

Ms. Natalie Golos

UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA
APO NEW YORK 09852-0006

April 16, 1991

Dear Ms. Golos:

I have been asked to respond to your letter of 4 April 1991 on behalf of General Schwarzkopf. Thank you for your concern about the health of our soldiers and be assured that we share your concern about the health effects of the Kuwait Oil Fires just as we are concerned about any threat to the well-being of those stationed here.

The specific health risks of this unprecedented environmental disaster are being evaluated through an international effort. By the time this letter reaches you these very questions will be under consideration by the World Meteorological Organization in Geneva. We are happy to report that tests conducted to date by the United States Army, the Saudi Arabian Meteorological Environmental Protection Administration, the Kuwait Environmental Protection Department, and a U.S. Air Assessment Team have shown certain toxic gases (hydrogen sulfide, sulfur dioxide, nitric oxides) to be within the U. S. Ambient Air Standard, This is not to say there is no risk, just that there is a modicum of good news in an otherwise disastrous situation. The U.S. Air Assessment Team is composed of the representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Centers for Disease Control, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and they are continuing their assessment.

The best course of action would be to extinguish the fires. However, the scope of this disaster precludes the rapid accomplishment of this goal. The next best action would be to get our people out of the area. This is being done as rapidly as possible. In addition to these "best actions" a continuous evaluation of the air, land, and sea pollution is being accomplished on an international basis. We are doing everything possible to protect, evaluate and treat our soldiers. Thanks again for your interest and concern.

Sincerely,

James D. Bales, Jr.,M.D.
COL MC USA