THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 8, 2011

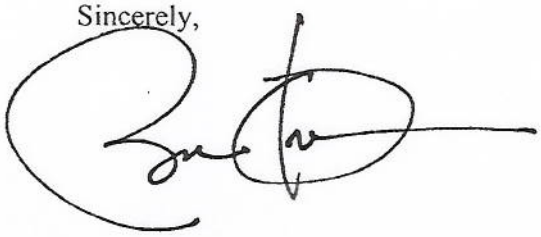
The Right Honorable
Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Ottawa

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

It has often been said that the United States and Canada are great neighbors, trading partners, and the best of friends. Friendship gives us comfort and it gives us strength, but can be tested in difficult times. In one of the darkest moments in our history, Canada stood by our side and showed itself to be a true friend.

On the 10th anniversary of September 11, 2001, we remember with gratitude and affection how the people of Canada offered us the comfort of friendship and extraordinary assistance that day and in the following days, by opening their airports, homes, and hearts to us. As airspace over our two countries was shut down, hundreds of flights en route to the United States were landed safely by Canadian air traffic control in seventeen Canadian airports from coast to coast. The small city of Gander, Newfoundland, population 9,600, received 6,600 diverted passengers, while Vancouver received 8,500 people. For the next 3 days – before our airspace was reopened – those displaced passengers were treated like family in Canadian homes, receiving food, shelter, medical attention, and comfort.

Ten years later, we continue to be grateful for Canada's friendship, and for the solidarity you continue to show us in our shared fight against terrorism. The United States is fortunate to share a border with a country that understands that, in your words, "There is no such thing as a threat to the national security of the United States which does not represent a direct threat to this country."

On this anniversary, we recognize all the gestures of friendship and solidarity shown to us by Canada and its people, and give thanks for our continuing special relationship.

Sincerely,