

FEMA authors response plans for catastrophes in four states

By Scott Lindlaw
Associated Press Writer

OAKLAND — The Federal Emergency Management Agency is quietly drawing up plans for a handful of disasters: devastating earthquakes beneath San Francisco and St. Louis and catastrophic storms in South Florida and Hawaii, FEMA's chief said Thursday.

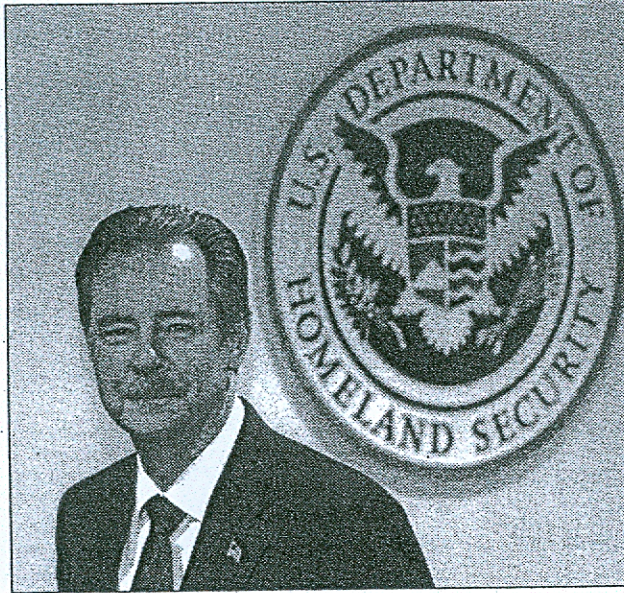
In a departure from its traditional expectation that states develop such responses, the agency is forming "base plans" for responding to specific calamities, FEMA Administrator R. David Paulison said in an interview Thursday with The Associated Press.

FEMA officials expect to finish plans for a massive Bay Area quake by the end of the year and are at work on another response blueprint for a large quake on the New Madrid fault, which runs from southern Illinois to northeastern Arkansas and lurks beneath St. Louis, Paulison said.

FEMA also is preparing for a Category 5 hurricane in the Miami area and has nearly completed response guidelines for a failure of the 143-mile dike around Lake Okeechobee, northwest of Miami, he said. About 45,000 people live in flood-prone areas around the lake.

Also, the agency recently began assembling response plans for a catastrophic hurricane in Hawaii, Paulison said.

Last year, Democratic Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer of California expressed dismay that the federal government did not have a plan to respond to a catastrophic



Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP

FEMA Chief David Paulison poses for a portrait in Oakland on Thursday.

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earthquake in this state.

In a March 2006 AP interview, Paulison's boss, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, said their complaints were "unwarranted."

"You don't want us to write a plan and say, 'Here, San Francisco, this is what you're going to do,'" Chertoff said. Rather, he said, officials from DHS had met with California emergency-management planners and asked to review the

state plan.

"They've got to write it," Chertoff said then of the state's primary role in a response plan.

Yet by late last year, FEMA's regional offices — not Washington headquarters — were well into the authoring of some of the planning documents.

"We recognize that we've got to do catastrophic planning," Paulison said in the interview at FEMA's regional

headquarters. The process of developing the plans began before Boxer and Feinstein aired their concerns, he said.

A spokesman for Chertoff did not immediately return an after-hours call for comment.

The federal government spent \$5 million to develop the Florida plans, about \$17 million for the New Madrid plan, \$1.5 million for Hawaii and \$1 million for northern California.

Next year, FEMA hopes to obtain additional funding to write another plan for an earthquake catastrophe in Southern California, said Nancy Ward, the regional administrator for FEMA's region IX, which includes California, Arizona, Nevada, Guam, Hawaii and other Pacific islands.

FEMA has adopted a more aggressive stance toward disasters since Hurricane Katrina devastated parts of the Southeast in 2005. FEMA officials said the agency worked closely with the state and city to complete a New Orleans-area disaster plan prior to hurricane season.

Paulison called it a "culture change" at FEMA.

Paulison said the old model of waiting for states to plead for federal help was a recipe for "sequential failure."

"We've got to go in as partners. We've got to stand side by side," he said.

"We're going to move in early, we're not going to wait for the state to ask for things before we start moving them, we're going to anticipate what the needs are, and then when they ask for them, we're going to be there," he said. "The worst that can happen is they don't need them."

The intent of California-financed "Houlihan Plan" was to provide time-tested ways to terminate our Constitutional government and Bill of Rights. Five sure-fire ways were suggested to move the U.S.A. under the regional (world) government system. The North American Union is regional world government. The Homeland Security Agency is the basis of a militarized government which is required by the General & Complete Disarmament Law - Public Law 87-297