



Hurricane Katrina: Better Plans and Exercises Need to Guide the Military's Response to Catastrophic Natural Disasters

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Highlights

Hurricane Katrina was one of the largest natural disasters in U.S. history. Despite a large deployment of resources at all levels, many have regarded the federal response as inadequate. GAO has a body of ongoing work that covers the federal government's preparedness and response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This statement summarizes key points from GAO's report on the military's response to Katrina (GAO-06-643), which was issued earlier this month. It addresses (1) the support that the military provided in responding to Hurricane Katrina along with some of the challenges faced and key lessons learned; (2) actions needed to address these lessons, including GAO's recommendations to the Secretary of Defense; and (3) the extent to which the military is taking actions to identify and address the lessons learned. In its report, GAO made several recommendations to improve the military response to catastrophic disasters. The recommendations called for updating the National Response Plan to reflect proactive functions the military could perform in a catastrophic incident; improving military plans and exercises; improving National Guard, Reserve, and active force integration; and resolving response problems associated with damage assessment, communication,

search and rescue, and logistics issues. The Department of Defense (DOD) partially concurred with all of the recommendations.

Full Report

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