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July 15, 2008

The Honorable Barack Obama
Chairman
Subcommittee on European Affairs
Committee on Foreign Relations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Obama,

In the coming days, I understand you will travel to Afghanistan for the first time and visit with a few of our European partners. Like my travels to these regions, I trust this trip will afford you a unique opportunity to see the facts on the ground firsthand and witness the work of our brave men and women who sacrifice so much to secure our freedom.

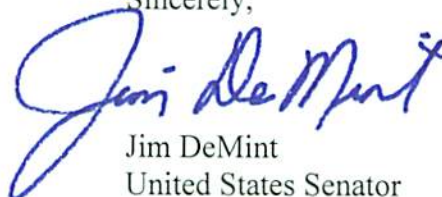
In February, I had the privilege of visiting and talking with our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. These brave Americans serve their country with incredible passion, pride and courage. As you know, NATO's International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) plays an integral part in the current operations and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

There are concerns about the imbalance between some European nations, their level of commitment to the fight in Afghanistan, and caveats these nations place on their forces in theater. I trust you will become well acquainted with these issues. The Bush Administration has worked hard to maintain and increase the level of forces our European allies have committed to the fight.

However, despite these successes, I am concerned our Subcommittee has not held any hearings on these issues over the last two years. With oversight of NATO relations and its role in Afghanistan, I believe it is time for us to focus closely on these issues. As Ranking Member of your Subcommittee on European Affairs, I would welcome a chance to hold a hearing on NATO's mission in Afghanistan upon your return.

The success of Afghanistan is critical to the future of NATO and vital to our efforts to defeat Al Qaeda and the Taliban. As the situation in Afghanistan grows more tense, it is time for us to hold a hearing on the mission there. I look forward to working with you to schedule this hearing.

Sincerely,



Jim DeMint
United States Senator

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