



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC

Office Of The Assistant Secretary

SAF/MI
1660 Air Force Pentagon
Washington DC 20330-1660

06 APR 2000

Ms. Elaine Kaplan
Special Counsel of the United States
U.S. Office of Special Counsel
1730 M Street, NW
Washington DC 20036-4505

Re: OSC File No. DI-98-2193

Dear Ms. Kaplan

This responds to your letter regarding the above-captioned file. Our Office of Inspector General (SAF/IG), the Office of the Air Force General Counsel, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Environment, Safety, and Occupational Health (SAF/MIQ)) conducted a review of the documents provided by OSC and Mr. Nelson. Additional information was requested from McClellan AFB Inspector General and Bioenvironmental Engineering Services (BES) offices. The two investigating officers selected to conduct the inquiry were chosen based on their career specialties and experience. Lt Col Timothy M. Russell (SAF/IGQ) is an aircraft maintenance officer; Lt Col M. Kelli Ballengee (SAF/MIQ) is a bioenvironmental engineer. Their biographies (attachment 2) demonstrate their credentials and experience.

Our findings are set forth in the attached Report of Inquiry (ROI). In the ROI, we analyze each of Mr. Nelson's allegations as set forth in your original letter to the Air Force. As indicated more fully therein, our report does not substantiate Mr. Nelson's allegations.

In addition, you should be aware that the Air Force Audit Agency (AFAA) had, prior to our receipt of your transmittal letter in this case, reviewed the Air Force confined space program. The AFAA identified several problem areas and provided three recommendations which are being or will be implemented: (1) the issuance of a message from Chief of Safety of the Air Force emphasizing the importance of the program, (2) the Inspector General's evaluation of the confined space program during all inspections to maintain an emphasis on the program, and (3) the rewriting of the Air Force Occupational Safety and Health Standard to incorporate the AFAA recommendations.

The accompanying ROI has been reviewed extensively by the Air Force's General Counsel's office. In addition, I have personally reviewed the findings contained in the ROI, and I am satisfied with them. I have been delegated, by the Secretary of the Air Force, the authority to sign this letter transmitting the attached report.

Sincerely



RUBY B. DEMESME
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force
(Manpower, Reserve Affairs, Installations &
Environment)

Attachments:

1. Report of Inquiry (ROI) w/listed attachments
2. Biographies