

**Remarks at the Senate Democratic Policy Committee Hearing  
Senator Harry Reid  
Senate Majority Leader**

**“The Exposure at Qarmat Ali: Did the Army Fail to Protect  
U.S. Soldiers Serving in Iraq?”**

**Monday, August 3, 2009  
628 Dirksen Senate Office Building**

Thank you to both the Senators and witnesses who are here today. Your collective commitment to openness, transparency and accountability in the face of waste, fraud and abuse is an example of our government at its best.

Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis called sunlight “the best of disinfectants.” That is what this committee provides.

I especially want to thank Chairman Dorgan for your leadership, not only on the issue before us today, but for all of your work at the helm of the Senate Democratic Policy Committee.

Because of Chairman Dorgan’s leadership and his staff’s hard work, this committee has shined a light on contractors who were rewarded for faulty work in Iraq – even though that work led to the electrocution deaths of nine of our soldiers.

They investigated the waste in our war zones, exemplified by private contractors who had so much money that they were seen playing football with wads of cash.

And they explored how contractors’ corruption undermines our military missions abroad.

Today, in the 20<sup>th</sup> hearing on contracting abuses in Iraq, we will get to the bottom of another terrible case. As you will hear, the water our troops drink has been exposed to a potentially deadly substance – the very same chemical that contaminated the water in the California case Erin Brockovich made famous.

Chairman Dorgan and this committee’s commitment to protecting those who protect us – the brave men and women who voluntarily serve – deserves our great gratitude and respect. And it is especially impressive how they do so without subpoena power – just through their own hard work, a firm sense of justice, and a little bit of sunlight.

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