



News Release

BYRON L. DORGAN
CHAIRMAN

For Immediate Release
Friday,
July 31, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
CONTACT: Barry E. Piatt
PHONE: 202-224-0577

DORGAN WANTS KBR BONUS MONEY RETURNED, OFFICIALS HELD ACCOUNTABLE

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) --- U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) continued to press the Army Friday to seek the return of \$83.4 million in bonus payments paid to military contractor KBR for electrical work in Iraq. An investigation by the Department of Defense (DOD) Inspector General's (IG) investigation has linked KBR's electrical work to the 2003 electrocution of a 24 year old Green Beret.

The IG also found that KBR's electrical work throughout Iraq was of poor quality, with more than 53,000 sites still requiring repair or upgrades as of March 2009.

KBR received the \$83.4 million bonus because the Army judged its work to be "excellen." Dorgan said the IG's report makes clear it was "it obviously was not."

Dorgan is also asking the Army what it intends to do to hold accountable officials who provided false information about the soldier's death.

Following the electrocution death of Staff Sgt. Ryan Maseth as he showered on his U.S. Army base in Iraq, the Army told his mother, Cheryl Harris, he carried a small electrical appliance into the shower. She rejected that explanation and pressed for answers. KBR continued to deny any connection with the electrocution.

She told her story at a 2008 Senate Democratic Policy Committee hearing Dorgan chaired. Dorgan and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) requested a new investigation of the death and a complete review of KBR's electrical work in Iraq and Aghanistan.

In a report on its investigation released this week, the DOD Inspector General concluded Maseth died because KBR failed to properly ground a water pump that supplied water to his shower. It also found multiple other failings by KBR, the biggest military contractor in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"The false story Staff Sgt. Maseth's mother was given, and that we in Congress were told, served only the interest of the contractor," Dorgan said Friday. "It did not serve the interest of the truth. It did not serve his family. It did not serve other soldiers. It did not serve taxpayers. I want to know what action the Army intends to take to hold those accountable who persisted in providing false information that served the interest of a contractor that performed shoddy and dangerous work, and no one else."

"I also want to know what steps the Army is taking to recover the \$83.4 million in bonus money for supposedly "excellent" work – a bonus that now looks sadly absurd in light of the Inspector General's report."

-- END --