



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

SEP 22 2008

The Honorable Byron Dorgan
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Dorgan:

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates asked me to respond to your June 26, 2008 letter concerning allegations that Kellogg, Brown, and Root Services (KBR) exposed U.S. troops, British troops, Iraqi nationals, and KBR employees to sodium dichromate at the Qarmat Ali water pump and filtration plant in Iraq.

I have directed that a senior level Army Review Panel, led jointly by the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) and the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology), review the issues associated with the sodium dichromate exposure at the Qarmat Ali facility.

The Review Panel will address the policy and procedures for hazardous exposure and post deployment health assessment. It will review the actions taken to identify and follow up on the military and DoD personnel who may have been exposed, including the members of the Indiana Army National Guard. Finally, the Panel will determine whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers exercised appropriate contract administration and oversight of KBR.

In order to ensure that the medical evaluations conducted by the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventative Medicine (USACHPPM) were comprehensive and appropriate, we have also requested that the Defense Health Board independently review USACHPPM's formal assessment of Qarmat Ali exposure.

I anticipate that the Panel will complete its review in 60 days, and we will get you feedback as soon as possible. Thank you for your continued concern for the health of our Soldiers, Families, civilian employees, and contractors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Geren", is written over a horizontal line.

Pete Geren