

Mr. Robbin SR

TELEPHONE OR VERBAL CONVERSATION RECORD

For use of this form, see AR 340-15; the proponent agency is The Adjutant General's Office.

DATE

File

1315

8 Jun 1978

SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION

Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Barriers

INCOMING CALL

PERSON CALLING Governor Edwards State of Louisiana	ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER AND EXTENSION
PERSON CALLED General Marshall	OFFICE	PHONE NUMBER AND EXTENSION

OUTGOING CALL

PERSON CALLING	OFFICE	PHONE NUMBER AND EXTENSION
PERSON CALLED	ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER AND EXTENSION

SUMMARY OF CONVERSATION

1. I told Governor Edwards that I understood he had talked with COL Rush a month or so ago about the barrier portion of the Lake Pontchartrain Protection Project. COL Rush discussed this with me, and I thought his answers were sound. My problem is that now you have asked the Corps of Engineers to reconsider the plan. We are complying with the Federal Court and are undertaking a comprehensive 2-3 year study that would look at the barriers and alternatives. This is an authorized project with funds appropriated by the Congress. We are about to contract for the New Orleans Marina floodwall and we have been authorized by the Court to continue such work but if there is any question of the withdrawal of local assurances, then we cannot continue the work. That worries me.

2. Governor Edwards said, "Between you and me I do not think you will ever get the barriers finally approved. I was careful to point out to the press that insofar as the levee system is concerned, full steam ahead. The Corps, as I understand it, has two projects which are engineeringly and financially separate." Guy LeMieux says if you build the levees and do not build the barriers, you would have moderate flooding.

3. I told the Governor that once in ^{about} 100 years at the present elevation of the levee system, those levees would be overtopped and fail, and you would have flooding and a catastrophe.

4. Governor Edwards said that tomorrow you can't start building the barrier--it is not going to start happening within the next ten years. Guy LeMieux inadvertently made reference to dropping the barriers at the meeting and the press picked it up. Nothing is going to happen within the next 18 months. With this controversy over the barriers, he said we may never get them, but he believes construction of the barriers would be helpful.

5. I told the Governor that we are in the process of building levees that are only safe with the barriers. Levees alone will provide some protection but will give a sense of false security. We are spending money annually on the levees, assuming barriers will be build. I told him that if he assumes we will not have the barriers and says that publicly, then that casts doubts on assurances of local cooperation.

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That says to me as a Federal Manager, "I will stop work." It is true that Chalmette can stand alone, but the Lake Front Floodwall at Marina (contract to be awarded in August) cannot stand without the barriers. I explained that the Corps has used barriers successfully in other areas and did not agree with his presumption that we cannot demonstrate the worth of barriers (although I admitted that there would be a lot of passion involved).

6. Governor Edwards said that we are getting all the problems and no solutions. He is not blaming me or COL Rush, but he has been led to believe that there would be no jeopardy in the levee structures. I told him that I could demonstrate that is in error, that the heights of the levees we are now building are adequate only if you have the barriers.

7. Governor Edwards suggested that we look at our respective schedules and set up an afternoon meeting in the Governor's office at which the press would be present with principal political figures and representatives of the Corps of Engineers. Among those invited would be Mayor of New Orleans, President of the Police Jury of St. Bernard Parish, Senator Russell Long, Senator Bennett Johnston, and Representatives Lindy Boggs and Robert Livingston.

8. Later Governor Edwards called and we agreed to a meeting at 1100 on 11 July 1978 at the New Orleans District Office.


R. C. MARSHALL
Major General, USA
Division Engineer

CF: Col. Phillips
R. Harris
H. Kassner

R. Resta

F. Boggs

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