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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

June 18, 2013

Lynne Halbrooks
Acting Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense
4800 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22350-1500

Dear Ms. Halbrooks:

I am writing to request that the Department of Defense's Office of Inspector General review the circumstances under which the Department of Defense (DoD) awarded contracts to Richard Danzig to provide biodefense-relating consulting services.

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.¹

Recent reports raise concerns regarding the government's decision that drug-resistant anthrax was a significant threat. This conclusion was 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. In a report completed in 2003, which reportedly was funded by the Defense Department, Mr. Danzig stated that a drug to combat drug-resistant anthrax should be produced 'as soon as possible' and that stockpiling such a drug "would deter an attack." At the time, Mr. Danzig was serving on the board of directors of Human Genome Sciences, Inc., the developer of raxibacumab. It appears that Mr. Danzig failed to disclose his position to the Defense Department.²

I am concerned that Mr. Danzig's may have improperly influenced the government's assessment of the need to acquire anthrax countermeasures. Therefore I request that you review the contracts for consulting services to the Defense Department and the extent of Mr. Danzig's

¹ *Anthrax Drug Brings \$334 Million to Pentagon Advisor's Biotech Firm*, Los Angeles Times (May 19, 2013).

² *Id.*

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influence over procurement of raxibacumab. I also request that you review the meetings Mr. Danzig had with Defense Department 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 Homeland Security'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