1	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT						
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4	IN RE: CHINESE-MANUFACTURED * DRYWALL PRODUCTS *	Docket 09-MD-2047					
5	LIABILITY LITIGATION *	Section L					
6		New Orleans, Louisiana					
7	* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *	July 14, 2015					
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9	MONTHLY STATUS CO	ONFERENCE BEFORE					
10	THE HONORABLE E UNITED STATES D	LDON E. FALLON					
11		ONTILD SIMILS DISTRICT SUDGE					
12	<u>Appearances</u> :						
13	For the PSC: Her	Herman Herman & Katz, LLC BY: RUSS_M. HERMAN, ESQ.					
14	II 820	O'Keefe Avenue Orleans, Louisiana 70113					
15	For the Knauf Bak	er Donelson Rearman					
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18		lps Dunbar, LLP					
19	and BNBM Defendants: BY: HARRY ROSENBERG, ESQ. 365 Canal Street, Suite 200						
20	New	Orleans, Louisiana 70130					
21	Official Court Reporter: Ton	i Doyle Tusa, CCR, FCRR Poydras Street, HB-275					
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25	Proceedings recorded by mechanical stenography using computer-aided transcription software.						

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PROCEEDINGS

(July 14, 2015)

THE DEPUTY CLERK: MDL 2047, In Re: Chinese-Manufactured Drywall Products Liability Litigation.

THE COURT: Liaison counsel make their appearance, please.

MR. HERMAN: May it please the Court. Good morning, Judge Fallon. Russ Herman for the PSC.

MR. MILLER: Good morning, Your Honor. Kerry Miller on behalf of the Knauf defendants.

MR. ROSENBERG: Good morning, Your Honor. Harry Rosenberg on behalf of the Taishan, CNBM, and BNBM entities.

THE COURT: We are here today for our monthly status conference. I met with liaison lead counsel a moment ago to go over the agenda with them. We will take it in the order that they propose.

Anything on pretrial orders?

MR. HERMAN: No, Your Honor.

Item II, state court trial settings, there's an appeal in Virginia by Mr. and Mrs. Nguyen of a state action there. That's the only matter.

THE COURT: Anything on omnibus?

MR. HERMAN: Nothing new, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Class action complaints?

MR. HERMAN: There's an issue as to service as

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between CNBM IT and the CNBM entities and the PSC, but it's not set. It's been briefed.

THE COURT: What about the litigation fee and expense fund?

MR. HERMAN: No, Your Honor, nothing new.

THE COURT: Anything on the remediation program?

MR. HERMAN: Kerry Miller is here for Knauf, and Jake is here to report on the administration.

MR. MILLER: Good morning again, Your Honor.

Kerry Miller. There's really nothing new on the remediation program as it was reported at previous status conferences this year. Knauf and BrownGreer are in the wind-down phase of the administration of the Knauf settlement as well as the related settlements, so there really aren't many houses left to be remediated. Primarily what we are dealing with now, Your Honor, are the last batch of pro se claimants that fell in the subsequent Knauf agreement, but that's what Moss is working on.

Your Honor, as in the past, Bill Adams from Moss is in attendance today and has been working with the PSC and Dan Balhoff and others in attempting to resolve questions and concerns of class members and other homeowners who had their homes remediated.

THE COURT: I understand we have Ms. Rebecca Hohne. She has an issue involving her.

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Do you want to come up, ma'am, and tell us about it at this point.

I received a letter from Ms. Hohne. indicated that she has some issues with the remediation.

MS. HOHNE: Yes, sir. Thank you, Your Honor. know, my house was remediated. Me and my son, we moved back in, and we started having similar health issues that we did prior to the remediation. We ended up moving out. smell is so strong it will irritate your eyes and irritates me to where I can't even go back in it anymore.

THE COURT: You said in your letter that you feel that they remediated your home by putting Chinese drywall back in it.

MS. HOHNE: Well, what it is is that I know that in Exhibit F it talks about how no subsidiary can have anything to do with the remediation part of it and the materials going back in the home. The drywall that's in there now, it's stamped Palatka, Florida, but it has American Gypsum tape on it.

Well, I looked, and American Gypsum only has five plants in the United States, and the one furthest on the East Coast is in South Carolina. I looked up and in Palatka, Florida, that was Lafarge. Lafarge is the only one that I know of that has a plant down there, and they are an entity of Knauf. Also, the insulation in the house, it's Guardian insulation and Knauf, they own that.

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So me myself, I've had so -- it's caused so many problems for me and my child with our health, financially. Recently I went to apply for an apartment to have another place to live for me and my child because in the school zone we are at -- my son, he is dyslexic, so I'm trying to keep him in the same program for special education there with the lady who works with him. When I applied for an apartment, I got declined just recently, and that's because my second mortgage has been charged off.

I can't do anything with the house. I can't sell it. I'm probably about to start foreclosure soon, but the second mortgage is already charged off. I can't afford to pay for my mortgage and pay for the place to rent and the expense of moving multiple times.

THE COURT: What is it that you are asking the Court to do?

MS. HOHNE: I'm wondering, has the Court granted a motion for people who have been through the remediation and it didn't work like in my situation?

THE COURT: Does Moss have any input on this situation?

MR. MILLER: Your Honor, Kerry Miller again. I think what we should do in this situation, Your Honor -- we really haven't had this situation crop up before. Probably what ought to happen next, Your Honor, is a reinspection of the home to

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see what could be happening in there.

Palatka drywall is manufactured by Lafarge in Florida. That's not a Knauf entity. That's U.S. manufactured drywall, so that's not Chinese drywall.

Your Honor, I think we should have the company that does the environmental inspections after the drywall is removed go back in and take a look.

THE COURT: Ms. Hohne, you can come back up. Let's do that. Let's take it a step at a time. Let's try to get to the bottom of this. Let's have your home inspected again by the environmental people that are doing it. I would like you to meet with them and call their attention to the problems that you see.

MS. HOHNE: Okay. It was inspected.

THE COURT: Let's do it again and see what it is.

Moss, get involved a little bit in this. Be present so that you can see what the issue is so that we can at least get to the bottom of it.

MS. HOHNE: Thank you, sir.

THE COURT: Are you from here or do you have to come

MS. HOHNE: I came in from Birmingham, so I drove down here.

THE COURT: I hate for you to have to come back, but I would like to keep on top of this and see if we can do it by

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the next meeting.

MS. HOHNE: Yes, sir.

THE COURT: If you can come next meeting and give us some input on it.

MS. HOHNE: I can arrange that.

THE COURT: Thank you very much.

MR. MILLER: Perhaps after, Your Honor, we could meet with her and exchange contact information so we can follow up.

THE COURT: Let's do that.

MS. HOHNE: Okay.

THE COURT: How about InEx, Banner, Knauf, and Global settlements? Anything? Do you want to give us a report?

MR. HERMAN: No, Your Honor, but BrownGreer is here to report.

MR. WOODY: Good morning, Your Honor. My name is Jake Woody from BrownGreer here to give the July report.

The most significant activity that we have done since the last status conference is our work on what we are calling the stipend list. By way of background, in December of 2014, the Court entered an order approving a motion made by the fee committee to make what we are calling a stipend payment to certain eligible properties. The Court approved stipend payments in the amounts of \$1,000 for a KTP property and \$150 for a non-KPT property. These payments can be made to properties where there is at least one eligible claim in the

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MDL settlements. We will make these payments when the time comes from the attorney fee funds, and we will ask for the Court to approve whatever payments we do end up making.

THE COURT: How are you going about determining it? Are people claiming them?

MR. WOODY: Yes, sir. What we did was we looked at all of the properties in our database and figured out which belonged to which firm and what kind of drywall they had in it. Once we know what kind of drywall is in it, whether it's KPT or non-KPT, we can determine the potential stipend for that property.

We put together a list for each firm and e-mailed that list last Friday. The list contains our determination of all the properties associated with the firm, whether the claim is eligible or not, and if so the amount of the stipend. We asked that the firms review that list carefully to make sure that we included all the properties that they believe should be included.

If a firm reviews the list and determines that they believe we have left off a property, we ask that they add it to the second tab of the spreadsheet. If they find or believe that we have incorrectly determined the stipend amount, whether they think it should be \$1,000 or \$150, we ask that they indicate that in the column on the spreadsheet we are calling the dispute column.

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For any other discrepancies, please e-mail us and let us know what the discrepancy is, and provide any proof that you think will be helpful to us. The firms should send the list back to us at CDWquestions@browngreer.com. The list is due on Wednesday, July 22, which is a week from tomorrow. If we don't hear from a firm on or before that date, we will assume that the list we sent is correct.

We have also, of course, continued to make payments in the program since the last status conference. The total payment to date is \$78,338,935. Of that amount, 76 percent or \$59,917,627 has gone to Global, Banner, InEx repair and relocation. 24 percent has gone to what we call other loss claims. The total there is \$18,421,308.

Other loss claims are made up of five separate claim types. Foreclosure and short sale has received 26 percent of the other loss payments or \$4,750,000. Lost rent, use, and sales has made up 28 percent of the payments for other loss claims, for a total of \$5,166,209. Miscellaneous claims, which are primarily claims for personal property damage, electronics, HVAC repair, things of that nature, has made up 17 percent of the total, for a total of \$3,161,095.

Preremediation alternative living expenses, which we abbreviate here to PRALE, is 28 percent of the total. Those claims are for alternative living expenses incurred prior to remediation. In some cases people had to move out for

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months or years before any remediation took place. Through the Knauf program, they are entitled to get a lump sum payment that compensates them for the time spent out of the home during remediation. Preremediation alternative living expenses deals with the other periods they were out of the home. The total for that claim type is \$5,234,002.

Finally, Your Honor, bodily injury claims, we have paid \$110,000 on those, and they make up just .6 percent of the total payments so far.

We are still working through miscellaneous claims. We have reviewed them all, and we have issued notices on them all. We issued a large batch of offers on miscellaneous claims on June 30. There are 221 open offers there.

Let me back up and note that we have issued 4,812 eligibility notices on other loss claims. 223 are open, meaning that claimants still have time to either accept the offer or make what we call a request for a special master award. 4,018 people have accepted the offer, which is an 83 percent acceptance rate. 584 have requested special master review of their offer. That's 12 percent of the total.

I expect the 223 open offers to close before the next status conference. The deadline for most of those will be the end of this month. They will either move to the offer accepted category or to the special master award. At that

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Finally, Your Honor, our contact information, as always, our portal is www3.browngreer.com/drywall. Our e-mail address is CDWquestions@browngreer.com. That is the e-mail address that people should use to respond to us on the stipend They can also ask any questions they have about the issue. stipend through that e-mail address. Our phone number is (866) 866-1729.

THE COURT: The settlement that you just reported on, that's in addition to the Knauf remediation. Why don't you explain to us how that interfaces with this.

MR. WOODY: Yes, sir. The Knauf remediation program is largely a program to remediate properties, to fix them, to replace the Chinese drywall that's in them, and to provide some collateral benefits, for instance, the lump sum payment I mentioned earlier. When people avail themselves of the Knauf remediation program, they generally assign their Global, Banner, InEx repair and relocation claim to Knauf.

Knauf has made a number of those claims pursuant to those assignments. However, in many cases they do reserve the right to file the other loss claim types, and many people have. That period to file those claims is closed, of course,

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but we do have people who have received Knauf remediation.

Knauf will then make the Global, Banner, InEx repair and relocation claim that they received through the assignment, and the homeowner will make one or more other loss claims and can receive additional compensation through that program.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MR. WOODY: Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you very much.

Anything on shared costs fund?

MR. HERMAN: Nothing new, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Taishan, BNBM, and CNBM defendants?

MR. HERMAN: From page 15 --

MR. ROSENBERG: Excuse me. Your Honor, on behalf of the CNBM entities, I know the Court is aware that two motions have been filed.

THE COURT: Right.

MR. ROSENBERG: One is the motion to clarify the July 17, 2014 contempt order, which has also been joined in by the BNBM entities, and then there's a separate motion to dismiss based upon sovereign immunity. I believe counsel for CNBM would like to at least address the Court about the scheduling of those issues --

THE COURT: Right.

MR. ROSENBERG: -- if the Court so pleases.

THE COURT: That's fine. Do you want to do it now?

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Whatever the Court's pleasure. MR. ROSENBERG:

THE COURT: Let me just make some comments to set the stage a little bit.

As we know, CNBM has filed a motion seeking to dismiss the lawsuit. The motion is based mainly on the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, which is really the sole basis of jurisdiction of the Court against a foreign state or, for that matter, an agency or instrumentality of a foreign Foreign-controlled corporations owned by a foreign state. state, of course, are included in that law, and it grants sovereign immunity to the foreign state from suits in the United States.

It's important to recognize that it's not only immunity from judgment, it's immunity from suit. The reason for that is that it recognizes that occasionally suits will last so long that costs will be expended, and the law is really geared to short-circuit some of that.

There are, however, several exceptions to it. One exception is the commercial activities exception found in § 1605 of the statute. Under the act, commercial activity means either a regular course of commercial conduct or a particular commercial transaction or act, but there must be some nexus of that activity or act to the United States; that is to say, the commercial activity must either be carried on in the United States or carried on outside the United States but

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have some impact on the United States or on something in the United States.

It's, of course, been recognized that the drafters of the act envisioned that the courts would have some latitude in determining the nature and scope of that activity, that is to say, what is commercial for purposes of the law.

There's also another exception, which is the tortious activities exception. We see it oftentimes in car accident cases, where it arises more frequently. Under this exception, a foreign state is not immune from suits where the losses to property or personal injury are caused by tortious acts of its officers, employees, agents, or affiliates while acting in the course and scope of their employment. That's the key here. It has to be in the course and scope of their employment. It can't be just while they are not in the course and scope of their employment.

Once a defendant alleges that it's a foreign state, the plaintiff then must produce some facts to show that an exception to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act exists; but the defendant does retain at all times, under the law and under the case law interpreting the act, the burden of establishing jurisdiction.

The role of the trial court, as I mentioned, the act is clear, I think, in its wording. It's certainly undisputed by the jurisprudence that's developed, as well as

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the legal commentary, that the act is intended to not only give immunity from judgment but also give immunity from suit. this involves the trial court and the responsibility of the trial court.

When a party challenges subject matter jurisdiction, the Court, of course, is given authority to resolve any disputes. It has some discretion as to the method to resolve the dispute. Oftentimes additional discovery is Sometimes affidavits are used. Some of the courts necessary. simply use affidavits, some allow more discovery, and some even have an evidentiary hearing to resolve those disputes. discovery proceedings or hearings, of course, should be focused solely and completely on the issue of jurisdiction. limited to jurisdiction, which includes, of course, the exceptions.

There's some authority to remind the trial court that it cannot just willy-nilly start discovery without any reason at all unless it has a clear understanding, the cases generally say, of the basis of a plaintiff's claim. should be clear that it understands what the basis of the claim is.

To start with, you look at the pleadings to see what is pled because sometimes in pleadings the plaintiff has not expressed themselves specifically and it's just generally, and that generally doesn't precipitate discovery. I look to

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the pleadings in this case, with the *Gross* pleading particularly, and the relevant paragraphs seem to me to be on page 20.

Starting with paragraph 45, the plaintiffs say: "Defendant CNBM Group caused the drywall at issue in the case to be imported, distributed, delivered, supplied, inspected, marketed and/or sold."

Paragraph 46 says: "Defendant CNBM USA Corp. is a California corporation with a principal place of business in California. By information and belief, CNBM USA Corp. is a subsidiary of either BNBM, China National Building Material Co., Ltd., BNBM Group, or CNBM Group."

Paragraph 47 says: "By information and belief, CNBM USA Corp. acted as an agent for BNBM, China National Building Material Co., Ltd., BNBM Group, and/or CNBM Group by promoting and marketing the drywall at issue in this litigation to American suppliers. Accordingly, CNBM USA Corp. caused the drywall at issue in the case to be imported, distributed, delivered, supplied, inspected, marketed, and/or sold."

Lastly, paragraph 48: "To the extent Taishan, BNBM, China National Building Material, Co., Ltd., BNBM Group, and CNBM Group are deemed to be foreign sovereign entities, plaintiffs bring their claims against these entities pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1605(a)(2), the commercial activity exception to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, or alternatively under

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§ 1605(a)(5), the tortious act exception. Plaintiffs allege that the claims against Taishan, BNBM, China National Building Material Co., Ltd., BNBM Group, and CNBM Group are based upon commercial activities carried on in the United States. The claims also seek monetary damages against a foreign state for damages to the property occurring in the United States, caused by the tortious acts or omissions of that foreign state, or of any official or employee of that foreign state while acting within the course and scope of employment."

I look at that. I am also familiar with the litigation. I've had some experience with this case. It's been with me now since 2009. I've had a number of trials in the case. I have designed the protocol to remedy the situation. I have participated in rather extensive discovery on the manufacture and distribution of the Chinese drywall. In fact, I went to China to participate, along with the lawyers, in depositions which lasted five days, nine to ten hours a day.

The type and nature of the defect was gone into during the trials. I understood that. I understood the extent of the damage. I heard the testimony of the experts and designed what I felt was an appropriate protocol to remedy the situation. I heard witnesses describe it.

Based on the pleadings, as well as my understanding of the litigation, I feel like I do have some clear understanding of at least the plaintiffs' claims. I

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don't know whether their claims are valid or not, but I understand what their claims are.

When I recognized that, I looked to the parties to see if they could come up with a discovery plan because I did think that both sides would profit by some discovery on the jurisdictional aspect of the case. With the quality and competence of the lawyers in the case, I always look first to them for some guidance and get their suggestions, which I take seriously.

They met and conferred and did their best to come up with a schedule that they felt would be satisfactory. They worked very hard on it. Notwithstanding their efforts, they were not able to come up with a satisfactory schedule, so I will come up with a schedule in this matter.

I do have this motion. I do feel, for the various reasons that I have just discussed, that some discovery would be helpful to me. I do recognize that it's not the type of case that can be discovered for years in the future. don't think that's appropriate. We are only discovering the jurisdiction and the extent of the exceptions, if any; but it is factually pregnant, those exceptions, and I think that some fact discovery would be helpful.

Now, we have gotten some, and the parties I think agree that there is some. They seem to disagree as to the amounts. The plaintiffs want a lot of material.

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defendants feel that enough has been given. I'll come up with a schedule in the near future, and we will go on that schedule and deal with it. That's my feeling on it.

If there are any comments, I will certainly listen to you.

MR. ROSENBERG: Your Honor, just as liaison counsel, I think it's better to defer to CNBM's counsel. Just a couple of quick points, and then I'm going to defer to Mr. Stengel, if it's acceptable.

I understand there are exceptions under the act, as the Court knows and just articulated, but it's up to the plaintiffs to establish that they can fall within one of those exceptions.

> THE COURT: I agree.

MR. ROSENBERG: With respect to the discovery, Your Honor, the Court has given considerable latitude to the plaintiffs already, considerable latitude. We have had weeks of discovery so far. We are about to engage in more weeks of discovery.

The plaintiffs steering committee has recently intimated that they need through the end of the year to conduct discovery, which is inconsistent with the priority the Fifth Circuit and other circuits have placed upon the sovereign immunity act, as Your Honor knows.

So with just that backdrop, Your Honor, I would

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ask if Mr. Stengel could address the Court.

THE COURT: Sure. Fine. I appreciate it.

MR. STENGEL: Good morning, Your Honor. Jim Stengel for CNBM Group, and I'm conscious of the fact that we are here to talk about scheduling and not the merits of the motions themselves --

THE COURT: Right.

MR. STENGEL: -- since we have just got our brief on
file so far.

THE COURT: Sure.

MR. STENGEL: Your Honor's recital of the law is, of course, accurate. There are some qualifications that I would bring to the Court's attention when thinking about the matter of scheduling.

First of all, Your Honor is absolutely correct as to the nexus requirement in the context of the commercial activities exception, but there's an additional requirement of that nexus. The nexus has to be not only with the United States, but it has to be with the conduct which underlies the litigation, the claims themselves. So even a nexus to the United States in a random fashion does not answer the question. It has to be related to the sale of drywall here.

The other aspect of the law which is critically important from Group's perspective here, as Your Honor is

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aware, in the Bancec case in the Supreme Court, an exception or presumption of separate status was created which has flowed through the litigation jurisprudence of sovereign immunity litigation since that time. Group, as a wholly owned entity of the Chinese government, is entitled to the Bancec presumption of separateness, and that puts an additional burden on the PSC to come forth with an evidentiary basis at this time.

The Arriba case in the Ninth Circuit is the controlling authority here. Your Honor is absolutely correct. The courts have not said "never" in discovery nor have we suggested that. We have obviously appeared and allowed witnesses to be deposed at some length. Since this is a matter of subject matter jurisdiction, the power of this Court to act, it is not appropriate for that to be deferred, as we believe the PSC is suggesting, so that all discovery has to be The discovery that is allowable/permissible under completed. the sovereign immunity act and the cases interpreting the act is very narrowly focused.

Here I have some concern because what the cases say is what is appropriate is only that discovery necessary to factually confirm the allegations made by the plaintiffs. allegations as to sovereign immunity and as to the relatedness of the parties in this case are vague. They are loose. don't think they meet the *Iqbal/Twombly* standard of a factual basis for the presumptions which I recited in the pleadings.

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So we are left somewhat untethered in deciding what the appropriate scope of discovery under the sovereign immunity act in this case may be given the looseness of the pleading in the complaints.

THE COURT: Well, when you say "looseness of the pleading," listen to paragraph 47: "By information and belief, CNBM USA Corp. acted as an agent for BNBM Group, Chinese National Building Material Co., Ltd., BNBM Group, and/or CNBM Group by promoting and marketing the drywall at issue in this litigation to American suppliers."

So they say that they delivered, they supplied, they inspected, they marketed, and they sold the drywall in the United States.

MR. STENGEL: Those are conclusory pleadings without any factual basis.

THE COURT: That's the purpose of the discovery.

MR. STENGEL: Also, the complaint morphs or melds Group and Company in ways which dispel any clarity.

THE COURT: Except they say they are the same. That's why they meld them.

MR. STENGEL: Well, you can say anything in a pleading, Your Honor.

THE COURT: I agree with that. That's why I think you need some discovery to see whether or not their allegations are true. I don't disagree with you. I think that you have a

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presumption, and the plaintiffs are going to have to come forward with some evidence. I can't stop them from having evidence.

MR. STENGEL: The only point I would make in closing, Your Honor, is I think you are aware we have had 30(b)(6) witnesses for both Group and Company. I have not heard complaints from the PSC as to the quality of the witnesses or the examination. We placed a reasonable limit on time. There was no complaint that the examination was foreshortened because of that. So I think it really behooves the PSC, having had access to 30(b)(6) witnesses for both of the senior CNBM entities, to start this process with some demonstration of a factual basis for the very broad-based blunderbuss pleadings.

What I might suggest as Your Honor thinks about this -- and I think that the cases speak with some clarity to this. I think if we were to proceed with the briefing process, we might actually sharpen the allegations the PSC could make. We would flush out -- because right now we are confronted with the letter we got very recently where basically the complaint was, well, we need, in essence, to complete discovery.

That's not the way the rules work. That's not the way the law works. We are entitled to a hearing on this issue sooner rather than later. I think we need to start down a path which moves us towards greater clarity as to what specific facts the PSC believes it can show.

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When did CNBM Group engage in marketing and It did not, Your Honor. I can assure you of that promotion? fact.

None of these are answerable in the affirmative. The sooner we get to the point of them recognizing that fact, that absent a, frankly, bizarre theory of attribution, they are not going to get to Group, and Group should be out of this litigation on sovereign immunity. Thank you, Your Honor.

> THE COURT: Thanks very much.

> > Anything?

MR. HERMAN: Very, very briefly. First, may it please the Court. Judge Fallon, I apologize for a very quick, hackneyed reply to the original letter. I was in transit, and I replied by cell phone.

However, the fact is that there are three tracks now. We started with one track. That was Taishan damages. Then there was a second track, the track dealing with contempt and affiliates. Wrapped into that, after briefing and argument, was the question of alter ego.

Your Honor set for the second track limits as to what those depositions were about but said if there's some other issue the witness can answer, that may be permissible.

We had three days of CNBM depositions, very professional on both sides. Those depositions related to affiliates and alter egos and were not specifically directed to

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We have not had jurisdiction depositions yet. addition to that, we received notice from CNBM and CNBMG that they would be producing documents through August 14.

I'm certainly not upset or whining about the idea that you get serial documents. That's really something that the defendants are in charge of, not the plaintiffs, how many documents we get at one time. I'm not complaining that they are machine translated, that most of the translations are They can't be easily read. We have had to employ at times nine different law firms, at least, four translators just to deal with the translations.

So it's not a question of, gee, we produced a million documents. It's a question because this is a foreign national, because they are machine translations, what do we do with those. What we do is we have to sit there laboriously and match a machine translation to a Chinese document and then have a lawyer -- not an associate, not a paralegal, a lawyer familiar with the case -- look at the document and say, okay, this is something we need translated. Then it goes to a translator. Now, this is a very laborious activity.

Do we believe that we ultimately will fit into the commercial exception? Of course, we do, and we have said SO. So what we are saying is we need -- they have raised the jurisdiction issue under the foreign immunities act late in this litigation, not early. It's not something, even when we 09:40 1 2 09:40 3 09:40 4 09:40

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were pleading these cases, that we had a sufficient knowledge Since then we have learned some knowledge. of. We have taken some depositions, but they have not been the SOE-type immunity, state immunity, Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act depositions.

Lastly -- and I keep repeating this, and it's for no other reason that I think it's true. Chairman Song, who is the chairman of these entities that now complain that they shouldn't be in the case, and we want his deposition. We have asked for months: Give us a date. Tell us whose law office it's going to be in. us a time.

Ultimately we haven't been able to resolve that I don't know how we can be faced with representing 3,000 homeowners who have been waiting six years for justice and have to say, well, the courts of the United States would not let us, under some legislation, go forward to take the ultimate prime mover's deposition.

Of course, Your Honor hasn't ruled on that one way or the other. We have not had any response from CNBM or CNBMG as to whether they will even produce Chairman Song. have been faced with a question where Mr. Peng -- who is the primary Taishan fella, who indicated that CNBM and BNBM were probably affiliates. He is not around, nor is the chairman of Taishan available.

So maybe if they had been available, we could have gotten into some of these questions about who controls you 09:42 1 2 09:42 3 09:42 4 09:42 5 09:42 6 09:43 7 09:43 8 09:43 9 09:43 10 09:43 11 09:43 12 09:43 13 09:43 14 09:43 15 09:43 16 09:43 17 09:43 18 09:43 19 09:43 20 09:43 21 09:43 22 09:43 23 09:43 24

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directly, you know, who was involved in approval or not approval. We believe that the indication is now that one or more executives of the moving defendants were consulted and approved of the withdrawal of Taishan originally and secondarily from this litigation.

I don't know whether that's tortious activity or not, but I do know we have a right -- and more than a right, an obligation to explore it based upon the people we represent. appreciate the opportunity to respond.

> Any response on that? THE COURT:

MR. STENGEL: Your Honor, just a couple of points.

THE COURT: Sure.

MR. STENGEL: On the timing, this is a matter of subject matter jurisdiction. It's raiseable at any point. It's not waivable.

I think we have worked very hard to be good citizens in this litigation. We have reentered in a strange way, not a way we necessarily would have chosen ourselves. have respected the limitations the Court has put on us, which has included making people available for discovery. think there's anything untimely about our request.

I do think, listening to Mr. Herman's observations or arguments about various facts, they do underscore the fact, to a certain extent, we and the PSC are ships passing in the night on the legal standards for sovereign

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immunity because I don't think they accept my construction of the nexus for commercial activity relating to the sale of drywall.

Frankly, the withdrawal of Taishan from the litigation is an independent issue. It may be relevant to contempt, although we have separately briefed that. really not relevant to this issue, and I think the quicker we can get to a legal determination from the Court -- and I'm not inviting an advisory opinion, but I think we need collectively some guidance as to how the Court views the FSIA so that we can sort of focus on that. I think that will, frankly, remove a lot of this disputation.

The other thing I would say is we did move on personal jurisdiction grounds for other CNBM defendants. want those heard. We understand the arguments for scheduling and jurisdictional discovery are different, but we think the sooner the better on those.

We have also, as Your Honor now knows, filed a motion to seek to vacate or qualify the contempt ruling as relates to the CNBM entities. I will let Harry describe our proposal for how we schedule all of these. Thank you very much.

Your Honor, if it please the Court, MR. ROSENBERG: the reason I broached the subject was strictly a scheduling I always welcome the Court's insight, and I always matter.

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enjoy listening to Mr. Herman make arguments. I left my closing argument back at the office, so I will respond later.

What we had talked about, I thought, in our prefatory meeting this morning, Your Honor, was that the PSC wanted to respond to the pending motion on sovereign immunity in writing. We would suggest that they could do so within the next two weeks, Your Honor.

CNBM Group could then respond, if it so decided, within the following 10 days, and then we could have a hearing perhaps at the September 18 conference, which Your Honor has already scheduled, so we can then focus on the very issue that the circuit courts have made a priority for adjudication rather than just put it off to manana, Your Honor.

THE COURT: The plaintiffs' position, as I read their letter, is that they need some additional discovery in order to craft their response. That's what I'm hearing from them.

MR. ROSENBERG: Well, Your Honor, if you read that letter, it also says they need some untold amount of discovery that they want to undertake and then several months to respond thereafter, which is the antithesis of making this decision a priority under the case law.

MR. LEVIN: He may have left his closing address back in the office, but he also left a lot else back in the office, Your Honor. They are not going to produce all of their documents until the 14th of August. We have a process that

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0 9 : 4 8 24 0 9 : 4 8 25 takes some time to review those documents. They don't come in in English, and you have heard what Mr. Herman has said. We also don't know that they have produced everything. So I guess what we would like is a certification that they produced what we asked for, and we will accept counsel's certification on that. That's their obligation.

After we get this all together -- and I'm only speaking as to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act -- we need two months to respond adequately to their brief. We suggested that -- they can shorten this time, but we would give them a month after that because these are complex and prolix issues, and they are very important to our clients.

You mentioned the *Gross* complaint. When we filed that *Gross* complaint, we had Chinese drywall, and we had to toll statutes of limitation. There has been a progression, as we got to the *Amorin* complaint, straightening out who these defendants are in this alphabet soup of defendants. When you start taking the depositions, you hear BNBM, CNBM *ad nauseam*, with 20 or 30, 40 different entities. This is very complex. It's very important to our clients, as it may be to their clients, but we don't want to shortchange our clients, and we need that.

As to the depositions, we have taken 30(b)(6) depositions. Mr. Herman has been -- and he is in charge of CNBM -- attempting to take the Song deposition forever now, and

we get no response. Radio silence.

THE COURT: Okay. I do understand the issues. don't disagree violently with either one of you-all. I do have a clear understanding of the plaintiffs' position based on all of the facts that I mentioned. You-all can't come up with a schedule, so I will come up with a schedule. I will take into consideration all of the information that you have given me, which has been very helpful, and I will come up with a schedule.

I think we need some discovery here in order for me to rule on it, but I don't think the discovery ought to be I don't think the discovery ought to be open-ended. I think discovery has to be focused, not generalized. need some discovery. I will come up with a schedule and I will give it to you. Hopefully this week I will be able to do it. Thanks very much.

Your Honor, I won't belabor that MR. ROSENBERG: Without opening up a lengthy argument on the second point. issue I raised, which is the other pending motion to clarify the Court's July 2014 order, that motion was filed by CNBM, joined by BNBM, and we would respectfully ask that the Court consider hearing that at the next status conference or the one thereafter, but preferably the August 7 conference.

I think we will be able to respond to MR. LEVIN: that by August.

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Let's do that by August. That's fair. THE COURT: will set that for August 7.

Thank you, Your Honor. I'm going to MR. ROSENBERG: mark this date, Bastille Day, that Mr. Levin and I agreed on something.

> THE COURT: Okay.

MR. HERMAN: I agree that I made a closing argument, Harry.

> I like your socks. MR. LEVIN:

I do want to indicate, Your Honor, and MR. HERMAN: for the record that we agreed with CNBM, CNBMG, BNBM, BNBMG that certain documents would remain sealed. I don't think I need to elucidate that. However, we will be moving that the depositions, aside from that particular issue, or disclosures be made public for the same reason that we moved with Taishan.

On Item XI, we have nothing new, Your Honor.

On Item XII, plaintiff and defendant profile forms, nothing new.

For the folks in the courtroom and for those that may be listening in, Joint Report 70 has been filed in ECF and will be placed on the Court's established website for the case.

Under Item XIII, frequently asked questions, nothing new, Your Honor.

The matters that are set for hearing --

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THE COURT: We have the Oceanique motion, the Bailey Lumber Company motion, and several motions that have not been objected to or responded to.

MR. HERMAN: Do you want to hear those now, Your Honor?

THE COURT: No. I will go into that after.

MR. HERMAN: Okay, sir. Judge Fallon, there are no new issues relative to *pro se*, no new issues as to physical evidence preservation order, entry of preliminary default.

Already remediated homes, Your Honor has already heard from an individual and suggested there be a reinspection of that property.

I note that Mr. Black is here for the Louisiana attorney general.

THE COURT: Anything from the attorney general?

MR. BLACK: David Black for the State of Louisiana. The one issue I have is we have been trying to get copies of the exhibits from the damages hearing. I have conferred with counsel for Taishan, BNBM, and CNBM, and they have no objection to us getting those exhibits. We need the exhibits for our damage case.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. BLACK: I don't know if there's any positions by others, but it seems like they were in open court and we should get them.

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THE COURT: Sure. Okay. Get the material, then.

MR. HERMAN: Your Honor, I just have one question.

Excuse me. Would you mind addressing whether or not the

Louisiana attorney general is going to pay an assessment with

respect to the document costs that we have incurred?

THE COURT: Do you know how much it is?

MR. HERMAN: I can itemize it.

MR. BLACK: There's been no discussion of this
before.

THE COURT: Why don't you discuss it with them and find out what they are asking, what their costs are. If you can't agree, I will decide it.

MR. BLACK: Thank you.

THE COURT: Anything from anybody in the audience? Any comments? Anybody?

MR. HERMAN: Your Honor, may it please Court, you have a date for --

THE COURT: Our next meeting is August 7, and the following one is September 18. I'll be back in a couple minutes to deal with the motions. We have several motions before the Court. Thank you very much. The Court will stand in recess for five minutes.

(Proceedings adjourned.)

* * *

CERTIFICATE

I, Toni Doyle Tusa, CCR, FCRR, Official Court
Reporter for the United States District Court, Eastern District
of Louisiana, certify that the foregoing is a true and correct
transcript, to the best of my ability and understanding, from
the record of proceedings in the above-entitled matter.

<u>s/ Toni Doyle Tusa</u> Toni Doyle Tusa, CCR, FCRR Official Court Reporter

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