



National Traffic System
The American Radio Relay League Inc
Newington, Connecticut 06111 USA

Robert E Griffin
Chairman
NTS Pacific Area Staff

Steven R Phillips
Chairman
NTS Central Area Staff

Joseph A Ames Jr
Chairman
NTS Eastern Area Staff

July 29, 2015

Mr. Brian Milesosky, Chairperson
Programs & Services Committee
American Radio Relay League, Inc.
225 Main Street
Newington, Connecticut 06111

PDF file sent via email only

Dear Mr. Milesosky,

The NTS Area Staff Chairs received, considered and have authorized this joint reply to your July 24 email sent on behalf of your Committee. Thank you for the Committee's appropriate willingness to communicate directly with the NTS leadership. We are hopeful that a candid and transparent relationship will ensue.

FEMA Contact. The Committee expresses concern about the lack of prior notice to the MoA point-of-contact or other "appropriate" ARRL officials about direct interaction between FEMA and NTS. This expression may be well intentioned, but the assertion that the initial contact with FEMA was inappropriate, "no matter which side initiated it," is, in our view, at best a biased rationalization. The issue of who initiated contact is absolutely central to resolving this concern. Your email response seems to imply that facts regarding the initiation of contact are somehow unproven. To the contrary, the facts are well documented.

In addition, your Committee appears to assume that there was an attempt on the part of NTS to somehow obscure its actions, yet the reality is that contact was initiated by FEMA staff acting under the direction of its supervisors.

As with all professional environments, individuals tend to rely on proven and reliable associates. This situation was no exception. A FEMA staff member who already had an "on the ground" working relationship with an NTS Eastern Area Staff official simply reached out to a trusted associate for guidance.

Nature of Contact. The nature and purpose of the discussion are also important. The initial discussions with FEMA were only exploratory in nature. The telephone calls in question might be viewed as a preliminary discussion, much like a sales engineer taking an initial telephone call from a customer who wishes to determine if a product or service will meet his needs.

Only experienced NTS management staff members have the operational and technical

knowledge needed to answer the technical questions presented by FEMA. These questions required specific expertise in areas involving network topography, message throughput, network interoperability, frequency management, operational procedures and message formats. These exploratory inquiries from FEMA were prerequisites that had to be shared before FEMA could even determine if it was appropriate to pursue an official working relationship with NTS through the ARRL MoA. While NTS offered a theoretical framework for potential exercise participation, the document's intent, as we communicated clearly to FEMA's officials as the basis of our interaction, was as a starting point for discussions and was hardly a circumvention as your Committee appears to imply.

In this case, it is also essential to remember that responsibility for the action of initiating contact cannot be divorced from the issue of governmental agency authority. Neither NTS staff nor the ARRL can dictate FEMA action, notwithstanding the MoA to which the Committee refers; nor would it be appropriate for NTS management to rebuff such inquiries. There was no attempt on the part of NTS to somehow obscure its actions by failing to inform Mr. Corey because it had not yet been determined whether exercise participation was practical or even possible.

The proposition that all contact must be through Mr. Mike Corey as the point-of-contact with FEMA is grave in its portent. While we assume Mr. Corey has a firm grip on his duties, there nonetheless remains considerable doubt as to whether Mr. Corey would have been qualified to answer the questions FEMA posed during this initial, exploratory phase.

Consider the following:

- To the best of our knowledge, Mr. Corey has never held any leadership position or field appointment within the NTS.
- While acting in his capacity as an ARRL employee, Mr. Corey has never reached out to the NTS Area Staff to introduce himself, inquire about the status of NTS or NTSD, its current operations, or to otherwise inquire about the status of NTS programs.
- While acting in his capacity as an ARRL employee, Mr. Corey has never reached out to the NTS Area Staff to explore methods by which NTS could be integrated into any emergency planning activities.
- During his tenure with ARRL Headquarters, Mr. Corey has never directly inquired into the many steps NTS has taken to modernize its capabilities and enhance its capacity to provide nationwide, survivable messaging capability using modern, automated digital methods.
- NTS management was not included as a stakeholder in any meaningful way during the development of the new *ARES Manual*, or the development to date of any national emergency communications guidelines affecting national network operations (if any exist).
- The arbitrary discontinuation of the *Public Service Communications Manual* and the deletion of its traditional *Introduction* and *Forward*, which describe the organizational relationship and cooperation between ARES, NTS, and HQ, leaves

NTS without portfolio and places our “official” mission in limbo, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by ARES leaders nationally.

- Mr. Corey and your Committee have clearly circulated misinformation regarding the nature of the relationship between the IC213 message format and the Radiogram format -- a situation causing confusion and harm to the NTS mission.

The Derogation of NTS: Since the retirement of George Hart W1NJM, ARRL’s first and only Communications Manager, the disposal of his files and archives, and the subsequent “zero-budgeting” of NTS (ca. 2005), ARRL as an entity has marginalized NTS and its capabilities in the emergency communications planning process. NTS survives today only through the dedication of its operators.

Clearly, ARRL’s recent history belies a false assumption that long-haul messaging capability is not needed. Recently, this has been evident by the purposeful exclusion, if not outright contempt of NTS, expressed through the actions of the Committee and Mr. Corey, and as illustrated above. Ironically, it is this very environment that motivated FEMA to approach NTS.

We also wish to express our discomfort with what appears to be little more than an attempt by your Committee to use the situation to subordinate NTS initiative as an unauthorized action in a chain of authority. Any “awkward” situation or embarrassment (as expressed in your email) stems not from the measured and responsible actions of NTS management, but rather from the dilemma created by your Committee in effectively misapplying the FEMA MoA to shut down cooperation between responsible NTS leadership officials and FEMA representatives.

In a volunteer organization, authority is predicated on cooperation and respect. Unfortunately, for some time now, NTS has not been granted even the minimum courtesy of inclusion in the normative policy-development and program-planning process offered a stakeholder. We find it ironic that the Committee insists that NTS respond and communicate at times when it is in the interest of the Committee—or support staff—while the same courtesy is not afforded NTS management when the NTS program would have been well served. Successful relations in such organizations rest on inclusiveness and mutual trust.

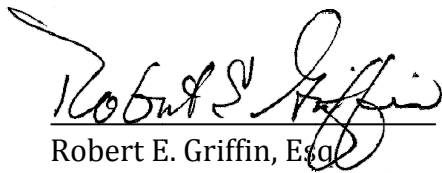
It is the sincere desire of NTS, its management and its volunteers to work in an effective and cooperative manner with the ARRL Board of Directors and your Committee. Such a relationship calls for a seat at the table and the respect and courtesy typically granted to a peer. Despite considerable investment in modernization, automation and improved participant-training and development, NTS and its operators have been largely disenfranchised by the Committee and others at the policy and resource allocation level. It is our position that NTS has earned and should expect the same level of courtesy and consideration afforded other operating interests within the ARRL family, including the ARES program, contesting and other operating activities.

While we are sensitive to your concerns and wish to be responsive to the Committee's role, the three Area Staff Chairs view the July 24 email as not only misguided, but somewhat reflective of the on-going derogation of NTS based largely on a failure to understand its history, management structure, mission or capabilities.

At all times, NTS acted responsibly, professionally and honorably. We ask only for mutuality in this regard. It is our desire this episode will lead directly to a literal "seat at the table" in Newington, with formal recognition of NTS as the lineal descendants of the Founders and their mission to organize and improve amateur radio traffic handling in service to our country.

Respectfully,

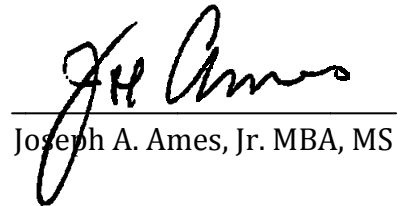
for the National Traffic System:



Robert E. Griffin, Esq



Steven R. Phillips MSEE



Joseph A. Ames, Jr. MBA, MS

CC: (in alphabetical order)
Mr. Thomas Abernathy
Dr. Kay Craigie
Robert Famiglio, Esq
Mr, James Fenstermaker
Mr. David Norris
Mr. Richard Norton
Mr. David Patton
Mr. Doug Rehman
Richard Roderick, Esq
Mr. David Sumner
Mr. Arthur Zygielbaum
NTS Eastern Area Staff
NTS Central Area Staff
NTS Pacific Area Staff

Joe Ames Jr

From: Brian Mileschosky [n5zgt@swcp.com]
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2015 6:40 PM
To: 'Steve Phillips'; 'Griffin, Robert, K6YR'; 'Ames, Joe W3JY'
Cc: Craigie, Kay (President); k1zz@arrl.org; Corey, Michael, KI1U
Subject: NTS/FEMA meeting, presentation

Joe, Steve, and Robert –

ARRL's Programs and Services Committee met at ARRL headquarters on Thursday 16 July with Mike Corey as well as several other Board members and officers, and discussed NTS leaderships' 07 July 2015 teleconference meeting with FEMA, its "Proposed Support Approach /FEMA" proposal dated 02 July 2015, and its signed follow-up letter dated 10 July 2015.

With good intentions to promote the service of NTS and, thereby, the ARRL, contact was established with FEMA (no matter which side initiated it) without prior coordination with appropriate ARRL officials. This has put us in a very awkward situation since NTS is an ARRL program and, as such, is accountable to ARRL's Board of Directors. It allowed the League's designated responsible point of contact with FEMA (Mike Corey) to be blindsided. It suggested an agreement that the ARRL, for legal or ethical reasons, could not support without prior review. It placed us in a position where we might need to countermand an agreement, or parts thereof, that is unacceptable to the League because of legal or organizational conditions that the initiators were not aware of. That would make our organization look really bad in the view of partnering agencies. While I in no way want to impugn your intentions or loyalty, this situation is one that needs to be avoided in the future for the good of the ARRL and ham radio in general.

Mike Corey is ARRL's only authorized point of contact to FEMA as per the ARRL-FEMA Memorandum of Agreement. According to his office, nobody from within the NTS program informed Mike of this meeting, proposal, or signed follow-up letter or engaged in any coordination with him. Mike saw, for the very first time, the proposal and signed follow-up letter during the PSC meeting when copies of both were circulated to all in attendance. His only indication that a meeting had occurred at all was when he was contacted by FEMA, four days after the meeting had occurred. Mike was unable to provide explanation to his FEMA counterpart when asked.

Needless to say, regardless of this meeting and proposal's best intentions or outcome, the lack of communication and coordination could have (and may have) put ARRL into an awkward and embarrassing situation with a key national partner. There appears to be no reason why there could not have been communication with Mike's office, or with any senior ARRL official in the event of his absence, between or before July 2 and 10.

PSC has instructed Mike Corey's office to closely review the proposal discussed with FEMA as well as the commitments and vision expressed in NTS's signed follow-up letter, flag portions that may present any concern organizationally, and identify others that ARRL may be able to assist with or provide complementary ideas. In the meantime and going forward, per ARRL's MOA with FEMA as well as ARRL Bylaw 31, NTS leadership and its designees are requested to coordinate all future FEMA engagements (meetings, presentations, proposals, etc.) with Mike Corey's office as far in advance as practical.

ARRL appreciates the efforts and dedication of NTS, its leadership, and its volunteers. However it is essential that authorized League officials be made aware of and participate in the advance coordination of all activities involving ARRL's national partners. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

73,
Brian N5ZGT
Chairman, ARRL Programs and Services Committee

CC: N3KN, K1ZZ, KI1U, PSC Committee

Joe Ames Jr

From: Turner, Chris [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2015 9:36 AM
To: w3jy@delcoares.org
Subject: National Traffic System

Mr. Ames,

I am reaching out to you on behalf of FEMA concerning the possibility or potential of involvement by ARRL resources in supporting an exercise that will be conducted by FEMA in the future. And perhaps building upon that exercise a relationship that could be utilized to support future catastrophic events from a communications perspective. In particular, let me provide you with a hypothetical scenario: Situation – a cyber-attack takes down the nations primary PSTN. The FEMA Administrator needs to get a message to each of his ten Regional Administrators. What are the possibilities of a radio gram being originated in the National Capital Region and being sent through the NTS and area networks to the regional networks and to an end user that would deliver the message to the FEMA Regional Office for consumption. And of course we understand the first and last mile of this message traffic is the most problematic. Whom would I or a designated FEMA representative deliver a paper message to, that would start the “By RF Only” process and who ultimately would deliver that message? Obviously we understand that we are asking a lot and would understand if you opted not to participate. I would like to discuss further with you the possibilities for this endeavor at your convenience.

v/r

Christopher L. Turner

Christopher L. Turner
Deputy Director
Disaster Emergency Communications Division
Federal Emergency Management Agency
[REDACTED]

“To become a courageous leader, you must realize that accepting responsibility is not optional, it’s mandatory.” David Cottrell



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Joseph A Ames Jr
Chairman
NTS Eastern Area Staff
David J Streubel
Eastern Area Digital Coordinator

Stephen R Phillips
Chairman
NTS Central Area Staff
Gary D Jones
Central Area Digital Coordinator

Robert E Griffin
Chairman
NTS Pacific Area Staff
Charles R Verdon
Pacific Area Digital Coordinator

Joseph A Nollmeyer
Chairman
NTS Winlink Committee

James A Wades
Director
NCERT Working Group

July 10, 2015

Mr Eric L Edwards
Disaster Emergency Communications Division
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20472

Sent PDF via email: Valerie.Smith3@fema.dhs.gov

Re: *Telephone Conference of July 7, 2015*
National Traffic System - FEMA

Dear Mr Edwards,

On behalf of the National Traffic System's leadership team and our two-thousand volunteer operators, thank you for reaching out to NTS to learn about our survivable, interoperable, radio messaging network and how it might contribute to our nation's disaster response preparations. We are pleased Tuesday's presentation to your team was well received and we are excited by your invitation to develop direct cooperation between FEMA and the NTS.

NTS is sponsored by the ARRL which enjoys a long-standing relationship with FEMA. We desire to build on the foundation established by the memorandum of agreement, signed one year ago next week, by ARRL president Dr Craigie and FEMA administrator Mr Fugate.

NTS uses HF radio spectrum for medium and long-haul communications across the continental US and Canada, even into Europe. We interface with local networks using VHF and UHF frequencies, providing local connectivity to government agencies and NGO relief operations. Moreover, we know you are aware NTS utilizes a variety of frequency-agile modes and methods, including digital systems, to provide emergency connectivity in times of communication blackout.

Specifically, FEMA expressed interest in using the universal Radiogram format, which contains the basic elements of the IC-213 memo form, while incorporating the essential network management and routing information you require. You also requested "last-mile" Radio-email connectivity for emergency backup and are interested in our NTS Communications Emergency Response Team concept (NCERT) to supplement existing NTS infrastructure and its high level of accountability and quality control, afforded by our standardized network procedures.

NTS will work with FEMA to develop standard guidelines to define the extent and nature of our support to FEMA, as well as state and local emergency management agencies. We are delighted by your suggestion of table top exercise, within the next few weeks, and will arrange it with your team.

Finally, we envision a formal memorandum of agreement or understanding between NTS and FEMA, outlining our cooperation and setting goals for the development of a beneficial relationship.

On behalf of the entire NTS, we look forward to continuing this discussion.

Sincerely,

The National Traffic System

CC: Mr Chris Turner, Deputy Dir DECD
Mr Ross Merlin, Director DHS SHARES
NTS/jaa