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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

February 24, 2003

The Honorable Joseph E. Schmitz
Inspector General
Department of Defense
400 Army Navy Drive
Arlington, Virginia 22202-4704

Dear Mr. Schmitz:

We are deeply concerned about allegations that the U.S. Air Force Academy apparently has failed to take appropriate action in response to reports of sexual assault against women cadets, and we are, therefore, writing to request that your office immediately and thoroughly investigate these complaints.

During the past few weeks, several current and former women cadets have charged that they were raped or otherwise sexually assaulted while attending the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. These individuals assert that Academy officials failed to investigate these charges properly and failed to prosecute the perpetrators. In some cases, the cadets reportedly experienced retaliation for reporting the attacks.

Secretary James Roche has announced the creation of a special panel to review sexual assault policies in the U.S. Air Force, with emphasis on the Air Force Academy. While we commend the Secretary for taking action in response to the allegations, we believe it is imperative that an independent investigation be conducted. The Inspector General's office is best suited to undertake such an investigation. A thorough investigation needs to be conducted as quickly as possible for, even if only a portion of the allegations are true, such behavior is intolerable, and corrective actions are required immediately.

If you have any questions concerning my request or if we can provide any additional information, please call Chairman Collins or have your staff contact Kim Corthell or Claire Barnard with Chairman Collins's staff at 202-224-4751, or David Berick with Ranking Member Lieberman's staff at 202-224-2627.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Collins
Chairman

Joseph I. Lieberman
Ranking Member