>Dunford</b> 59:11,13	<b>employee</b> 52:21
<b>Davis</b> 58:11 59:16 60:12,17 61:12,18 62:6 68:7	<b>development</b> 42:20 47:21 52:20 65:20 69:7	<b>dwell</b> 30:12	<b>employment</b> 53:20
<b>day</b> 27:2 39:23 40:2	<b>deviation</b> 34:6	<b>Dyess</b> 45:11	<b>empty</b> 58:6
<b>days</b> 29:17	<b>dialogue</b> 54:20	<hr/>	<b>encroachment</b> 33:24 34:9,10 38:10 42:2,8
<b>DC</b> 41:17 59:23	<b>difficult</b> 30:22 66:24	<b>E</b>	<b>encroachment-armed</b> 38:10
<b>deal</b> 26:15 31:13 50:21	<b>difficulties</b> 69:24	<b>e-mail</b> 26:7	<b>end</b> 16:3 21:7 23:20 33:16 70:3
<b>dealing</b> 60:9	<b>directed</b> 25:14	<b>e-mailed</b> 25:9	<b>endangered</b> 33:23
<b>death</b> 28:14 39:8,13	<b>direction</b> 54:7	<b>e-mails</b> 20:24	<b>enemy</b> 41:2,3
<b>Deborah</b> 63:14	<b>director</b> 59:22 63:15	<b>earlier</b> 67:2	<b>energy</b> 40:17 56:16
<b>debt</b> 16:20	<b>disaster</b> 22:2	<b>early</b> 15:24 39:24 59:20 70:25	<b>engage</b> 35:10 54:15,25 57:2 62:21
<b>decide</b> 41:25	<b>disbursements</b> 51:15	<b>easier</b> 48:11	<b>engaged</b> 28:8 53:25
<b>decision</b> 32:22 33:16 37:11,15 38:17	<b>disclose</b> 20:25	<b>east</b> 42:18 45:4,8,11,12	<b>engagement</b> 28:1
<b>decisionmakers</b> 28:2 31:7	<b>disconnect</b> 30:5 32:15	<b>economic</b> 39:15 53:17, 21 65:20 67:9 69:7,9	<b>engineering</b> 16:9 22:1
<b>decisions</b> 39:11	<b>discussed</b> 20:17 46:11,19 52:10	<b>economy</b> 53:15,22	<b>engineers</b> 24:2
<b>deck</b> 48:3 58:25	<b>discussion</b> 20:23	<b>educating</b> 33:2 35:24 54:10	<b>enhance</b> 66:3
<b>defend</b> 17:24	<b>disseminate</b> 70:19	<b>education</b> 13:14 31:23 32:3 35:8,10,12,16 44:4,8 53:10	<b>Enhancement</b> 28:13
<b>defense</b> 13:8 29:5,18, 23 30:3,4 31:7 34:11 39:6 41:5 46:8	<b>dissimilar</b> 70:14,21	<b>educational</b> 61:5,11	<b>Entergy</b> 52:21
<b>deficiencies</b> 40:9	<b>dissolve</b> 25:6	<b>EEO</b> 53:3	<b>entering</b> 30:13
<b>deficit</b> 16:20	<b>distention</b> 36:21	<b>effective</b> 45:9 66:25	<b>entire</b> 28:8 31:3
<b>delegation</b> 19:25 31:4 33:13 44:13	<b>district</b> 59:1,2	<b>effectively</b> 66:4	<b>environmental</b> 42:24
<b>delegations</b> 30:21	<b>division</b> 65:21	<b>effort</b> 54:4	<b>equalization</b> 22:7
<b>deligation</b> 17:8	<b>DOD</b> 34:5 43:12 53:17		<b>equally</b> 16:21
<b>deliver</b> 16:8 17:5	<b>Dogs</b> 59:5		<b>equipment</b> 13:1 15:12
	<b>dollars</b> 33:25 34:9 35:18 39:16 55:1,19		



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<b>errors</b> 31:20	<b>F22</b> 49:10,13	<b>finding</b> 66:25	<b>FORCECOM</b> 32:25
<b>essentially</b> 15:19 48:23	<b>F35</b> 48:13,21,23 49:22 50:1	<b>fine</b> 64:6	<b>forced</b> 41:5
<b>established</b> 65:20	<b>F35s</b> 45:5 47:24 48:3,5, 12,17	<b>finish</b> 32:16	<b>forget all</b> 58:16
<b>event</b> 24:12	<b>facility</b> 49:1 58:4	<b>finished</b> 67:16	<b>form</b> 19:22 27:21
<b>events</b> 22:16	<b>fact</b> 16:6 25:5 32:11 54:25 60:13 67:3	<b>firm</b> 36:11,12 57:3	<b>formal</b> 54:20 65:2
<b>eventually</b> 41:9	<b>factor</b> 15:4 22:8 35:11	<b>firms</b> 36:9	<b>formally</b> 57:2
<b>exception</b> 27:19	<b>factors</b> 18:16 30:12 52:9	<b>firsthand</b> 49:10	<b>Fort</b> 17:18 25:10,15 26:1,8,13 27:6,14,25 28:17,18 29:22 31:24 32:3,5 33:2,7 34:18 35:7 36:19 37:12,17 38:7,12,15 39:23 40:5, 8,16 41:16 45:3 54:13 56:22 62:3,10,17,21 64:22 66:7 67:8,9 68:4 69:1,12 70:10,23
<b>excess</b> 38:2 41:7	<b>failure</b> 41:23	<b>fixed-wing</b> 63:8	<b>Fortunately</b> 44:13
<b>excited</b> 43:5	<b>fairly</b> 67:11	<b>fixing</b> 31:20	<b>forward</b> 22:15,23 34:18 35:12 36:12 37:7,13 43:1 45:20 64:25 66:3,5 70:22,24 71:2,5
<b>exciting</b> 56:3	<b>Fall</b> 59:6 70:25	<b>Flag</b> 45:4,8,11,12	<b>found</b> 30:5 31:19 69:5
<b>excuse</b> 23:4 71:1	<b>fallback</b> 48:9	<b>Fleming</b> 31:12	<b>Four-star</b> 44:1,7 50:4, 23
<b>Executive</b> 59:22	<b>familiar</b> 13:15 25:17 53:16	<b>flight</b> 13:19 15:20 56:10	<b>Fourchon</b> 70:12
<b>exempt</b> 25:15	<b>Fantastic</b> 61:25	<b>flights</b> 63:17,18	<b>fourth</b> 38:8
<b>exists</b> 30:11	<b>farther</b> 48:5	<b>flood</b> 22:17	<b>frankly</b> 67:11
<b>exo</b> 59:7	<b>fashion</b> 27:21	<b>flooded</b> 15:17	<b>freight</b> 56:6,18
<b>expansion</b> 65:21,24	<b>Fay</b> 61:9	<b>floor</b> 15:24 16:1 27:5 30:20 31:3	<b>Friday</b> 59:2,4,5 64:25
<b>expect</b> 16:9	<b>fear</b> 37:18	<b>fluency</b> 65:25	<b>friendly</b> 17:8 44:23
<b>expense</b> 47:12	<b>federal</b> 13:7,20 14:13 15:18,21 26:4 43:11	<b>fluid</b> 47:25	<b>front</b> 61:14
<b>expensive</b> 48:24 49:2 56:7	<b>feel</b> 32:21 41:13,15 49:20 51:23 66:4	<b>flushed</b> 29:2	<b>full</b> 56:9 61:21
<b>experience</b> 63:10	<b>fewer</b> 47:16	<b>fly</b> 13:18	<b>full-time</b> 15:11
<b>expertise</b> 36:10	<b>Field</b> 55:23 56:4 57:9 63:23	<b>focus</b> 13:12	<b>functional</b> 47:15
<b>experts</b> 35:16 36:6	<b>fields</b> 43:13	<b>focused</b> 37:4 41:21 53:5	<b>fund</b> 35:17 55:2,9,12
<b>explain</b> 35:4	<b>fight</b> 17:6	<b>folks</b> 41:17 44:25 47:16 51:19 56:5 57:12 58:15, 20 62:6 64:6	<b>funding</b> 13:6,7,21 29:2, 5 34:11,15 43:11 64:25 66:21
<b>explained</b> 19:11	<b>fighting</b> 31:4	<b>follow</b> 26:17	<b>funds</b> 19:7 34:25 40:19 50:24 64:12,21 67:4,12
<b>exploring</b> 56:2	<b>fill</b> 61:22 70:5	<b>foot</b> 39:23 49:25	
<b>explosives</b> 25:13	<b>final</b> 65:9 67:15	<b>footprints</b> 70:11	
<b>extension</b> 42:16	<b>finalized</b> 64:25	<b>force</b> 18:17,21,23 33:15 38:4 41:6,20 42:10,15, 17 43:22 44:2,7 45:12, 14 46:6,24 47:20 50:10, 22 51:2,8 62:16,21 63:24	
<b>extensively</b> 41:17,18	<b>finally</b> 42:19		
<b>extremely</b> 49:2	<b>find</b> 49:12		
<b>eye</b> 54:14			
<hr/> <b>F</b> <hr/>			
<b>F16s</b> 45:7 47:24 48:1,9			



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<b>fuse</b> 20:5	<b>good</b> 14:14 17:11 20:4, 25 21:1 22:8,22 26:25 27:2 30:24,25 31:7 37:2,4,5 39:22 41:11 47:18 53:1,6 66:15 71:2	63:16	<b>helped</b> 51:15 69:11
<b>future</b> 40:4 45:5 48:6, 18 65:10		<b>guess</b> 19:18 25:13 36:17 62:2	<b>helpful</b> 66:14
<b>FY-17</b> 38:21		<b>guidance</b> 29:18,24 30:3,4	<b>helping</b> 55:18
<b>FY-18</b> 38:21	<b>Goody</b> 59:6	<b>guide</b> 15:3 66:8	<b>herd</b> 65:5 66:12
<hr/> <b>G</b> <hr/>			
<b>gainer</b> 41:16,20	<b>government</b> 35:15	<b>Gulf</b> 62:17	<b>herding</b> 62:5
<b>game</b> 36:14 41:23 48:12	<b>governor</b> 21:13 24:10, 14 66:17	<b>Gustav</b> 22:16	<b>Hey</b> 63:10
<b>Gary</b> 52:19 55:8 58:13 65:5 67:22	<b>governor's</b> 19:12 58:3	<b>gutting</b> 32:15	<b>Hickman</b> 63:3
<b>Gary's</b> 66:11 70:8	<b>governors</b> 24:9	<b>guys</b> 31:10 52:4 53:15 58:17 59:20 63:17	<b>high</b> 45:16 57:12
<b>gate</b> 42:16,18 43:25	<b>grabber</b> 69:25	<hr/> <b>H</b> <hr/>	
<b>gauge</b> 69:22	<b>grade</b> 13:16	<b>hair</b> 60:9	<b>highlight</b> 51:14
<b>general</b> 18:6,9,14 19:6, 7,17 21:2,5,20 22:4,12, 20 23:4,5,14,21,22 24:19,23 25:9,18 26:10, 19,24 27:4 28:4,5,22 30:8 31:11 33:1 39:22 42:6 44:1,3,10,11 50:6, 23 59:9,11,13 63:3 70:21	<b>graduate</b> 13:4 61:13	<b>handled</b> 65:22	<b>highway</b> 43:11
<b>General's</b> 20:9	<b>graduating</b> 61:20	<b>hanger</b> 48:24 49:1 58:6	<b>Hill</b> 27:10
<b>generally</b> 20:8,9	<b>Gramercy</b> 14:2	<b>happen</b> 32:22 56:11 57:11	<b>hit</b> 52:8
<b>George</b> 69:6	<b>grateful</b> 67:19	<b>happening</b> 41:4 53:8 54:21,23 64:16	<b>hold</b> 28:25 29:8
<b>get all</b> 34:4 36:22	<b>GRB</b> 59:7	<b>happy</b> 34:17 57:23	<b>homeland</b> 17:6
<b>give</b> 19:4 27:12 31:15 37:17,25 45:16 51:19 66:17 67:4	<b>great</b> 17:11 31:13 38:11 40:3,11 46:8 51:14,25 52:3,6 61:17 62:17 64:2,15,16 68:6 69:3	<b>hard</b> 37:19 47:1	<b>hopeful</b> 66:20
<b>giving</b> 17:12 31:14 36:18 52:14	<b>greater</b> 50:22 62:9	<b>hash</b> 33:20	<b>hoping</b> 45:4
<b>glad</b> 18:3 31:8 64:4 66:11	<b>greatest</b> 16:20	<b>hat</b> 43:23	<b>horns</b> 57:24
<b>glitches</b> 70:1	<b>greatly</b> 49:17,19	<b>headquarters</b> 16:10 50:20 61:14	<b>horrible</b> 41:7
<b>Global</b> 44:2 50:10,11 51:5,8,10	<b>Green</b> 45:3,8,11,12	<b>heap</b> 47:7	<b>House</b> 14:25 15:23 25:13 30:6,20 31:2
<b>GNO</b> 52:12,20,22 53:2, 24 57:23 58:13 64:7 65:4 67:16	<b>ground</b> 43:8 50:4	<b>hear</b> 16:2 26:2 45:18 59:10	<b>housing</b> 42:3,4
	<b>group</b> 34:3 45:22 46:18 69:8,9	<b>heard</b> 14:9 17:2 33:5	<b>huge</b> 53:14 61:22
	<b>Groups</b> 66:5	<b>heavily</b> 26:9	<b>human</b> 22:25 56:16
	<b>grow</b> 38:14 67:5	<b>heavy</b> 69:5	<b>humble</b> 16:25
	<b>growing</b> 18:24 54:8	<b>held</b> 27:18	<b>humph</b> 21:13
	<b>grown</b> 17:7	<b>helicopter</b> 16:12	<b>hurricane</b> 23:8 24:1
	<b>growth</b> 37:18	<b>helicopters</b> 15:14 21:18	<b>hurricanes</b> 15:13
	<b>Grumman</b> 46:1		<b>hurtles</b> 43:16
	<b>guard</b> 14:12 15:1,7,8, 10,21 16:6 18:7,10,12, 21,22,24 19:24 22:9,10 24:1 29:11 58:22 59:3		<hr/> <b>I</b> <hr/>
			<b>I-10</b> 14:2
			<b>ice</b> 22:17 23:12 63:18
			<b>idea</b> 30:8
			<b>identified</b> 44:3



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<b>identify</b> 54:4,6,20 56:14 57:5 65:5	<b>installations</b> 34:5 35:11 38:1,3 57:21 62:4 66:1 70:15	<b>Jim</b> 69:9	38:16,25 39:19 40:10, 14 43:6,15 46:10,16 47:23 50:2 51:13 52:2 57:16 59:12 60:6,15 61:4,16,24 62:8,25 64:5,9 67:1,13,21 68:5, 9,13,18,22 70:7 71:13, 17
<b>immediately</b> 35:18	<b>instance</b> 35:7	<b>job</b> 33:2,9	
<b>immigrations</b> 63:18	<b>instances</b> 24:21	<b>jobs</b> 42:5 55:4	
<b>impact</b> 14:21 19:23 25:16 26:1,9 42:24 53:17,21 67:10	<b>instrumental</b> 55:18 66:7	<b>John</b> 63:14,20	
<b>impacted</b> 24:21	<b>intelligence</b> 49:1	<b>join</b> 61:1	
<b>impacting</b> 39:9	<b>intended</b> 65:16	<b>joined</b> 31:12	<b>lack</b> 42:8
<b>impacts</b> 14:15 17:16 20:2 21:18 29:17 33:4 37:12 39:17	<b>interest</b> 17:23 57:19	<b>joint</b> 55:25 59:14	<b>Lake</b> 27:23 69:3
<b>importance</b> 50:4 70:11	<b>interested</b> 34:1 53:6,7 54:9,19 57:14	<b>Jones</b> 54:25 55:8,11 57:3	<b>land</b> 32:14
<b>important</b> 34:17 36:21 48:13 54:12 55:4 57:1,4 64:19 65:17,20 66:23	<b>interests</b> 71:5	<b>journey</b> 65:9	<b>Landreneau</b> 22:14 23:23
<b>impressed</b> 69:1	<b>interface</b> 36:15	<b>July</b> 59:23 66:19	<b>lands</b> 34:10
<b>impression</b> 21:11,15	<b>interim</b> 45:7	<b>jump</b> 57:6	<b>language</b> 31:2 70:20
<b>impressive</b> 69:6	<b>international</b> 63:16	<b>jumped</b> 54:22 55:6 56:23	<b>large</b> 55:16 60:3
<b>improve</b> 37:4	<b>Interstate</b> 42:17	<b>June</b> 33:16 57:10 70:23	<b>larger</b> 14:23 25:24
<b>improved</b> 35:22	<b>intimately</b> 14:10	<b>junior</b> 57:12	<b>largest</b> 38:8
<b>improving</b> 61:5	<b>inventory</b> 38:9		<b>laser</b> 37:4
<b>incentives</b> 53:9	<b>invite</b> 56:5	<b>K</b>	<b>lastly</b> 34:14
<b>include</b> 15:14 55:19	<b>invited</b> 52:22	<b>Kathy</b> 61:8	<b>late</b> 45:2 53:24 71:1
<b>included</b> 18:7	<b>involved</b> 14:10 27:20, 22 28:3 31:5 34:13 35:14 66:13 69:10	<b>Katrina</b> 22:15,16 24:22	<b>lead</b> 33:9
<b>includes</b> 37:20	<b>Isaac</b> 22:16	<b>keeping</b> 32:23	<b>leaders</b> 54:4
<b>income</b> 67:11	<b>issue</b> 19:21 25:22 41:24 42:9 44:20 45:4	<b>key</b> 33:10 36:6,8 49:21 61:1	<b>leadership</b> 17:1 58:20 69:13
<b>increase</b> 40:19	<b>issues</b> 26:5 41:24 43:4 49:5 54:21 59:15	<b>kicks</b> 14:24	<b>leading</b> 28:19
<b>industry</b> 56:16	<b>issuing</b> 65:1	<b>kidding</b> 50:25	<b>learn</b> 13:18,19 16:16 60:11
<b>infantry</b> 24:24 28:12	<b>item</b> 20:4 64:11	<b>kids</b> 13:4 14:4,6	<b>learned</b> 60:10
<b>information</b> 17:20 31:16	<b>items</b> 33:18	<b>kind</b> 19:14 30:16,19 40:24 48:3 49:20 51:21 54:5,14 57:24 65:9	<b>leave</b> 21:11,15 65:16
<b>informed</b> 28:7		<b>kinds</b> 69:15	<b>LED</b> 51:15 53:13 58:2
<b>infrastructure</b> 38:2,5 48:23 49:3 52:6,7 59:4	<b>J</b>	<b>kinetic</b> 40:17	<b>Leesville</b> 27:23 32:2
<b>Inside</b> 15:11	<b>Jackson</b> 13:23	<b>Kirkland</b> 51:7	<b>legislation</b> 25:11 28:24 33:14
<b>installation</b> 26:2 55:24 58:8 69:14	<b>Jay</b> 61:9		<b>legislative</b> 71:3
	<b>Jay's</b> 61:10	<b>L</b>	<b>legislature</b> 19:12,19 34:17,24 53:8 66:16
		<b>LACERTE</b> 19:3 20:3, 15,20 22:6,18 26:3,14, 18,21 27:3 35:2 37:1	<b>lesson</b> 60:11
			<b>lethal</b> 30:10



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<b>letter</b> 20:16 70:18	<b>loss</b> 28:10	<b>management</b> 23:24 28:5	<b>message</b> 31:14 32:19
<b>letters</b> 17:14	<b>lost</b> 28:12,13 45:6	<b>manager</b> 52:20	<b>met</b> 27:8 32:9
<b>level</b> 13:7,10 17:1 24:23 34:21 36:14 39:11 45:17	<b>lot</b> 19:11 22:10 32:24 35:13,14 39:7 40:16,17, 18 48:5,20,24 58:14,21 60:4 66:22	<b>maneuver</b> 28:13 38:7,8	<b>metrics</b> 37:5
<b>levels</b> 29:5	<b>lots</b> 55:5 62:4	<b>manmade</b> 18:1	<b>Metro</b> 62:10
<b>leverage</b> 35:4 67:5,12	<b>Louisiana</b> 14:12 15:5, 7,21 16:6,8 17:16 19:25 20:2 23:18 24:1,12,23 25:1,2,25 31:4 34:1,5,8 38:8 40:2 53:4,15,17 59:25 60:25 62:14,20, 24 63:16 65:19 69:16, 19 70:10 71:5	<b>manuals</b> 49:11	<b>mid-50s</b> 44:21
<b>librarian</b> 44:25	<b>low</b> 27:17	<b>March</b> 27:19	<b>midst</b> 54:21
<b>library</b> 44:18,20,24	<b>low-flying</b> 63:8	<b>MARFORRES</b> 57:18 59:8 61:14	<b>Mike</b> 27:5 40:12,15 42:2 45:23 68:3,19
<b>life</b> 42:6 43:4 44:19 52:9,25 54:5 60:22	<b>lower</b> 30:10	<b>marine</b> 49:5 59:15	<b>Mike's</b> 41:6 67:2
<b>lift</b> 48:11	<hr/> <b>M</b> <hr/>	<b>Marines</b> 59:22	<b>MILCON</b> 43:7,11
<b>lifting</b> 69:5	<b>macro</b> 39:11	<b>market</b> 36:18	<b>military</b> 17:19 27:15,16 31:18 33:3,7 34:4 35:11 41:4,8 42:5 44:9 52:12 53:14 54:3,20 56:9 57:19 58:18 60:24 63:18 64:11 65:23,25 66:10 69:14 70:11
<b>likelihood</b> 47:15 50:14	<b>made</b> 29:15 45:10 63:4	<b>marketing</b> 36:18 54:12	<b>military-related</b> 53:20
<b>limited</b> 38:10 44:10 55:25	<b>main</b> 14:7	<b>math</b> 13:18,20	<b>Milley</b> 33:1
<b>lines</b> 17:9 53:8,11	<b>maintain</b> 13:1 36:5 67:5	<b>MATHES</b> 67:23	<b>millions</b> 39:16
<b>listed</b> 40:9	<b>maintained</b> 48:15	<b>matter</b> 25:5 54:24	<b>Mills</b> 59:9
<b>listening</b> 16:25 27:7,18 39:25 69:1	<b>maintaining</b> 38:1 48:21	<b>mayor</b> 20:11 24:7 47:2 49:24 51:3 52:5 68:10, 11	<b>Minden</b> 25:14,20,22
<b>live</b> 14:22 37:18	<b>maintenance</b> 46:12 49:19	<b>Mcguire</b> 39:22	<b>minimal</b> 67:11
<b>living</b> 14:14,21	<b>major</b> 22:15 33:14 42:11 65:17	<b>meantime</b> 28:16 29:9	<b>minimized</b> 58:5
<b>LMAC</b> 19:18,21 20:8 34:3,13 51:15	<b>make</b> 14:15 17:17,21 20:12 29:12 30:18,20 36:23 37:8 39:10,11 52:10 54:9 57:25 58:4,9	<b>measure</b> 20:10 30:7	<b>Minot</b> 46:4
<b>local</b> 13:25 35:15	<b>makes</b> 62:20	<b>measures</b> 28:20 33:8 35:19	<b>minute</b> 63:6
<b>location</b> 14:5	<b>making</b> 36:19	<b>mechanics</b> 48:21	<b>missile</b> 43:13
<b>locations</b> 69:25	<b>man</b> 57:14	<b>mechanism</b> 66:21	<b>mission</b> 45:15 53:16
<b>logic</b> 49:22	<b>manage</b> 66:17	<b>meet</b> 29:17 30:3	<b>missions</b> 22:3 45:15 54:8 62:21,22 71:4
<b>logistics</b> 48:21,22		<b>meeting</b> 71:19	<b>Mississippi</b> 22:17
<b>long</b> 45:25 46:2 48:2 49:18 52:4		<b>meetings</b> 31:9,13 55:22	<b>mitigate</b> 39:17
<b>long-range</b> 47:19 49:21		<b>meets</b> 64:14	<b>mitigation</b> 33:23,24
<b>looked</b> 18:18		<b>members</b> 19:20 34:24 52:18	<b>mix</b> 18:25 45:5
<b>lose</b> 15:6,14 16:9,10, 11,12 60:9		<b>Memorandum</b> 42:19	<b>mode</b> 65:24
<b>loser</b> 41:21		<b>mention</b> 33:19	<b>model</b> 66:3
<b>loses</b> 42:1		<b>mentioned</b> 16:13,18 37:10 46:11 53:2	<b>modifying</b> 26:12



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<b>moment</b> 15:23	<b>nearby</b> 63:11	<b>one-story</b> 44:21	<b>paradigm</b> 30:11
<b>momentum</b> 46:20	<b>necessarily</b> 45:1	<b>one-third</b> 15:22	<b>paramount</b> 61:6
<b>money</b> 14:20 33:22 34:1 36:18 37:3 41:18 43:12 54:10	<b>neck</b> 37:9	<b>open</b> 13:21 14:16,17 27:5 42:1 49:14 60:1 66:11	<b>parcel</b> 47:19
<b>moneys</b> 35:4	<b>needed</b> 32:9 61:1	<b>opened</b> 13:24	<b>Parish</b> 14:2 42:15,22 44:18,24 55:22 56:13 70:13
<b>month</b> 39:24	<b>neighbors</b> 69:4	<b>operate</b> 41:5	<b>parishes</b> 14:1 53:4 62:4
<b>months</b> 13:21 27:7	<b>net</b> 41:16,20,21	<b>operating</b> 50:15	<b>park</b> 49:1 63:15
<b>morning</b> 26:8	<b>network</b> 57:21	<b>Operation</b> 65:18	<b>parking</b> 49:6
<b>motion</b> 20:12,16,21 71:7	<b>news</b> 66:15	<b>operations</b> 66:17	<b>part</b> 27:15 40:3 47:18 48:17 56:3 64:20 65:19
<b>move</b> 25:2 37:7 44:12 59:23 64:24 66:14 70:24 71:5	<b>Next-generation</b> 47:19	<b>opinion</b> 16:5,25 19:9	<b>participation</b> 56:15
<b>moved</b> 13:9 71:10,14	<b>no-cut</b> 47:12	<b>opportunities</b> 54:8 56:14,19 57:5 62:11 63:2	<b>parting</b> 31:25
<b>moving</b> 22:22 35:12 37:12 43:1 44:14 62:18	<b>NOLA</b> 59:3	<b>opportunity</b> 37:17 69:17	<b>partnership</b> 44:17
<b>Murray</b> 40:21 51:25 68:15	<b>North</b> 25:1,2 46:4	<b>opposed</b> 20:18 71:15	<b>passionate</b> 28:21 29:25
<hr/> <b>N</b> <hr/>	<b>Northrop</b> 46:1	<b>optimistic</b> 47:8,17	<b>past</b> 37:22 42:24
	<b>note</b> 25:10	<b>options</b> 56:7	<b>path</b> 15:3,20
	<b>notes</b> 28:23	<b>order</b> 32:12	<b>Paul</b> 53:13 64:21
	<b>number</b> 30:2 31:22 35:21 41:14 42:14 43:2, 3 44:10 46:25 47:3,4,6	<b>organization</b> 54:6 66:8	<b>pay</b> 14:15 50:13
	<b>numbers</b> 15:6 18:6	<b>organizations</b> 45:25 66:5,22	<b>people</b> 15:22 16:6,8 17:7,10 27:22 28:23 35:13 40:1 48:20,24 50:16,17,20 51:11 55:12 61:23 69:21 70:5
	<hr/> <b>O</b> <hr/>	<b>organize</b> 34:10	<b>percent</b> 15:19 21:23 27:14 32:16 38:2,5 41:7 45:9,10 53:19,22
<b>naive</b> 30:24	<b>obvious</b> 57:18,20	<b>organs</b> 56:16	<b>perception</b> 36:24
<b>names</b> 58:16	<b>occur</b> 29:21	<b>Orleans</b> 13:24 34:19 62:9	<b>performance</b> 37:6
<b>nation</b> 17:23 28:19 46:8	<b>occurred</b> 70:1	<b>OSD-LEVEL</b> 33:22	<b>period</b> 25:5
<b>national</b> 13:8 14:12,25 15:1,7,8,21 16:6,20 18:7,10,12,21 19:24 22:10 23:19 24:1 59:21	<b>occurs</b> 24:16 38:14	<b>outreach</b> 32:24	<b>persistent</b> 28:9
<b>nationally</b> 15:1	<b>OCO</b> 29:3	<b>overdue</b> 59:10	<b>personnel</b> 13:1 50:15 56:9
<b>nationwide</b> 36:23	<b>October</b> 14:24 15:20 51:9 59:6	<b>overseas</b> 29:2	<b>perspective</b> 20:9 22:24
<b>natural</b> 18:1	<b>odds</b> 18:14	<hr/> <b>P</b> <hr/>	<b>petty</b> 41:13 56:3
<b>nature</b> 31:9 34:7	<b>offered</b> 32:13	<b>paid</b> 29:8	<b>Phil</b> 41:1
<b>naval</b> 54:23,24 55:3,23 62:22	<b>office</b> 19:12 58:3 65:1,8	<b>painfully</b> 57:20	
<b>navy</b> 56:24	<b>officer</b> 44:12	<b>paint</b> 23:1	
<b>NDAA</b> 15:23 20:17 28:25 30:25 38:20 70:19	<b>officers</b> 44:10	<b>panel</b> 49:14	
	<b>offline</b> 34:23		
	<b>oil</b> 22:17		



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<b>phone</b> 17:9	5 33:2,7 34:18 35:7	<b>priority</b> 42:14 43:2,3	
<b>physically</b> 16:5,19	36:19 37:12,17 38:7,12, 15 39:23 40:5,9,16	<b>problem</b> 24:14 29:24	<hr/> <b>Q</b> <hr/>
<b>picked</b> 64:21	41:16 45:3 54:13 56:22	<b>process</b> 27:18 31:17 36:7,8 39:11,14,18 40:4	<b>qualify</b> 55:8
<b>picture</b> 23:1	62:3,10,21 64:22 66:7	41:19 54:22 57:6 65:4,7	<b>quality</b> 35:10 42:6 43:4 44:19 52:9
<b>piece</b> 25:10 50:8,9	70:10,23	66:3,14	<b>questions</b> 18:4 21:3 26:19 40:11 47:25 51:25 64:6
<b>pieces</b> 15:12 32:17	<b>Polk's</b> 62:17	<b>professional</b> 36:9	<b>quick</b> 62:16
<b>Pierson</b> 48:19 53:2 55:7,14 64:13 65:14 68:24	<b>populate</b> 50:21	<b>program</b> 13:3,5,11,16, 21 14:6 32:14,18 33:24 47:10 59:22,24 60:3	<b>quickly</b> 54:25
<b>Pine</b> 34:8	<b>populated</b> 48:8	<b>programs</b> 64:24	<b>quorum</b> 71:7
<b>place</b> 18:15 50:6,23 58:25 59:8 60:3	<b>Port</b> 70:12	<b>Progress</b> 34:18 64:23	<hr/> <b>R</b> <hr/>
<b>placeholder</b> 34:22	<b>portion</b> 41:18 53:14	<b>progressions</b> 27:15	<b>railroad</b> 41:8
<b>placement</b> 35:20,21	<b>position</b> 19:19 22:14 32:1 37:22 41:15,20 48:9 51:2,24	<b>prohibit</b> 25:12	<b>raised</b> 35:19
<b>places</b> 15:16	<b>positions</b> 15:11	<b>prohibiting</b> 34:9	<b>Raleigh</b> 33:21
<b>plan</b> 35:9,13,17 56:5	<b>positive</b> 70:22	<b>project</b> 47:11,12,13	<b>rallying</b> 69:15
<b>planned</b> 52:25	<b>possibility</b> 46:12,19	<b>projects</b> 51:19	<b>ranch</b> 64:17
<b>planning</b> 34:9 48:6 56:4	<b>possibly</b> 38:21	<b>prominence</b> 31:13	<b>Rand</b> 44:4 50:6
<b>plans</b> 39:17	<b>post</b> 61:6	<b>property</b> 32:17 34:8	<b>RANDOLPH</b> 64:3 68:2 69:18
<b>Plaquemines</b> 55:22 56:13 58:15	<b>pot</b> 33:22,25 43:12	<b>protect</b> 47:17	<b>Range</b> 45:25 46:2
<b>play</b> 30:12	<b>potential</b> 27:13 33:3 57:1	<b>protecting</b> 33:10	<b>ranges</b> 62:18
<b>player</b> 40:3 49:21	<b>practice</b> 41:19	<b>protection</b> 28:19 43:3	<b>Ranson</b> 69:9
<b>players</b> 33:11	<b>pre-storm</b> 24:25	<b>provide</b> 14:3 21:18	<b>rate</b> 22:7
<b>pleased</b> 64:20 65:7 69:20 70:4	<b>predominantly</b> 37:24	<b>provided</b> 29:1 47:12	<b>ready</b> 33:21 43:21,22
<b>pledge</b> 58:2	<b>presence</b> 65:17	<b>providing</b> 29:4	<b>real</b> 50:3 57:17 58:12 62:23
<b>plug</b> 49:14	<b>present</b> 56:8	<b>public</b> 20:24 53:7	<b>real-world</b> 63:9
<b>Poche</b> 28:4	<b>President</b> 21:14 55:22	<b>public/private</b> 44:17	<b>realignment</b> 36:8 37:16,23
<b>point</b> 22:22 24:9 37:2 45:5 56:20 60:25 70:9	<b>pressure</b> 39:5,7	<b>puck</b> 54:14	<b>reality</b> 28:11
<b>points</b> 20:8 64:19	<b>pretty</b> 14:14 60:3	<b>pulling</b> 26:12	<b>realize</b> 48:25 63:2
<b>policy</b> 37:4 53:7	<b>prevent</b> 31:1	<b>purchase</b> 32:14	<b>realm</b> 61:5
<b>political</b> 39:10	<b>previous</b> 47:14	<b>pursuing</b> 36:16	<b>rearrange</b> 13:12
<b>Polk</b> 17:18 25:10,15 26:1,8,13 27:6,14 28:1, 17,18 29:22 31:24 32:3,	<b>previously</b> 32:23 46:11	<b>push</b> 70:24	<b>reason</b> 48:8,12
	<b>primarily</b> 25:21 53:4	<b>pushing</b> 39:5,6	
	<b>primary</b> 22:3	<b>put</b> 18:20 42:5 50:1 55:1	
	<b>prioritize</b> 54:6	<b>putting</b> 28:6 35:25	



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<b>reasons</b> 19:11 41:14	<b>removed</b> 58:10	<b>results</b> 29:9,14	<b>RUSSO</b> 23:3,7,16 63:22 67:25
<b>rebuilt</b> 47:9	<b>replace</b> 45:6	<b>retaining</b> 54:7 59:24	
<b>receive</b> 67:9	<b>replaced</b> 48:16	<b>retention</b> 53:5 65:22, 24	<hr/> <b>S</b> <hr/>
<b>received</b> 13:20 31:17 35:22	<b>replacement</b> 59:10	<b>Retired</b> 52:21	<b>San</b> 44:5,13,14
<b>receiving</b> 36:2,23	<b>report</b> 29:16 66:15	<b>retirees</b> 52:6	<b>Saturday</b> 61:14
<b>recent</b> 37:11,15	<b>reports</b> 40:6	<b>retirement</b> 52:24	<b>Sawyer</b> 53:13
<b>recently</b> 27:7	<b>represent</b> 53:3	<b>retiring</b> 59:9	<b>scale</b> 25:24
<b>recentralizing</b> 57:24	<b>Representative</b> 25:20	<b>reuse</b> 38:11	<b>school</b> 14:19 32:12 35:15 61:23
<b>recognize</b> 33:12	<b>representatives</b> 28:24	<b>review</b> 65:1,8	<b>schools</b> 32:11 42:2
<b>recognized</b> 34:17 60:25 69:13	<b>represents</b> 53:14 55:4	<b>Reynolds</b> 25:20	<b>science</b> 13:17,20
<b>recognizes</b> 32:10,15	<b>republican</b> 29:4	<b>Rick</b> 69:9	<b>scores</b> 35:22
<b>recommendation</b> 18:19	<b>request</b> 63:4	<b>rings</b> 16:15 19:14	<b>scout</b> 48:14
<b>reconvene</b> 70:25	<b>required</b> 65:2	<b>risks</b> 16:20 29:19	<b>scrub</b> 31:18
<b>record</b> 63:13	<b>requirements</b> 50:8,12, 14	<b>Rita</b> 22:16	<b>search</b> 15:15
<b>Red</b> 59:5	<b>requires</b> 29:16 39:13 48:23	<b>River</b> 22:17	<b>seat</b> 50:24
<b>reduce</b> 39:17	<b>rescue</b> 15:15	<b>road</b> 43:23 64:14	<b>secondary</b> 41:24
<b>reduction</b> 50:20	<b>reserve</b> 18:21 19:24 48:1 54:23 55:3	<b>roads</b> 43:13	<b>seconded</b> 20:17 71:14
<b>Reese</b> 19:16 21:16,22 25:8 26:6,16 27:5,11 35:6 37:14 38:19 39:12, 21 60:19 61:7 62:13 63:12,25 67:7 68:20 71:11	<b>reserves</b> 18:20 48:10 49:5,23	<b>Robin</b> 44:4	<b>secret</b> 44:7
<b>references</b> 49:17	<b>resolution</b> 19:21	<b>rocket</b> 13:18	<b>Secretary</b> 18:23 33:11
<b>region</b> 54:5 62:6 70:16	<b>resource</b> 64:2	<b>role</b> 48:11	<b>section</b> 25:11
<b>regional</b> 23:19 58:20 69:8	<b>resources</b> 22:25 40:18 55:5 57:1 58:1 64:19 66:19,23 69:15	<b>roll</b> 27:10 49:14 70:22	<b>secure</b> 18:11,22 48:25
<b>regular</b> 55:21	<b>respect</b> 56:23	<b>rolling</b> 58:24	<b>security</b> 14:3 47:16
<b>relationship</b> 48:14 53:13 56:2	<b>response</b> 20:19 21:4, 17 22:2 23:19 26:20 40:13 52:1 64:8 71:16	<b>rollout</b> 48:2	<b>seeking</b> 31:16
<b>relieve</b> 25:1	<b>responsibilities</b> 21:12 25:2	<b>room</b> 27:20 67:16	<b>sees</b> 40:4
<b>rely</b> 22:1	<b>respectful</b> 16:5,19	<b>Roosevelt</b> 46:18 53:18	<b>SEMA</b> 54:3,9,19 56:15, 21 57:6 69:16
<b>remains</b> 50:18	<b>responsibly</b> 35:1	<b>Rouge</b> 13:24 14:2	<b>semi</b> 52:24
<b>remind</b> 34:25	<b>rest</b> 60:23	<b>round</b> 37:10 38:14,18 48:17	<b>senate</b> 16:1 31:2
<b>removal</b> 33:4	<b>restoration</b> 53:10	<b>route</b> 70:14	<b>Senator</b> 31:11,12
	<b>resubmitted</b> 31:21	<b>RS</b> 25:11	<b>senators</b> 17:15
		<b>RSVPS</b> 69:22	<b>send</b> 20:16 24:11,25
		<b>rubber</b> 64:14	<b>senior</b> 17:1 69:13
		<b>run</b> 16:21 27:1 41:8	<b>September</b> 59:6,8
		<b>running</b> 14:5	



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<b>sequester</b> 20:1 29:5 30:2	21	<b>spiel</b> 67:17	<b>state's</b> 65:17
<b>sequestered</b> 31:1	<b>sit</b> 23:24	<b>spill</b> 22:17	<b>statement</b> 42:24
<b>sequestration</b> 14:9,23	<b>sitting</b> 38:5 43:25 63:2	<b>split</b> 48:3	<b>states</b> 23:11,25 24:4,9, 13 25:25
<b>serve</b> 36:12 52:15 70:9	<b>size</b> 47:14	<b>sponsor</b> 33:14	<b>station</b> 32:6 36:19
<b>Serves</b> 30:6	<b>skiff</b> 48:23	<b>sponsored</b> 25:21	<b>stationed</b> 32:5
<b>service</b> 60:16	<b>skills</b> 56:11	<b>spouses</b> 42:5	<b>stations</b> 31:10
<b>services</b> 16:2 62:15	<b>Skipper</b> 55:21 56:14	<b>spread</b> 70:13	<b>Status</b> 64:11
<b>session</b> 27:7,18 39:25 69:2 71:3	<b>Skipper's</b> 55:21	<b>Spring</b> 71:1	<b>statute</b> 44:10
<b>sessions</b> 27:22	<b>skips</b> 49:1	<b>square</b> 49:25	<b>stay</b> 15:20 17:13 35:11 42:9 48:2 50:9 54:16 66:13
<b>set</b> 34:19	<b>slide</b> 51:21	<b>St</b> 70:12	<b>stayed</b> 70:3
<b>setting</b> 49:22	<b>smaller</b> 30:9 47:15	<b>staff</b> 18:23 31:11,23 33:12 35:9 40:6 61:9	<b>stays</b> 42:1
<b>sexy</b> 44:19	<b>Snake</b> 34:8	<b>staffers</b> 17:10	<b>steadfast</b> 40:7
<b>shape</b> 27:21	<b>soft</b> 19:9 52:9	<b>stage</b> 41:23 48:12	<b>STEM</b> 36:3
<b>sharing</b> 18:7 62:19	<b>solders</b> 15:2	<b>stakeholders</b> 33:3 36:23	<b>step</b> 58:13 71:2
<b>short</b> 20:5	<b>soldier</b> 32:5	<b>stall</b> 30:19	<b>stepped</b> 39:23
<b>shot</b> 30:20	<b>soldiers</b> 14:17 15:2,6 21:10 28:12 32:16	<b>stand</b> 19:14 41:12,15 54:18 56:21 66:6 69:4 71:18	<b>stepping</b> 53:25 57:23
<b>show</b> 40:1 67:3	<b>solutions</b> 34:4 62:14, 24	<b>standards</b> 32:9	<b>steps</b> 27:18 33:17 56:25
<b>side</b> 13:11 15:10 19:10, 15 25:10 30:15 52:10 59:15 66:2	<b>someplace</b> 44:12	<b>standing</b> 33:7 69:16	<b>stoic</b> 16:22
<b>sign</b> 24:5	<b>south</b> 25:3 46:4	<b>standpoint</b> 23:9,18	<b>stop</b> 22:19 25:24
<b>signal</b> 16:11	<b>Southeast</b> 52:12 53:4, 15,16 54:3 60:25 66:9 70:10	<b>stands</b> 50:8	<b>storage</b> 46:15,17,24 47:9,14
<b>signed</b> 42:19	<b>Southwest</b> 69:7,16	<b>Starbase</b> 13:15	<b>storm</b> 15:16 22:17 23:13
<b>significant</b> 31:9 32:10 53:23	<b>space</b> 37:24 38:8 58:6	<b>start</b> 13:6 20:6 24:14 47:22 48:10 52:14	<b>strategic</b> 29:17,23 30:3 32:20 51:20
<b>Silbert</b> 18:5 19:1 38:22 39:3 52:16,19 55:10,17 62:1 63:19 65:12 67:18	<b>spaces</b> 62:20	<b>started</b> 14:11 40:2 53:24 61:20	<b>strategy</b> 22:22 65:24
<b>similar</b> 23:12 34:15,19 51:22 65:24	<b>speak</b> 18:11 27:9 46:2 49:10 53:9 70:4	<b>starting</b> 14:6,21 16:1 54:18	<b>strike</b> 44:2 45:25 46:2 47:19 49:22 50:11 51:5, 8,10
<b>simplifies</b> 49:18,19	<b>speakers</b> 69:23	<b>starts</b> 15:2 17:12 66:18	<b>stripped</b> 28:16
<b>simply</b> 30:10	<b>speaking</b> 54:13	<b>state</b> 13:4,11 19:5,7,10, 14 20:2 22:9 24:10,17 25:25 33:13 34:11 35:14 41:18 43:11 45:21 53:3,6,19,24 57:11 60:24 64:20 65:9 66:18 67:10	<b>strong</b> 23:1 40:19 57:21 58:19 62:7
<b>simulator</b> 13:19	<b>species</b> 33:23		<b>strongest</b> 43:17,20,21
<b>simultaneous</b> 27:22	<b>specific</b> 18:13 63:7		<b>structure</b> 28:17,20 29:1,8,10,14 30:1,3
<b>sir</b> 18:10,25 23:6,15 26:22 40:24 46:23 68:8,	<b>specifically</b> 26:12 51:16		
	<b>specificities</b> 37:7		
	<b>spend</b> 29:6		



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31:10 33:10 34:19	<b>takes</b> 14:25	<b>terms</b> 28:1,19 29:23 32:3,23 33:10 36:14 53:24 54:10,15 56:17, 25 67:12 69:14	<b>timeline</b> 38:17
<b>struggling</b> 58:17	<b>taking</b> 20:7 57:23 60:13	<b>terribly</b> 41:22 44:23 45:14	<b>times</b> 33:6
<b>students</b> 13:10,16 35:22 36:2	<b>talk</b> 26:11 27:6 30:12 34:6,23,25 37:12 46:20 49:18 50:3 56:5 59:20 61:19 62:16 64:10	<b>terrific</b> 33:2	<b>tip</b> 69:11
<b>study</b> 53:18	<b>talked</b> 57:1,8 63:13 65:15,23	<b>territories</b> 24:13 30:13	<b>today</b> 14:8 17:3,19 28:10 32:4,21 33:20 52:13 65:23 66:25
<b>submitted</b> 70:2	<b>talking</b> 20:8 21:24 22:19,22 28:15	<b>territory</b> 41:24	<b>told</b> 28:4 68:12
<b>success</b> 65:19	<b>talks</b> 19:22	<b>testament</b> 39:15	<b>ton</b> 48:7
<b>successful</b> 32:14 66:11	<b>Tammany</b> 70:13	<b>Texas</b> 44:13 46:5	<b>tool</b> 30:25
<b>suffer</b> 36:20	<b>tangible</b> 67:3	<b>thing</b> 13:14 14:7 17:14, 16,22 21:6 24:6 32:7 38:12 39:9 42:25 44:19 53:1 54:22 56:23 68:25	<b>top</b> 28:1 32:19 33:8 42:9 57:6
<b>summer</b> 32:22 35:23 58:23 71:1	<b>tap</b> 43:14	<b>things</b> 13:12 22:1 23:13 25:7 26:1 31:15, 23 35:8,17 42:6 44:16 45:19,22 49:20 53:11 54:1,16 64:16 65:6,15 70:17	<b>topic</b> 35:3
<b>superintendents</b> 13:25	<b>taped</b> 70:1	<b>thinking</b> 24:15	<b>totally</b> 59:25
<b>support</b> 20:17 32:3 34:16 39:14 40:1,17 45:8,11,12,15,21,22,23 46:7 49:4 54:7 59:4 62:22 64:11 65:13 66:16,20 68:4 69:2,3 70:18 71:4	<b>tapped</b> 24:1 59:11,13	<b>Thirty-five</b> 27:23	<b>touch</b> 14:7
<b>supporters</b> 30:6	<b>tapping</b> 60:4	<b>thoughts</b> 67:15	<b>tower</b> 56:10 63:17
<b>supporting</b> 42:8 45:3 69:14	<b>target</b> 62:18	<b>thousand</b> 27:22,24	<b>town</b> 32:2
<b>supposed</b> 47:20	<b>task</b> 30:22	<b>thousands</b> 40:1	<b>tracking</b> 30:25
<b>surprised</b> 30:23	<b>tax</b> 32:13 67:11,12	<b>threatened</b> 27:13	<b>train</b> 14:20 37:25
<b>surrounding</b> 32:2	<b>taxes</b> 53:10	<b>threats</b> 57:5 58:4,9	<b>trained</b> 30:9
<b>suspect</b> 57:2	<b>teach</b> 13:17	<b>three-year</b> 47:11	<b>training</b> 14:16,17,18 25:16 34:10 35:23,25 37:24 44:5,8 45:17 62:17,20 63:9
<b>sustaining</b> 56:12	<b>teacher</b> 57:12	<b>throw</b> 68:25	<b>transition</b> 48:10 52:23 59:19
<b>swayed</b> 55:12	<b>teachers</b> 35:24,25	<b>tight</b> 66:19	<b>transitioned</b> 60:22
<b>Swift</b> 69:6	<b>teaching</b> 36:1	<b>till</b> 70:3	<b>transport</b> 15:16
<b>system</b> 32:12 65:10	<b>team</b> 24:25 28:16 37:20 39:7 40:3 58:14,20 62:7	<b>time</b> 17:10 25:5 26:22 30:12 31:21 35:14 41:3 43:20 45:9 46:24 48:8 52:4 58:24 60:21,22 65:4 66:6 70:5	<b>transportation</b> 16:11 21:25 42:20
<b>systems</b> 22:9 23:24 35:15 65:17	<b>tech</b> 49:11	<b>timeframe</b> 41:10 44:3 47:22	<b>trip</b> 56:4 57:8 63:20
<hr/> <b>T</b> <hr/>			
<b>table</b> 37:20 50:25 56:6 57:23,25 58:10 67:20	<b>technical</b> 69:24 70:1	<b>timeframes</b> 48:1	<b>troops</b> 27:14 45:17 67:9
<b>tail</b> 50:15	<b>technology</b> 13:17		<b>truth</b> 15:23
	<b>telephone</b> 20:24		<b>TSA</b> 56:10 63:17
	<b>telling</b> 50:12		<b>turn</b> 42:4
	<b>tells</b> 49:15		<b>turned</b> 37:19
	<b>ten</b> 21:23 28:24 53:3 62:4		<b>turning</b> 60:5
	<b>ten-parish</b> 54:5		<b>turnout</b> 69:20
	<b>termination</b> 42:17		



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<b>turnover</b> 58:23	<b>venture</b> 40:19	<b>week</b> 13:17 27:10 33:20 59:2	<hr/> <b>Y</b> <hr/>
<b>two-week</b> 14:18	<b>versus</b> 48:2	<b>weeks</b> 15:25 28:4 31:7, 24 40:5 59:9 61:8	<b>y'all</b> 23:12 27:1 44:9 66:7
<b>type</b> 16:7	<b>view</b> 65:18	<b>West</b> 14:2	<b>yardstick</b> 37:5
<b>types</b> 22:11	<b>views</b> 47:18	<b>WHIPP</b> 31:4	<b>year</b> 13:5,6 14:11,16,24 16:21 17:4 19:8 23:25 29:1,15 34:16,21,23 35:8 38:24 39:2,5 47:21 52:21 61:22 64:22 66:18 67:10
<b>Typically</b> 50:15	<b>VISER</b> 20:13 40:23 43:9,18 46:14,22 47:5 48:4 49:7 50:5 51:6,17 68:16	<b>Whiteman</b> 46:5	<b>years</b> 15:3 17:3 18:17 24:22 32:1,8 51:22 55:24 61:20
<hr/> <b>U</b> <hr/>	<b>visibility</b> 50:22 60:23	<b>Whiting</b> 55:23 56:4 57:8 63:23	<b>you-all</b> 20:6 71:4
<b>U.S.</b> 53:17	<b>visible</b> 45:14	<b>wing</b> 42:10 43:2 51:7 65:21	<b>Young</b> 59:22
<b>U10s</b> 45:6	<b>vision</b> 64:18	<b>wings</b> 46:4,5 51:9	<b>youngsters</b> 60:10
<b>ultimately</b> 34:2 38:4	<b>vision</b> 64:18	<b>wise</b> 57:14	<b>Youth</b> 13:3
<b>umbrella</b> 51:9	<b>VISOR</b> 71:9	<b>wonderful</b> 52:23	<hr/> <b>Z</b> <hr/>
<b>underestimate</b> 48:20	<b>vital</b> 70:11	<b>Woodpecker</b> 34:8	<b>Zone</b> 14:13
<b>understand</b> 41:19	<b>Vitter</b> 31:11	<b>woods</b> 37:9	
<b>understanding</b> 29:19 36:13 42:19 48:14	<b>vocal</b> 28:7	<b>word</b> 30:24	
<b>understatement</b> 62:11	<b>voice</b> 46:3 54:17	<b>wore</b> 60:21	
<b>underway</b> 31:23	<b>void</b> 57:22	<b>work</b> 13:2 20:22 29:11 30:21 32:10 34:17 37:19 42:7 47:1 48:15 49:2 51:19 54:9 60:21 61:2,11 64:23 65:22 68:3	
<b>uniform</b> 60:22	<b>volunteer</b> 66:22	<b>worked</b> 52:4 58:13 69:6,8	
<b>unique</b> 36:4 62:20	<b>vote</b> 20:7,24 32:25	<b>workforce</b> 53:10	
<b>unit</b> 24:22 48:1 50:16	<b>voted</b> 16:1,3	<b>working</b> 14:25 33:1 34:3,15 42:21,22 44:16, 17,24 45:20,24 46:7 48:13,14 55:20 66:4	
<b>units</b> 14:16,20 16:9 28:17 48:8	<b>votes</b> 20:7	<b>worst</b> 44:6	
<b>unknown</b> 50:19	<hr/> <b>W</b> <hr/>	<b>wrap</b> 70:17	
<b>UNO</b> 65:18	<b>walked</b> 28:23	<b>wrapped</b> 71:3	
<b>update</b> 19:4 27:12	<b>Walker</b> 54:25 55:8,11 57:3	<b>writing</b> 20:22	
<b>upkeep</b> 43:13 49:19	<b>wanted</b> 14:1,7 31:18 70:4	<b>written</b> 17:14 27:24	
<b>uptake</b> 46:20	<b>war</b> 17:6	<b>wrong</b> 49:16	
<b>user</b> 44:23	<b>Warfare</b> 65:17		
<b>usual</b> 26:23	<b>Washington</b> 28:5 36:6 57:4 59:23		
<b>utility</b> 14:15 23:9	<b>waste</b> 25:12		
<hr/> <b>V</b> <hr/>	<b>ways</b> 36:16,25		
<b>vacuum</b> 57:18	<b>Weapon</b> 46:17		
<b>value-added</b> 67:4	<b>weapons</b> 46:12,15,23 47:9,14		

