



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
WASHINGTON

SEP 22 2008

The Honorable Evan Bayh  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bayh:

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates asked me to respond to your September 12, 2008 letter expressing concerns about exposure of military personnel to sodium dichromate at the Qarmat Ali water pump and filtration plant in Iraq. You requested an investigation of the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine's determinations and the Army's actions, policies and plans for identifying, evaluating, and treating those who might have been exposed.

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 Kellogg, Brown, and Root Services.

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".

Pete Geren