1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
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3	ARKANSAS GAME & FISH COMMISSION, :
4	Petitioner : No. 11-597
5	v. :
6	UNITED STATES :
7	x
8	Washington, D.C.
9	Wednesday, October 3, 2012
10	
11	The above-entitled matter came on for oral
12	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States
13	at 10:54 a.m.
14	APPEARANCES:
15	JAMES F. GOODHART, ESQ., Little Rock, Arkansas; on
16	behalf of Petitioner.
17	EDWIN S. KNEEDLER, ESQ., Deputy Solicitor General,
18	Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; on behalf of
19	Respondent.
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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:54 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	next this morning in Case No. 11-597, Arkansas Game &
5	Fish Commission v. The United States.
6	Mr. Goodhart.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF JAMES F. GOODHART
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. GOODHART: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
10	please the Court:
11	The issue is whether temporary flooding can
12	ever constitute a taking under the Fifth Amendment. The
13	Federal Circuit said, no, never, ruling that the
14	permanent consequences of the Government's actions were
15	not relevant solely because its actions were not
16	permanent.
17	Respectfully, Your Honors, that cannot be
18	the rule. There are at least two reasons why.
19	First, the United States must provide just
20	compensation when its direct physical invasion
21	substantially intrudes upon a landowner's protected
22	property interest, regardless of the particular mode or
23	duration of that invasion.
24	And, second, the Federal Circuit's decision
25	conflicts with fundamental guarantees that the Takings

- 1 Clause is intended to preserve, and, therefore, is
- 2 manifestly unjust.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: What about this Court's
- 4 precedent in, what is it, the Sanguinetti case, where
- 5 the Court said that for there to be Government
- 6 responsibility it is at least necessary that the
- 7 overflow constitute a permanent invasion of the land
- 8 amounting to an appropriation, not merely an injury, to
- 9 property?
- 10 We would have to withdraw or modify that
- 11 statement, would we not, if you -- if your -- your
- 12 argument prevails?
- MR. GOODHART: Justice Ginsburg, we would
- 14 say that you would not have to overrule Sanguinetti
- 15 because the language there, "permanent flooding
- 16 invasion, " was -- was not how the case turned on the
- 17 result. The court there did make an inaccurate summary
- 18 of the early flood-taking cases -- Pumpelly, Lynah, and
- 19 Kress. None of those cases said that flooding had to be
- 20 permanent. The facts in those cases did have a
- 21 permanent condition of flooding, but that was not made a
- 22 requirement. And none of those cases said that you
- 23 could not have temporary flood invasions.
- But, Your Honor --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Was Sanguinetti -- had we

1	had	anv	temporary	takings	cases	before	Sanquinetti?

- 2 MR. GOODHART: Justice Scalia --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: In other words, was
- 4 Sanguinetti expressing a special rule for flooding, or
- 5 was it -- was it simply saying there can't be a
- 6 temporary taking? If the latter, that dictum if it's
- 7 dictum or a holding if it was a holding has already been
- 8 overruled by our later temporary takings cases.
- 9 MR. GOODHART: Justice Scalia, there --
- 10 you're correct. There was no temporary takings prior to
- 11 Sanguinetti. The Court there didn't have occasion to
- 12 address temporary flooding, whether that could
- 13 constitute a taking. And all of the cases after
- 14 Sanguinetti that have actually addressed whether a
- 15 direct temporary invasion will -- that substantially
- 16 intrudes upon property interests have held that, yes,
- 17 you can have a temporary --
- 18 JUSTICE BREYER: Which ones? Because I
- 19 counted eleven cases which either say, state, some seem
- 20 to hold or support the proposition that when it's
- 21 temporary with a flood it's a trespass, and where it's
- 22 permanent it's a taking. Okay?
- I mean, I have eleven. And so I've got from
- 24 my law clerk. And then I tried to see, well, what are
- 25 the ones that say the opposite? And so far we've come

- 1 up with zero. All right?
- 2 You could argue that there were three cases
- 3 during the war which might be read that way, though they
- 4 don't quite mention it. All right?
- 5 So which of the cases that you -- rather
- 6 than list my eleven, I'm more interested in what you
- 7 think, and so I'd like to know which are the ones you
- 8 think support -- with something like a flood, which it's
- 9 not -- you're not physically taking hold of the whole
- 10 thing. You're sending something in that comes back.
- 11 Which of the ones support you that temporary is not a
- 12 trespass, temporary is a taking?
- MR. GOODHART: Justice Breyer, in the
- 14 Dickinson case in 1947 where the Court found a taking
- 15 from flooding, Mr. Dickinson reclaimed his property,
- 16 effectively reclaimed most of the property that had
- 17 flooded, effectively ending the flood invasion. And the
- 18 Court there said the taking was a taking when that
- 19 occurred, regardless of whether the landowner does
- 20 reclamation.
- 21 Of course, this Court in the war seizure
- 22 cases, in General Motors, Petty Motor, Pewee Coal,
- 23 Kimball Laundry, in all of those cases the Court has
- 24 found --
- 25 JUSTICE BREYER: Dickinson -- I got written

- 1 down Dickinson.
- MR. GOODHART: Yes, Your Honor.
- 3 JUSTICE BREYER: Kimball Laundry. Kimball
- 4 Laundry was the -- laundry facilities.
- 5 MR. GOODHART: Yes, Your Honor.
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: They took the laundry
- 7 facilities for 3 years, but there what they did is they
- 8 went in and they took this building, you know, took the
- 9 whole thing.
- 10 MR. GOODHART: Yes, Your Honor.
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: The problem with a flood is
- 12 you don't take all the land. You send some stuff in.
- 13 And the stuff is there for a while, and then it comes
- 14 back, and -- it's called water. And so I don't know
- 15 what to make of the cases like Kimball Laundry where you
- 16 actually appropriate the property. I suspect that they
- 17 are not quite the same.
- 18 Anything else? I got Dickinson. I've got
- 19 Kimball Laundry.
- 20 JUSTICE SCALIA: We have cases about flying
- 21 overland -- -
- JUSTICE BREYER: Yes, Causby.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: -- cases about shooting --
- 24 shooting overland. Right?
- MR. GOODHART: Yes, Your Honor. The Causby

- 1 case --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: That's not water, but it
- 3 ain't taking, either, in the -- in the narrow sense that
- 4 Justice Breyer has talked about.
- 5 MR. GOODHART: Yes, Your Honor. The -- the
- 6 United States flooded the air over the Causby's
- 7 residence and commercial chicken farm.
- 8 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes, but in Causby, what
- 9 they did -- there was a question about whether just
- 10 flying some airplanes over is a taking or a trespass.
- 11 But it went on for 25 years, so it was a long time.
- 12 And, therefore, the permanency of it I don't think is at
- 13 issue there.
- MR. GOODHART: Yes. Your Honor, in this
- 15 case, the court -- the Court of Federal Claims found
- 16 that these deviations resulted, in over 8 years, 6
- 17 consecutive years of recurring flood invasions during --
- 18 during the summertime, during unnatural time periods;
- 19 and that the facts were more compelling than even in
- 20 Causby with the -- the overflights or in Portsmouth
- 21 Harbor with cannon shots flooding the air over
- 22 Portsmouth Landing Harbor Hotel.
- 23 This -- these flood invasions happened each
- 24 year for specific sustained time periods. The United
- 25 States controlled the timing, the frequency, and the

- 1 extent of the duration of these floods.
- 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: What if it hadn't harmed
- 3 the timber? I mean, you know, the damages claimed are a
- 4 lot -- a lot of the timber that -- that would have been
- 5 valuable was -- was impaired by these floodings.
- 6 Suppose there'd been no harm at all? Suppose it had
- 7 just been for a certain period of time you were not able
- 8 to use that land for anything? You couldn't plant
- 9 anything on it. You couldn't picnic on it. You
- 10 couldn't do anything. Would that have been --
- 11 nonetheless, despite the fact that there -- there was no
- 12 harm done except -- except the flooding -- would that
- 13 have been a taking?
- MR. GOODHART: Your Honor, no. If -- there
- 15 would not have been a taking unless the landowner could
- 16 show substantial intrusion upon his protected property
- 17 rights.
- 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, he has. It's
- 19 flooded. He can't --
- 20 MR. GOODHART: If -- Your Honor, if he can
- 21 show that the -- he has the right to exclude
- 22 superinduced invasions of water, that -- so it doesn't
- 23 interfere with his use and enjoyment. Here --
- 24 JUSTICE SCALIA: It does. He can't plow on
- 25 it. He can't picnic on it. How does that not interfere

- 1 with his --
- MR. GOODHART: Well, and it very may well,
- 3 Your Honor. And here, that -- there was that --
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: So it would be a taking.
- 5 Are you saying yes or no? What is it?
- 6 MR. GOODHART: I'm saying, yes, if he can
- 7 show that it intruded on his use and enjoyment, and as
- 8 you said, indicated, that type of interference, yes. It
- 9 would be a -- it would be a substantial intrusion on his
- 10 rights to use his property --
- 11 JUSTICE GINSBURG: So that would cover a
- 12 one-time flood.
- MR. GOODHART: Not necessarily, Justice
- 14 Ginsburg. A one-time flood that is extensive, it could
- 15 kill all the trees on this management area in one flood.
- 16 However, one flood may not result in substantial
- intrusion on protected property rights. So it's going
- 18 to depend on the facts, Your Honor, in the case.
- 19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: I don't understand that.
- 20 You said if -- if it's one flood, even though it
- 21 destroys the trees, and certainly would not make --
- 22 would make it impossible to have picnics, what -- so if
- 23 that's your position, then you're turning on it happened
- 24 six times, not once. Is that --
- 25 MR. GOODHART: And, Your Honor, what I'm

- 1 saying, it's a proof of facts. The physical takings
- 2 analysis is the same. The legal analysis is the same.
- 3 But one flood could effectively destroy timber if it is
- 4 a lake; if it sits there. We didn't have that in our
- 5 case.
- 6 We had intrusion during 1993 to 2000, 8
- 7 years, 6 of which were substantially throughout the
- 8 summer where this management area sat in water during
- 9 June, July, into August, basically, stagnated water that
- 10 choked the oxygen from the roots of these trees. And in
- 11 1999 it was termed a brownout. It was massive.
- 12 Once the timber inventory was done, it
- 13 revealed that there was over 100,000 trees in a
- 14 6,990-acre area that were either destroyed or were --
- 15 were in the process of dying. And that didn't include
- 16 the other 11,000 acres that we subsequently inventoried.
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, all of our
- 18 cases in this temporary versus permanent, as I read the
- 19 cases and I read what the multiple facts that each are
- 20 relying on, it seems to me that our cases have been
- 21 attempting, in the term "temporary," to encompass a lot
- 22 of different concepts. Both intentionality, because an
- 23 accidental issue is not a taking; causation: Did this
- 24 -- and that's part of Sanguinetti's holding -- did what
- 25 the Government do actually and directly cause the injury

- 1 at issue? And foreseeability: Is what you intended
- 2 something whose consequences you could have seen?
- 3 And they are using that in a multifaceted
- 4 test, one that the Solicitor General is not trying to
- 5 endorse here, but one that I think is more consistent
- 6 with our general jurisprudence in this area.
- 7 So there is never a simple answer on the
- 8 question of permanent damage, because you can have
- 9 permanent damage that's not a taking, if all of the
- 10 other factors I've just mentioned are not in your favor.
- 11 Is that correct?
- 12 MR. GOODHART: Yes, Your Honor, you're
- 13 correct. The -- the invasion has to be direct by the
- 14 United States.
- 15 The Court of Federal Claims found that --
- 16 that it was direct, natural, and probable -- the results
- 17 were -- from the Government's action.
- 18 One thing in water cases is you don't have
- 19 dye in the water. Mr. Causby could look up and see the
- 20 insignia on the airplanes. And we knew that the cannon
- 21 fire from the -- from the artillery was coming over the
- 22 Portsmouth Harbor's land was from the Government. The
- 23 water, you can't always tell. And so you have to prove
- 24 that that was directly from the United States. And the
- 25 commission in this case did.

- 1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I guess the problem with
- 2 this case, and it's part of what's interwoven in your
- 3 adversary's arguments, is that with flooding it's going
- 4 to occur naturally anyway. The Government generally
- 5 builds dams to control that flooding to the benefit of
- 6 all of the interests along its affected route. And at
- 7 some point, either the Government is going to -- is
- 8 going to make a decision that's going to help someone
- 9 and potentially hurt someone. And the question is,
- 10 isn't all of those situations going to be subject to
- 11 litigation.
- 12 The Government's rule -- I call it the
- 13 Government's rule, but it's -- is basically simple. It
- 14 can't. Because, if the deviation is temporary -- and
- 15 that's what the circuit below said -- it's just
- 16 exercise. It's either a nuisance or temporary trespass,
- and we're not going to hold the Government responsible
- 18 for that loss. Assuming it's going to occur in part
- 19 because flooding is always going to occur, the question
- 20 is perhaps when. But in any place you have a dam, it's
- 21 there because flooding was happening.
- Isn't that the basic argument? And I don't
- 23 know that you've actually announced the rule that
- 24 addresses the essence of the policy considerations that
- 25 are driving the Government decision. So tell me how

- 1 your rule makes this a manageable situation.
- 2 MR. GOODHART: Your Honor, the -- the two
- 3 elements of the rule, that there must be direct physical
- 4 invasion by the United States and not from some other
- 5 cause, and there must be substantial intrusion upon
- 6 these protected property rights, the right to exclude,
- 7 the right to use and enjoy, and the right to dispose,
- 8 that --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But that's every flood.
- 10 MR. GOODHART: That runs throughout
- 11 this Court's --
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But that's every flood.
- MR. GOODHART: Yes, Your Honor, it is. But
- 14 the United States, when it does its flood control --
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No, no, no, I don't
- 16 -- why is that every flood? You go through your three
- 17 factors, you could have lots of flood that aren't a
- 18 substantial intrusion. You know, you get an extra inch
- 19 of water, and then it recedes. And it's -- you know --
- MR. GOODHART: That's --
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- you get a note
- 22 from the Corps of Engineers saying, we're sorry, it
- 23 won't happen again. That's not -- every flood is not --
- MR. GOODHART: Not -- you're correct,
- 25 Mr. Chief Justice. Every flood is certainly not rising

- 1 to the level of a taking.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: I guess what we're asking
- 3 you is, how do you define the baseline of protected
- 4 expectations for the property?
- 5 MR. GOODHART: Your Honor --
- 7 in your brief that one year won't do it. This was six
- 8 or seven years.
- 9 If that's a baseline of expectations, the
- 10 Government cannot change that, even if it thinks that
- 11 there is a higher and -- and more urgent priority in
- 12 protecting some other land?
- MR. GOODHART: Your Honor, the -- certainly,
- 14 the Government is not the insurer of -- of flood
- 15 control, how they just carry it out.
- 16 There is the case that's cited in the
- 17 Government's brief, United States v. Sponenbarger, which
- 18 says that very thing. The United States is not the
- 19 insurer of it. But when it takes water and it controls
- 20 water and releases it in a manner that's not from
- 21 storms, not from natural, but does it in a manner that
- they control how it's released and the duration,
- 23 frequency, and they use property to store that water for
- 24 eight -- you know, over eight years, that in this case
- 25 was -- was compelling. And the court found that those

- 1 facts --
- 2 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But my question is how do
- 3 you define the baseline that gives a legitimate
- 4 expectation, if the Corps of Engineers -- did not happen
- 5 in this case, but in the hypothetical case -- makes the
- 6 finding that there is a more urgent and -- and a higher
- 7 priority for other lands, and it changes its policy? It
- 8 cannot do that?
- 9 MR. GOODHART: Your Honor, it can go through
- 10 its law, the National Environmental Policy Act, the
- 11 Clean Water Act. It can make changes, and then it can
- 12 pay for what it's going to take from private landowners.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, what you're saying
- 14 is that it can't make that change without paying, right?
- 15 MR. GOODHART: It -- it cannot make that
- 16 change where it's going to burden the landowner and
- 17 interfere with that -- those property rights that the
- 18 Fifth Amendment is guaranteeing.
- Now, in practice --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Now suppose, at the very
- 21 outset of the dam, the -- the Government says, we've got
- 22 to put this water someplace, we're going to put it on
- 23 the left bank, not the right bank. That's not a taking
- 24 as of that time --
- MR. GOODHART: Your Honor --

- 1 JUSTICE KENNEDY: -- if the land was always
- 2 flooded anyway on the right?
- 3 MR. GOODHART: That may not be a taking.
- 4 And, for example, in the Bedford case in 1904, where a
- 5 revetment was in the Mississippi River, it was trying to
- 6 control natural erosion from a cutoff that had been
- 7 created, the landowner could not show --
- 8 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But what I want is the
- 9 definition of the operable baseline that we can use in
- 10 order to define whether or not there has been a taking.
- 11 MR. GOODHART: And, Your Honor, I guess I
- 12 must say it may not be a bright line. It is -- the
- 13 analysis here that this Court has used throughout its
- 14 physical takings cases will separate the torts from the
- 15 takings.
- 16 And, here again, the United States -- this
- 17 has worked well in other cases for the United States,
- 18 where in Sanguinetti there was no --
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: Should the baseline be what
- 20 would have happened if the dam was never built?
- 21 MR. GOODHART: Perhaps, Your Honor. And in
- 22 this case, for example, the court had evidence that this
- 23 land flourished before the dam. There was evidence that
- 24 this bottomland hardwood forest existed for generations.
- 25 And when the control plan was put in effect in 1953, it

- 1 worked fine because they mimicked natural flow where
- 2 late -- late winter and early spring, you have your
- 3 releases, they dissipate, the water recedes, but you
- 4 don't have extensive summertime flooding from a river.
- 5 Frankly, anywhere in the country, but
- 6 certainly not in the southern part of the United States,
- 7 these rivers do not overflow during June, July, August.
- 8 This never happens.
- 9 JUSTICE BREYER: But what do you suggest --
- 10 what do you suggest -- I looked at the consent.
- MR. GOODHART: Yes, Your Honor.
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: To tell you the truth, I
- 13 think it's permanent. I think they're thinking it's
- 14 intermittent, but permanently intermittent.
- MR. GOODHART: Yes, Your Honor.
- 16 JUSTICE BREYER: The flood comes like three
- 17 months a year every year. And the erosion, they say
- 18 that part that's eroded belongs to the Government now.
- 19 And if he comes back with his dirt and puts it in,
- 20 that's fine, but he's trespassing on Government land.
- 21 So if I'm right in reading that, if I'm
- 22 right -- and a big if -- it seems that eleven cases
- 23 somewhat stand for this, I agree, somewhat arbitrary
- 24 rule.
- Now -- so I'm tempted, if I'm right, to say,

- 1 okay, it's not perfect, but let's go with it. There are
- 2 people all over the country who have probably relied on
- 3 this stuff. And that would be so absent a better rule.
- 4 So what do you suggest would be a better,
- 5 clearer rule for compensating for flooding where our
- 6 problem is what's a trespass and what's a taking?
- 7 MR. GOODHART: And, Your Honor, I know it
- 8 cannot be the Federal circuit's rule that you can never
- 9 have temporary flooding as a taking. And I guess
- 10 I would --
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: You know, but I want to
- 12 know what your idea -- I understand the difficulties are
- 13 there --
- MR. GOODHART: Yes.
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: -- and I'm willing to
- 16 accept a lot you mentioned.
- 17 MR. GOODHART: Yes.
- JUSTICE BREYER: But what I'm
- 19 asking -- which I just did ask -- is what's your idea of
- 20 a substitute that would be better?
- 21 MR. GOODHART: Your Honor, the substitute
- 22 would be to remain consistent with how this Court
- 23 analyzes the physical takings, not use anything from
- 24 regulatory analysis here, but looking at these elements.
- 25 And the -- the Corps of Engineers will

- 1 need -- when they know that it's predictable, that it is
- 2 foreseeable, as the court below found, that -- that
- 3 their actions will place water for storage on land that
- 4 they know they can purchase flood easements for --
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: So a Department of the
- 6 Interior employee trespasses on Jones's land, trampling
- 7 paths, and even limbs fall off trees. That's a taking
- 8 and not a trespass?
- 9 MR. GOODHART: No, Your Honor, it's not.
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: Because?
- 11 MR. GOODHART: And because the Court said in
- 12 the Cress case, it's the character of the Government's
- 13 action, not the amount of damages resulting from it, so
- 14 long as that is substantial.
- 15 And in the cases, the Court has looked at
- 16 what is substantial intrusion. In Loretto, the Court
- 17 said a permanent physical occupation on a rooftop in Ms.
- 18 Loretto's building, small area, that is substantial,
- 19 even though geographically it was very small, because it
- 20 cut through these valuable property rights to occupy
- 21 someone's property.
- 22 And so -- substantial may not have to be
- 23 very high.
- 24 JUSTICE BREYER: So our department employee
- 25 trying to find a shortcut drives his bulldozer through

- 1 Jones's land knocking down his favorite redwood, it's a
- 2 taking?
- MR. GOODHART: Your Honor, I think we would,
- 4 again, use the analysis, separate out the torts, where
- 5 the action is direct, it's been predictable what would
- 6 that would result in, the United States should know
- 7 that, and then the intrusion or interference with those
- 8 property rights is substantial, there will be a taking.
- 9 Usually that's not going to be the case in a
- 10 one-time situation, as your hypothetical. And, again,
- 11 here the court heard six consecutive years of this
- 12 invasion of water. The commission couldn't turn it
- away.
- 14 JUSTICE SCALIA: So our cases -- our cases
- 15 treat physical occupations differently from other --
- 16 from other cases, don't they?
- 17 The park ranger walking through can hardly
- 18 be called a physical occupation. He's harmed the land,
- 19 but it's not a physical occupation.
- What you're -- what you're arguing here is
- 21 that -- is that flooding the land is a physical
- 22 occupation for the period that it's flooded.
- MR. GOODHART: It is, Your Honor. Where
- 24 it's an occupation, it's certainly clearer and more
- 25 intrusive. There can be invasions that don't amount to

- 1 an occupation.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes, but what you say --
- 3 here's what troubles me. You say it has to be
- 4 substantial. But you -- can we -- can we fold into that
- 5 word substantial a requirement that it have caused
- 6 substantial financial loss?
- 7 See, if that were the case, then -- then I
- 8 could distinguish your case where a lot of valuable
- 9 trees got destroyed.
- 10 MR. GOODHART: Certainly, Your Honor.
- 11 Substantial --
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: And I wouldn't say every --
- 13 you know, every flood that goes across a land, even two
- 14 years or three years in a row, would not necessarily be
- 15 a taking.
- MR. GOODHART: You could look at the
- 17 economic part -- yes, definitely, Your Honor. What is
- 18 substantial is going to be made as a legal determination
- 19 by the Corps, as a matter of degree.
- 20 And you can look at the extent of the
- 21 damages -- if there is destruction of property.
- 22 Destruction has been -- as in the Kansas City Life case
- 23 in 1950, the taking is to the extent of the destruction.
- 24 Beyond that, though, it's looking at interference with
- 25 use and enjoyment --

- 1 JUSTICE SCALIA: What was the Kansas City
- 2 case that you are referring to? I don't --
- 3 MR. GOODHART: The Kansas City Life
- 4 Insurance case in 1950, Your Honor, was underflow
- 5 invasion of water percolating up on property in Missouri
- 6 from the Mississippi River. And that was found to be a
- 7 substantial invasion where the property, the 1700 acres,
- 8 was taken by the United States. And the Court there
- 9 said, when you destroy the use of that property for what
- 10 it was being used by the landowner, you owe to the
- 11 extent of the destruction that you have caused.
- 12 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Goodhart, maybe it
- 13 would help to know what you think if we accept your
- 14 position would be left over for the Federal Circuit to
- 15 consider on remand. You -- you haven't asked to -- for
- 16 outright reversal and have the decision of the Court of
- 17 Federal Claims be the end of the matter. So if we
- 18 accept your position, then what issues would be open for
- 19 the Federal Circuit to resolve on remand?
- MR. GOODHART: Your Honor, if I may, after
- 21 answering your question I would like to reserve the
- 22 remainder of my time.
- Your Honor, I wish we could have asked for
- 24 affirmance. We -- there are several other issues that
- 25 the Federal Circuit did not disturb or address. They

- 1 did not go into the facts of, on appeal, that the United
- 2 States --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, the question is what
- 4 do we say to the circuit? What do you want us to tell
- 5 the circuit to do on remand?
- 6 MR. GOODHART: We want the remand to say:
- 7 Apply the rule of law here for physical taking and look
- 8 at it as the Court of Federal Claims did: Was there a
- 9 direct physical injury? Did it result in substantial
- 10 intrusion on the commission's property? If so, the Just
- 11 Compensation Clause is self-actuating and there should
- 12 be just compensation.
- 13 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But what were the other
- 14 issues that you just mentioned? You said we couldn't
- 15 ask for an automatic affirmance.
- 16 MR. GOODHART: The United States raised
- 17 several issues and the commission cross-appealed in
- 18 asking for regeneration damages, Your Honor, and those
- 19 would need to be addressed on the remand.
- Thank you.
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- Mr. Kneedler.
- ORAL ARGUMENT OF EDWIN S. KNEEDLER
- 24 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
- MR. KNEEDLER: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it

- 1 please the Court:
- 2 As has been pointed out, this Court has
- 3 consistently held in its flooding cases and reaffirmed
- 4 in Loretto that a -- that a taking occurs in the context
- 5 of flooding only if the flooding is the direct result of
- 6 the structure itself and if it results in a permanent
- 7 effect on the property such that it's an actual
- 8 appropriation. So --
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So it's -- there is
- 10 a little confusion about the Government's position,
- 11 there was in the court of appeals.
- 12 Is it -- I'm quoting from your friend's
- 13 brief, and he says: "The Federal Circuit adopted a
- 14 categorical rule that temporary Government action can
- 15 never be a taking if the Government does not intend to
- 16 create a permanent flooding condition." Is that an
- 17 accurate statement of your understanding?
- 18 MR. KNEEDLER: The -- I think the intent
- 19 point, I quess I would modify that. There are some
- 20 things that -- I think it would have to be an objective
- 21 standard. In Dickinson, for example, the -- the
- 22 modification was intrinsically permanent. The landowner
- 23 had corrected for it. But it was intrinsically
- 24 permanent until the landowner had done something about
- 25 it. So actually Dickinson is consistent with our --

- 1 with our position.
- 2 But I do want -- there is a critical piece
- 3 about this case that Justice Kennedy's questions have
- 4 touched upon that I think it's very important for this
- 5 Court to focus upon.
- 6 This case is not about flooding by the
- 7 project itself. The reservoir behind the dam, the
- 8 easements, the flowing easements there, the spillway,
- 9 the project is the Government and I think it's fair to
- 10 say the Government is occupying the land when the
- 11 Government builds the project.
- 12 What we have here are incidental
- 13 consequences downstream from the dam as a result of the
- 14 flowage. And there are -- Loretto, when it is summing
- 15 up this Court's flooding cases, makes two points. One,
- 16 it says it has to be permanent, not temporary invasion;
- 17 but it also distinguishes the category of cases in which
- 18 there is conduct outside the landowner's property that
- 19 has consequential damages within the property.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I don't -- I don't
- 21 understand what you're saying. Are you saying that if
- 22 this landowner owned land behind the dam that was
- 23 temporarily flooded as often as has happened here, that
- that would be a taking?
- MR. KNEEDLER: No. I --

- 1 JUSTICE SCALIA: No, I didn't think you were
- 2 saying that.
- 3 MR. KNEEDLER: No, but what I'm saying is
- 4 this would be a particularly bad or problematic context
- 5 for the Court to depart from that.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, there are
- 7 pretty clear findings in the Court of Claims on the
- 8 question of causation, right?
- 9 MR. KNEEDLER: I don't think it's a question
- 10 of causation, and if I could just point out two cases,
- 11 one of which was cited in Loretto in its summing up of
- 12 this Court's flooding cases is Bedford. Bedford was a
- 13 situation in which a revetment, as counsel pointed out,
- 14 a revetment was constructed in the -- in the Mississippi
- 15 River to protect erosion and access to the City of
- 16 Vicksburg. It was -- it was clearly shown in that case
- 17 that over time, over a period of 6 years, as in this
- 18 case, downstream by 6 miles it resulted in permanent
- 19 flooding of land as a consequence of that.
- 20 But what the Court said is that is
- 21 consequential injury downstream; it is not occupation by
- 22 the Government.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, so if the
- 24 Government comes in and tells a landowner downstream
- 25 that every March and April we are going to flood your

- 1 property so that you can't use it, from now on, that's
- 2 the way -- that's part of our plan, that's a taking for
- 3 those 2 months, correct?
- 4 MR. KNEEDLER: No. I don't think --
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No? The Government
- 6 says you will not be able to use your land because of
- 7 what we are doing for 2 months -- you have been able to
- 8 up to now, but from now on, for March and April, you
- 9 can't. That's not a taking?
- 10 MR. KNEEDLER: I don't, and -- and let me
- 11 explain why. What we're talking about here is the Corps
- 12 of Engineers operating a dam from which it has to take
- 13 into account multiple considerations. In this case,
- 14 there was marina operators, there were farmers along the
- 15 river, there were drainage districts.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I'll grant you that
- 17 it can decide whose land it wants to take. I just want
- 18 to know why that's not a taking.
- 19 MR. KNEEDLER: Because this is a classic
- 20 example of the Government adjusting benefits and
- 21 burdens. This is why the Federal Government was invited
- 22 in to construct these projects because along -- along
- 23 the river there was very serious flooding. So the
- 24 Government puts in a dam to control the flooding, it has
- 25 to release the flood waters, and the timing of the

- 1 release of the flood waters is something that you have
- 2 to take into account --
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So if the Government
- 4 says we've got to release the flood waters and what
- 5 we're going to do is we're going to have water trucks
- 6 pull up behind the dam, we're going to load them up and
- 7 we're going to drive them down river to this person's
- 8 property and we're going to dump the water there?
- 9 MR. KNEEDLER: I think that's a different
- 10 situation because the Government itself is actually
- 11 putting the water -- I think that's very close to being
- 12 the reservoir behind the dam. But -- but typically,
- 13 when the Government -- I think uniformly, when the
- 14 Government is operating --
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But your answer is
- 16 that would be a taking?
- 17 MR. KNEEDLER: I think because it would
- 18 be -- it would be specifically deposited on that
- 19 landowner's land.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I thought --
- 21 MR. KNEEDLER: It would be the same as if
- 22 they put a pipe from the dam --
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Right.
- 24 MR. KNEEDLER: -- to that person's land.
- 25 But that's not what's happening when the Government's

- 1 operating a dam, and it's operating it with consequences
- 2 for the basin. It's not aimed at any particular
- 3 landowner.
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Again, I think the
- 5 Court of Claims' findings are to the contrary.
- 6 MR. KNEEDLER: Well --
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: They said the
- 8 Government knew that this water was going to go right
- 9 here, right?
- 10 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, it was not -- there is
- 11 no suggestion that it was targeted at this land, which
- 12 is -- which is I think something quite different. This
- 13 was -- this was an incidental consequence of what was
- 14 happening downstream. Again, in the Bedford case you
- 15 had permanent --
- 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: A foreseeable and certain
- 17 incidental consequence.
- 18 MR. KNEEDLER: No, I don't believe
- 19 foreseeable is enough. It was -- it could have been --
- 20 it could have been foreseeable in Bedford.
- 21 Let me take a more -- a more dramatic
- 22 example that I think illustrates this point. This
- 23 Court's decision in Sponenbarger which we cite in our
- 24 brief, that a -- that case discusses a prior holding by
- 25 this Court in a case called Jackson, which was a

- 1 situation where a levee, Government built a levee on one
- 2 side of the river which had the effect of flooding
- 3 property on the opposite side of the river because it --
- 4 it kept it from going to this side and channelled it
- 5 into the river and it caused it to overflow the -- the
- 6 land on the other side, and the Court said that is not a
- 7 taking.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What if the
- 9 Government decides for purposes of flood control -- I
- 10 don't know -- I don't know the ecological way -- but the
- 11 water has to percolate or whatever down in this area.
- 12 So it goes onto this person's land and it cuts down \$5
- 13 million worth of his trees. The same purpose, to assist
- in flood control. No doubt that that's a taking, right?
- 15 MR. KNEEDLER: I think that would be --
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay.
- 17 MR. KNEEDLER: Unless there was some
- 18 emergency justification.
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Sure, sure. And so
- 20 the Government then comes down and says, we're going to
- 21 flood your land and we know -- again, looking at the
- 22 factual findings -- we know that will result in your
- trees dying, but because we're doing it for flood
- 24 control, that's just too bad. Different case when they
- 25 go in with a chain saw than when they go in with the

- 1 water?
- 2 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes. When they go in with
- 3 the chain saw the Government is actually going on the
- 4 property and the Government is, to use counsel's term,
- 5 directly cutting down the trees. I think it's very hard
- 6 to explain consequences 110 miles downstream as being
- 7 direct. It's -- and there is no case that -- that
- 8 Petitioner has pointed to with that sort of incidental
- 9 consequence --
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: What is the legal rubric?
- 11 I mean what you're -- what I haven't thought of until
- 12 you've been putting it this way is that the Government
- 13 builds a dam. When it does it, water backs up behind
- 14 the dam, and that water might flood somebody's land.
- 15 That's a taking, if it's at least permanent, and so
- 16 forth.
- Okay. Now, the Government builds a dam, all
- 18 that happens. Because the Government builds a dam, a
- 19 lot of other things happen. They release water
- 20 sometimes. They make electricity sometimes. Different
- 21 animals come in.
- 22 All kinds of things can happen to different
- 23 people 200 yards down. Some will be 200 miles down,
- 24 200 -- you know. Some will be helpful, some will be
- 25 hurtful. Can they never bring a lawsuit? Can they

- 1 sometimes recover? How do we look at that?
- 2 MR. KNEEDLER: I -- I think, under this
- 3 Court's takings decisions, and specifically those
- 4 dealing with effects caused by something outside the
- 5 property, I think it is basically a per se rule.
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, then, suppose what
- 7 the Government said is, Mr. Smith, you live 150 miles
- 8 from here, and we have a rule, and our rule is you can't
- 9 cut down any of your trees, and you can't farm the land,
- 10 and you can't even walk on it without a boat. All
- 11 right, that would be at least a regulatory taking.
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, it would be -- it would
- 13 be analyzed as a regulatory taking --
- JUSTICE BREYER: So why -- now, they're
- 15 doing exactly the same thing here, but, instead of a
- 16 regulation, they send some water in to do it. So should
- 17 we analyze it as a regulatory taking?
- 18 MR. KNEEDLER: It -- it has certain
- 19 parallels in that respect in the sense that the
- 20 Government has to make a choice. It constructed the
- 21 dam, and its releases are going to help someone and hurt
- 22 someone. It can't be put in a position where it's going
- 23 to have to pay compensation every time it chooses one --
- 24 one thing or another.
- There's another point I'd like to make --

1 JUSTICE BREYER:	Well,	but	that's	the	issue
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- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm totally confused
- 3 now. Is Dickinson decided wrong under your theory?
- 4 MR. KNEEDLER: No.
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: They built a dam. It
- 6 raised the water level and flooded the petitioner's
- 7 land, and the court gave recompense.
- 8 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes. And --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But you just said two
- 10 minutes ago -- or I thought I heard you say -- that when
- 11 the Government builds a dam, even if it floods some
- 12 people and not others, that there's no taking.
- MR. KNEEDLER: I'm talking about downstream,
- 14 not the -- not the reservoir. And after it goes --
- 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: After it's --
- 16 MR. KNEEDLER: -- after it goes through --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So the baseline -- tell
- 18 me what the baseline is. And perhaps you can answer
- 19 Justice Kennedy's question more directly. Anything in
- 20 the reservoir is a taking. Anything downstream is never
- 21 a taking.
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, assuming it's permanent
- in the reservoir, which it's likely to be when the
- 24 Government is constructing it --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, no, not necessarily.

- 1 Suppose there -- because of a spring melt-off or other
- 2 factors, it's clear that the reservoir for several
- 3 months of the year will be more extensive than it will
- 4 the rest of the year.
- 5 MR. KNEEDLER: Right.
- 6 JUSTICE SCALIA: So you could say, just --
- 7 just as here, that there's only been a temporary taking
- 8 of some of the land behind the reservoir.
- 9 Now, doesn't the -- doesn't the Government
- 10 condemn all the land --
- MR. KNEEDLER: Yes. But that --
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: -- even that which would be
- only temporarily flooded?
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, but that -- that
- 15 is covered by this Court's decision in Cress, in which
- 16 the Court said that if you have a situation where
- 17 property is permanently liable to inevitably recurring
- 18 flooding, that that's the same thing as a permanent --
- 19 even though sometimes it's not -- it's not covered, it
- 20 is permanently liable.
- 21 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And the only difference in
- 22 that formulation and this case is that it was for seven
- 23 years and not permanent? Is that your --
- 24 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, insofar as we're
- 25 looking at the temporary aspect of it. It wasn't seven

- 1 years, it was -- it was -- it was a series of individual
- 2 determinations made by the Corps; but -- but for reasons
- 3 that tie into the downstream effects, it was releasing
- 4 water from the dam and was making a series of
- 5 administrative decisions about how to operate the dam.
- 6 It has a water control manual. Downstream
- 7 landowners are protected, not by retroactive award of
- 8 damages under the Just Compensation Clause, but by
- 9 public participation requirements --
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I must be -- I must be
- 11 slow today because I'm -- I'm having significant problem
- 12 with your articulation of your test.
- Basically, you're saying once a dam is
- 14 built -- once a dam is built, no downstream owner has a
- 15 claim? Or, you're building an exception from when the
- 16 claim can be applied to a downstream owner?
- 17 MR. KNEEDLER: I -- I -- I think, under this
- 18 Court's current precedence, there would be no claim
- 19 downstream.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It doesn't matter
- 21 whether it's permanent, reoccurring --
- MR. KNEEDLER: Foreseeable.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- foreseeable or
- 24 anything else?
- MR. KNEEDLER: No, because Jackson,

- 1 Spokenbarger -- Sponenbarger, the revetment case,
- 2 Bedford were all cases where --
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Right.
- 4 MR. KNEEDLER: -- where it was -- where it
- 5 was permanent.
- If I could mention one other point --
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, just before
- 8 you get off, because I think part of the confusion, at
- 9 least for me, is the difference between what the Federal
- 10 circuit decided and what you're arguing.
- 11 You seem to be arguing that it doesn't make
- 12 any difference, it's not -- whether it's temporary or
- 13 permanent, right? The Federal circuit thought it was
- 14 dispositive that this they viewed as temporary and not
- 15 permanent. So it seems to me that you're fighting, and
- 16 you're fighting a lot of the court of claims' very
- 17 exhaustive findings, to present a different argument.
- MR. KNEEDLER: No.
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It seems to me that
- 20 if we disagree, and we think it makes a difference that
- 21 it doesn't have to be 50 years, but it might be
- 22 something less, then maybe you've preserved all these
- 23 other arguments or maybe not, but --
- 24 MR. KNEEDLER: But I think it's -- we have
- 25 argued, both below and here, that -- that this is

- 1 consequential, and that -- that it's downstream and had
- 2 those effects.
- We agree with the -- with the Federal
- 4 circuit, we are not disagreeing with that conclusion,
- 5 because this is -- these were temporary -- a series of
- 6 individual temporary decisions made for their own
- 7 reasons.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I know, but you
- 9 agree -- you agree with the Federal circuit, but then
- 10 you're presenting all these other arguments in which it
- 11 doesn't depend.
- 12 So, if we disagree with the Federal circuit,
- it seems to me that we ought to say that, and maybe you
- 14 can make these other arguments about it's too far
- 15 downstream or --
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, but -- but I think, in
- 17 deciding what's temporary, you shouldn't divorce it from
- 18 context. And -- and here, the context is the
- 19 consequences downstream.
- 20 This is -- this is not -- if you were to
- 21 depart from the Court's rule up until this point about
- 22 permanence -- and there has to be -- something less than
- 23 permanent will do, I don't think you should ignore the
- 24 fact that the consequences are not the sort of direct
- 25 governmental occupation of the land like at the

- 1 reservoir, but the sort of consequences downstream that
- 2 affect -- that can affect a whole range of people.
- 3 And I would like to make one very important
- 4 point about context, and that is, in 1928, after the
- 5 Great Mississippi Flood of 1927, Congress first got into
- 6 the flood control business in a massive way, but it --
- 7 it -- it was unwilling to do that if it was going to be
- 8 held liable for consequential damages from flood waters
- 9 downstream.
- 10 It therefore included Section 702(c) in the
- 11 Flood Control Act of 1928, which says that the
- 12 Government shall not be liable for any damage to any
- 13 property at any place resulting from floods or flood
- 14 waters.
- 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: Of course, that can't
- 16 overrule the Takings Clause, can it?
- 17 MR. KNEEDLER: I think what it --
- 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: I mean, that's nice that
- 19 Congress doesn't want to be liable.
- 20 (Laughter.)
- 21 MR. KNEEDLER: No, but Congress -- no,
- 22 it's -- the point is more fundamental than that.
- 23 Congress recognized -- and the legislative history shows
- 24 this -- Congress recognized that under this Court's
- 25 precedence, there would not be takings liability. The

- 1 Bedford decision is, in fact, cited in that.
- 2 This Court pointed out in its James
- 3 decision, which recounts the history of that, that there
- 4 was a proposal to -- to make the Government responsible
- 5 under the flood -- flood control projects for any taking
- 6 or any damage to property. And this Court said that
- 7 went way beyond anything the Fifth Amendment would
- 8 require, and it was cut back. And Congress said it's
- 9 not going to be liable for any damage.
- 10 And I think that shows a very important
- 11 reliance interest on the part of Congress with respect
- 12 to the line that this Court has drawn. Congress was not
- 13 going to --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: What about --
- 15 Mr. Kneedler, what was wrong with Judge Newman's
- 16 position on this temporary versus permanent? It said --
- 17 she said that temporary versus permanent, the target
- 18 should not be the Government's action, but the effect of
- 19 that action; that is, if trees are killed and they
- 20 weren't revived, the damage is permanent. That's where
- 21 we should vote, not whether the Government is going to
- 22 do this year after year.
- MR. KNEEDLER: I don't believe that that's
- 24 correct. I mean, that -- that would turn on the
- 25 happenstance of what a particular landowner had -- had

- 1 on his property downstream.
- 2 And -- and I think the Government, in
- 3 operating the general project, cannot be held to do an
- 4 investigation of every property owner. Again, it's
- 5 releasing water generally. And if we -- maybe if I
- 6 could use the levee example here.
- 7 This -- the release changes that were made
- 8 here were made to protect farmers so that they could --
- 9 so that they could plant more crops and not -- and be
- 10 protected during their harvesting.
- If you shift back to what the Corps -- to
- 12 the Corps' regular operating scheme, it affects the
- 13 farmers. There might be a flood --
- 14 JUSTICE SCALIA: I mean, the issue is who is
- 15 going to pay for that wonderful benefit to these
- 16 farmers. Should it be everybody, so that the Government
- 17 pays, and all of us pay through taxes, or should it be
- 18 this -- this particular sorry landowner who happens to
- 19 lose all his trees?
- MR. KNEEDLER: It is in the nature --
- 21 JUSTICE SCALIA: That doesn't seem to me
- 22 particularly fair.
- MR. KNEEDLER: It is in the nature of living
- 24 along a river. Riparian ownership carries with it
- 25 certain risks and uncertainties, from weather, from

- 1 intervening causes. The Government is -- there are a
- 2 thousand square miles, more square miles of drainage
- 3 area --
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: I don't think -- one of
- 5 those risks has to be the Government's going to make you
- 6 pay for protecting somebody else.
- 7 Is that one of the risks?
- 8 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, when -- picking up on
- 9 what I said about Congress, Congress would not have
- 10 gotten into the flood control business without this
- 11 protection of liability. People --
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: I doubt that.
- 13 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, this Court in James
- 14 said it was an important condition for Congress getting
- 15 into it, that it was not -- Congress was not going to be
- 16 held liable for the -- for the damages downstream.
- 17 That came to be the basis, the baseline, of
- 18 expectations for people downstream from --
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Or upstream, under
- 20 your theory.
- 21 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, if it's -- but the
- 22 construction of the project itself and the flooding of
- 23 the reservoir, the Government condemns that land,
- 24 purchases that land. It recognizes --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, the hypothetical is,

- 1 suppose it doesn't. Suppose that there's some land
- 2 that's up -- that's fairly far upstream from the main
- 3 reservoir, but it's flooded once every other year.
- 4 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, the question would be
- 5 whether it falls within the Cress test of whether it is
- 6 permanently liable.
- 7 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Your -- but your position
- 8 seems to be that if it's downstream, somehow it's not
- 9 the Government. There's a series of administrative
- 10 actions and it's not really the Government's water.
- 11 It's like -- it's like the old moral refuge that the
- 12 rocket designers take: You know, I make the rockets go
- 13 up; where -- where they come down is not my concern.
- MR. KNEEDLER: It -- it was basically -- I
- 15 mean, it was the rationale of this Court's cases in --
- in Bedford, in Sponenbarger, and reaffirmed by this
- 17 Court in Loretto, a modern takings case dealing with the
- 18 question of physical occupation. And the Court said
- 19 that -- and it made two points. Again, it said -- it
- 20 made the temporary versus permanent point, but it also
- 21 made the point about conduct outside the land that has
- 22 an effect inside the land.
- This case has both of those features. You
- 24 have a series of temporary decisions --
- 25 JUSTICE BREYER: But building a Government

- 1 project, let's say an electricity plant or high tension
- 2 wires, you could require the taking of some land to
- 3 build it. Now, you've got that and you begin to run it.
- 4 You could run it in such a way that it takes some of the
- 5 property. I mean, the electricity could, for example,
- 6 because of some odd thing run around over somebody's
- 7 land and kill all the chickens. That wasn't expected
- 8 but it happened, and it happened because of the way the
- 9 Government runs the plant.
- 10 Now, I guess there would be a taking in such
- 11 circumstance if in fact, because of the way it's run, it
- 12 makes that land which no one thought would happen, as a
- 13 consequence of the project uninhabitable; wouldn't there
- 14 be?
- 15 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, again, it depends. If
- 16 the Government -- if the Government is occupying the
- 17 land when it happens, yes. But there's -- as you've I
- 18 think pointed out, there's a critical difference between
- 19 a tort and a taking. And there -- there can be
- 20 collateral consequences of what the Government does
- 21 that -- that cause injury.
- JUSTICE BREYER: The collateral consequence
- 23 is to make some piece of land 4 miles away quite
- 24 unexpectedly, but totally uninhabitable. Now, what's
- 25 supposed to happen there? That's not just a trespass

- 1 because it's permanent. And even if it's once every
- 2 2 years, it's permanently once every 2 years.
- 3 MR. KNEEDLER: I think it would depend on
- 4 whether -- and there was a -- a case -- I believe it's
- 5 the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad --
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: What does it say?
- 7 MR. KNEEDLER: It says if the -- it had to
- 8 do with releasing smoke from -- from a train. And the
- 9 Court said just -- just releasing it into the air --
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes, but they made this --
- MR. KNEEDLER: -- but -- but if you focus it
- 12 on someone --
- 13 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes.
- MR. KNEEDLER: If -- if you pipe it -- if
- 15 you pipe it to the person's property, that's a -- that
- 16 may be a different matter.
- JUSTICE BREYER: All right. So -- well,
- 18 that's the part -- that's the point. The reason they
- 19 don't compensate there is it apparently had something to
- 20 do with everybody suffering the cinders. But where the
- 21 cinders went out of the train and they ended up on just
- one person's property because there were some pipes or
- 23 something, then it was a taking.
- 24 MR. KNEEDLER: It was focused, and that's
- 25 not -- not true in the operation of the dam.

- JUSTICE BREYER: Well, here they're focusing
- 2 it on his land.
- 3 MR. KNEEDLER: They're not focusing it on
- 4 his land. His land -- first of all, the commission's
- 5 land has always been subject to flooding and, as we
- 6 pointed out in our brief, even under -- even under
- 7 Petitioner's analysis, it results in an incremental
- 8 flooding of 5, 4 or -- 3 or 4 days.
- 9 JUSTICE SCALIA: Not flooding that time of
- 10 year. That's the problem. I mean -- yes, flooding at a
- 11 time when it wouldn't harm the trees.
- MR. KNEEDLER: But it is land -- it is land
- in a floodplain that would be suitable for any sort of
- 14 construction or development. It is land in a
- 15 floodplain. And they have -- they have not argued, and
- 16 in fact, their appraiser in this case acknowledged, that
- 17 there is no permanent decrease in the valuation of the
- 18 land. They are -- they are arguing only about trees.
- 19 And that is -- that seems classic
- 20 consequential tort-type damages, that -- that flood
- 21 waters, it -- we'll assume in somewhat greater
- increments, went on the land and damaged trees. They
- 23 didn't damage the land. In fact, the commission --
- 24 there was still hunting on the land during this period
- 25 of time.

- 1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It strikes me that
- 2 that's a valuation question. But I understood you to
- 3 say that if there was a pipe coming out of the dam and
- 4 it went to somebody's -- right to the property line of
- 5 somebody's land and that's where you dump the water,
- 6 that would be a taking.
- 7 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes. Because --
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. I thought the
- 9 factual findings in the trial court said that was this
- 10 case, that you knew when you opened up the dam that this
- 11 is where the water was going to go.
- MR. KNEEDLER: First of all, the Court --
- 13 the Court did not say that the Government knew. In
- 14 fact, it said the Government was unaware -- this
- 15 discussion's between 95a and 99a in the Court of Federal
- 16 Claims decision -- that the Government was unaware in --
- 17 in 1993.
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What about 6 years
- 19 later, when it was doing the same thing and the water
- went to the same place?
- 21 MR. KNEEDLER: The taking goes -- the taking
- 22 claim here goes from 1993 to 1998. The Court of Federal
- 23 Claims said even as of 19 -- at least until 1996, it was
- 24 generally assumed that the operations of the dam did not
- 25 have a significant impact below the Missouri-Arkansas

- 1 line. Again, this is 110 miles downstream. This was in
- 2 no way focused on the -- on the commission's land,
- 3 but --
- 4 JUSTICE ALITO: Are you saying there's a
- 5 difference between the situation where the Government
- 6 particularly wants the water to go to a -- to a place,
- 7 and the situation where the Government knows that's
- 8 where it's going to go, but doesn't particularly care
- 9 where it's going to go?
- 10 MR. KNEEDLER: I think there's a -- I don't
- 11 know about the "intend." I mean, in the hypothetical
- 12 with the Chief Justice the Government was actually
- 13 transmitting the water. It was essentially using the
- 14 land as -- as a reservoir. And that -- that's, I think,
- 15 what Petitioner's counsel was trying to conjure up by
- 16 saying the Government was using this land for storage.
- 17 The Government was not using this land for storage. The
- 18 -- this wasn't the Government's water. There weren't
- 19 any outtakes from the commission's land to use this
- 20 water.
- 21 These were flood waters, which again the
- 22 Flood Control Act says the Government is not liable for
- 23 the release of flood waters from a project, that ended
- 24 up on the land that is an incidental consequence of the
- 25 operation of a flood control project.

- 1 People who live in a basin where there is a
- 2 flood control project get enormous benefits in the
- 3 control of that. The water has to be released. And it
- 4 has long been the case that the way that problem is --
- 5 that issue is handled about how it will be released is
- 6 by ordinary administrative law principles, basically,
- 7 with the Corps, in operating the dam, they have
- 8 requirements of public participation. In this case, the
- 9 commission participated on ad hoc planning groups.
- 10 This manual had not been updated in 50
- 11 years. Corps regulations say that manuals should be
- 12 updated to keep apace of changing circumstances,
- 13 population changes, different uses, environmental
- 14 concerns, so that when that happens, the commission
- 15 acted responsibly here and, had --
- 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: You -- you would say that
- 17 even -- even if this land was permanently flooded, okay,
- 18 permanently flooded so he couldn't use it at all, since
- 19 it was downstream, no harm done, right?
- MR. KNEEDLER: I think that's the
- 21 consequence of this -- but there's no -- the Court
- 22 doesn't have to decide that here.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: But that's your position.
- 24 MR. KNEEDLER: That -- that's I think the
- 25 necessary consequence of this Court's holdings in

- 1 Bedford, in Bedford and related cases. And -- it may
- 2 have harshness in some circumstances. But again, when
- 3 you live on a river and you know the consequences of
- 4 having a flood control project on the river, that --
- 5 that's what happens, but this is not arbitrary. There
- 6 is this planning process. There is notice and comment.
- 7 There's NEPA --
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: If there's notice
- 9 and comment -- so the choice is, there are 10 landowners
- 10 downstream. The question is which one you're going to
- 11 flood. And you flood number 2, and there is a public
- 12 process in which number 1 and 3 through 10 get to say,
- 13 yes, this sounds fine to me.
- 14 (Laughter.)
- 15 MR. KNEEDLER: No, that's not -- that's not
- 16 what happens. What the Corps was working for here, it's
- 17 commendable. The Corps was trying to develop a
- 18 consensus of downstream water users, which is why it
- 19 convened this ad hoc working group: The commission
- 20 drainage districts, representatives of farmers, the
- 21 marina, the Corps of Engineers, getting everybody
- 22 together to try to come up with a -- with a way to
- 23 handle the problem. And --
- 24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But what difference does
- 25 that make? It's nice that you try to reach consensus.

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- 2 consensus because he's the one always affected --
- 3 MR. KNEEDLER: Well --
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- you're saying
- 5 permanency -- permanency, repetition, nothing counts,
- 6 he's just -- loses.
- 7 MR. KNEEDLER: No. He doesn't lose because
- 8 he has an action under the Administrative Procedure Act.
- 9 He's not -- the -- the Corps is required to take into
- 10 account various factors including, specifically, the
- impact on other people in the basin when it's making a
- 12 decision. If the Corps --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes, but he loses because
- 14 the Corps comes in and says, yes, indeed, we did flood
- 15 2, but, in order to save, you know, 1 and 3 through 10.
- 16 Right? And -- and he'd lose.
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, the Corps cannot be
- 18 arbitrary in doing that.
- 19 JUSTICE SCALIA: Okay. It's not arbitrary.
- MR. KNEEDLER: But the -- but the Corps
- 21 requires a broad ambit of discretion in managing a river
- 22 over time, and it has to be able to change to update
- 23 circumstances without exposing the United States to
- 24 massive liability.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Kneedler, does your

- 1 essential argument turn on this being indirect, as you
- 2 say? This is consequential; therefore, it isn't -- it
- 3 doesn't belong in the takings category, anything that's
- 4 consequential rather than direct?
- 5 MR. KNEEDLER: We have two submissions. I
- 6 mean, it's the confluence of both factors mentioned in
- 7 Loretto. And the Court doesn't have to decide anything
- 8 broader than that. It's the temporary nature of the
- 9 decisions.
- 10 These were individual decisions made often
- 11 with a recommendation or concurrence of the ad hoc
- 12 committee. So it's temporary in nature -- self
- 13 limiting, as everyone knew as part of this ongoing
- 14 planning process -- but, also, particularly in this
- 15 case, where it has only consequential effects
- 16 downstream, which is, again, the way the Court --
- 17 including in Lionel, one of the leading cases -- the
- 18 Court says that this is consequential.
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: Why should it make a
- 20 difference whether the court had -- the Corps has a plan
- 21 which says, we're going to release this water every
- 22 summer, and a situation where, year after year after
- 23 year, somebody makes an ad hoc decision in the summer
- 24 that we're going to release the water?
- 25 MR. KNEEDLER: I don't think analytically,

- 1 for the reasons I said about -- about the downstream;
- 2 but, to the extent the Court is focusing on temporary,
- 3 these were self-limiting, and there was no guarantee
- 4 they were going to be renewed.
- And, in fact, at the end of this process,
- 6 the court -- or the Corps decided not to adopt a
- 7 permanent change after going through the NEPA process.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 9 Mr. Kneedler.
- Mr. Goodhart, you have four minutes
- 11 remaining.
- 12 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF JAMES F. GOODHART
- ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- MR. GOODHART: Thank you.
- 15 As -- as my friend has said about these
- 16 damages being consequential and just affecting trees and
- 17 not -- not the land, the -- the court did not find that
- 18 this was just consequential downstream damage; that this
- 19 was direct, natural, and probable from these releases
- 20 that the commission had protested and complained about
- 21 for years.
- 22 That -- that that's in the record, that they
- 23 knew that they were using this land to store this water.
- 24 And the commission could not get their attention to stop
- 25 it until our director -- it was on Valentine's Day in

- 1 2001 -- brought the appraisal to the Corps of Engineers'
- 2 office, a whole roomful of people from both sides, and
- 3 placed that report from -- from 2000, that said, over \$4
- 4 million worth of valuable timber is gone, please stop.
- 5 We -- we were -- we were pleading. So they knew.
- 6 And I think the Court of Federal Claims
- 7 found that they -- they had the understanding that they
- 8 were using this to accommodate the farmers who were
- 9 using marginally low property, that the U.S. Fish and
- 10 Wildlife Service says in the record probably should have
- 11 been cleared anyway, but they were wanting to provide
- 12 and adjust the benefits for those landowners and use the
- 13 commission's property to store the water.
- 14 And, Your Honor, I don't know, Justice
- 15 Kennedy, where the line should be drawn, but the cases
- 16 of Sponenbarger and Bedford and Sanguinetti say that
- 17 when it's not the United States' structure or it's not
- 18 the policy -- and the landowner cannot show that, that
- 19 it's from storms or from something in nature -- that's
- 20 not going to incur liability. Even negligence may not
- 21 incur liability unless it's direct that what -- how it
- 22 caused, and then substantial intrusion.
- 23 And, Your Honor, I think --
- 24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Is the baseline -- go
- 25 back to Justice Kennedy's question -- is it before the

- 1 dam or after the dam, and why is it one or the other?
- 2 If flooding was going to occur more
- 3 unpredictably before the dam, and possibly summer
- 4 flooding of this kind could have happened, do you lose?
- 5 MR. GOODHART: Your Honor, under that --
- 6 under those facts, if it could have happened and the
- 7 landowner knew that, and that that is -- that is a
- 8 cause, not the United States, if -- if the United States
- 9 takes away its flood protection and this land goes back
- 10 to what it would be naturally, then the landowner can't
- 11 prove that it's direct from the United States. The
- 12 landowner would not recover in that instance.
- In this situation, the evidence --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Even though after the
- 15 dam and the dam's plan was to ensure that it didn't
- 16 happen, you would still lose? If natural conditions --
- MR. GOODHART: Your Honor --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- would have possibly
- 19 caused this, you would lose?
- 20 MR. GOODHART: If -- if it's not
- 21 super-induced invasions directly from the United States,
- 22 the landowner is going to have that as a natural
- 23 condition. Here, that was certainly not the case.
- 24 Summertime flooding of this type never happened in
- 25 the recorded history.

1	JUSTICE SOTOMATOR: Pre-dam. In the
2	recorded history.
3	MR. GOODHART: In the pre-dam or during the
4	whole first 40 years of how this was operated.
5	It was when it was adjusted that the United
6	States used this land and then took the valuable timber
7	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm not sure that's not
8	open to dispute. There is some argument here that
9	rainfall that was naturally occurring contributed to
10	what was happening to the trees.
11	MR. GOODHART: And I
12	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I think that there is -
13	at least that's what I understood some of the factual
14	argument to be.
15	MR. GOODHART: No, Your Honor. I think the
16	record is clear that this was directed naturally,
17	probably without the without the interference or
18	addition of nature.
19	Thank you, Your Honor.
20	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
21	Counsel, the case is submitted.
22	(Whereupon, at 11:55 a.m., the case in the
23	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
24	
25	

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