

THOMAS R. CARPER, DELAWARE, CHAIRMAN

CARL LEVIN, MICHIGAN
MARK L. PRYOR, ARKANSAS
MARY L. LANDRIEU, LOUISIANA
CLAIRE McCASKILL, MISSOURI
JON TESTER, MONTANA
MARK BEGICH, ALASKA
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN
HEIDI HEITKAMP, NORTH DAKOTA

TOM COBURN, OKLAHOMA
JOHN McCAIN, ARIZONA
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
ROB PORTMAN, OHIO
RAND PAUL, KENTUCKY
MICHAEL B. ENZI, WYOMING
KELLY AYOTTE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

RICHARD J. KESSLER, STAFF DIRECTOR
KEITH B. ASHDOWN, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

June 18, 2013

Charles K. Edwards
Deputy Inspector General
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Drive, SW, Building 410
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Edwards:

I am writing to request that the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General review the circumstances under which the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) determined that drug-resistant anthrax constituted a material threat to the United States.

In 2004, DHS determined that drug-resistant anthrax posed a threat so significant that the government should invest in measures to counteract a potential attack. This determination, known as a Material Threat Assessment, authorized the government to acquire countermeasures, including antitoxins, which can be used to treat individuals who have been exposed to the bacteria.¹

Since 2006, the government has spent approximately \$334 million to purchase more than 65,000 doses of the anthrax antitoxin known as raxibacumab (raxi) from Human Genome Sciences, Inc. Raxi is the only available anthrax antitoxin on the market. It has a shelf life of three years, costs more than \$5,000 per dose, and its efficacy against anthrax is unproven. The U.S. government is currently the only known purchaser of the drug.²

Recent reports raise concerns regarding the Department's decision that drug-resistant anthrax was a significant threat. The Material Threat Assessment appears to have been based in part on the recommendations of Richard Danzig, a former Secretary of the Navy, who at the time was serving as a biodefense advisor to the government. It appears that Mr. Danzig was also serving at the time as the director of Human Genome Sciences, the manufacturer of raxi, and that Mr. Danzig failed to disclose his involvement to the government.³

¹ Project BioShield Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-276 (2004).

² *Anthrax Drug Brings \$334 Million to Pentagon Advisor's Biotech Firm*, Los Angeles Times (May 19, 2013).

³ *Id.*

Charles K. Edwards
June 18, 2013
Page 2

I am concerned that Mr. Danzig's role in the development of the Material Threat Assessment may have improperly influenced the government's assessment of the need to acquire anthrax countermeasures. Therefore I request that you review the development of material threat assessment, and the extent of Mr. Danzig's involvement. I also request that you review the meetings Mr. Danzig had with DHS officials and whether there is any evidence that he disclosed his role at Human Genome Sciences while advocating the need to address a possible drug-resistant anthrax threat. Please coordinate with the Department of Defense's Inspector General, whom I have also asked to review this matter.

I appreciate your assistance with this request. Please contact Sarah Garcia with the Subcommittee staff at (202) 224-5602 with any questions. Please send any official correspondence relating to this request to Lauren_Corcoran@hsgac.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
Chairman
Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting
Oversight

cc: Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight