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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

March 11, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to express my concern about the trafficking of illegal weapons, bulk cash, and narcotics across the southwest border and the dramatic surge in cross-border crime. While many challenges currently face the country, I strongly urge you to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses problems along the U.S.-Mexico border as soon as possible.

I am especially concerned about the trafficking of illegal drugs, like methamphetamine. With the exception of Missouri and Indiana, more meth labs were discovered in my home state of Tennessee in 2007 than anywhere else in our country. In response to increasing meth problems, I wrote legislation that President Bush signed into law in December 2007, charging the EPA to develop national standards for cleaning up meth lab sites. However, it is not only important that we halt the domestic production of meth and other drugs, but that we also stop these deadly substances, in addition to illegal weapons and other items, from coming across the U.S.-Mexico border.

I urge you to create a thorough strategy that builds off the Bush Administration's existing programs. As you develop this strategy, I encourage you to do two things: (1) increase border security by issuing at least 1,000 additional personnel to provide logistical support to Border Patrol agents; and, (2) continue the Bush Administration's work to complete both the physical and virtual fencing along the southwest border. In the 110th Congress, as Chairman of the House Science and Technology Committee, I co-authored legislation (H.R. 3916) with Ranking Member Ralph Hall that sought to provide DHS with the next-generation of border security technologies to assist the Department with its long-term security goals. Mr. Hall and I will re-introduce this legislation in the next few weeks.

President Calderon is currently deploying 45,000 troops, or a quarter of the Mexican army, to combat drug cartels and criminal smuggling organizations. As the Mexican government commits more resources and manpower, we too should expand the Border Patrol and further efforts to complete the fence. I hope you will take my recommendations into consideration and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


BART GORDON

Member of Congress

CC: Secretary Napolitano

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