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THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

S10 020117-016  
OST-2001-11029  
Correspondence  
Part 300 File

January 22, 2002

The Honorable Richard A. Gephardt  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-2503

Dear Congressman Gephardt:

OST-01-11029-128

Thank you for your letter of December 19, 2001, urging the U.S. Department of Transportation to conclude an open-skies aviation agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom (U.K.). You also noted the importance to the city of St. Louis of enhanced access to London's Heathrow Airport.

The goal of the Department is to increase liberalization of international markets, including establishing open skies with the U.K. As you noted in your letter, an open-skies agreement with the U.K. would provide substantial benefits to U.S. consumers, communities, and airlines in contrast to the current restrictive agreement. Securing access for additional airlines and cities to Heathrow Airport is a priority of the Department, and we will continue to work closely with all sectors of the U.S. aviation community.

The Department has consolidated the American/British Airways and the United/British Midland antitrust cases. The requests for immunity will be decided on the record developed in the case, which includes a significant amount of information concerning access to Heathrow Airport. Since the requests are pending before the Department, I am sure you understand that I cannot comment on the merits of the applications. I assure you, however, that we will consider all relevant factors in making our decision.

As is our normal practice, I am placing a copy of your letter and my response in Docket OST-2001-11029 and in the file for contacts outside the record of the case. I appreciate your sharing your views with me. If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely yours,

Norman Y. Mineta

RICHARD A. GEPHARDT  
THIRD DISTRICT, MISSOURI  
DEMOCRATIC LEADER

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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-2503

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
1235 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2503  
PHONE: (202) 225-2671  
e-mail: gephardt@mail.house.gov  
http://dickgehardt.house.gov

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
11140 SOUTH TOWNE SQUARE  
ROOM 201  
ST. LOUIS, MO 63123  
PHONE: (314) 894-3400

998 E. GANNON DR.  
PO Box 392  
FESTUS, MO 63028  
PHONE: (636) 937-6399

December 19, 2001

The Honorable Norman Y. Mineta  
Secretary of Transportation  
United States Department of Transportation  
400 Seventh Street, S.W., Room 10200  
Washington, D.C. 20590

The Honorable Colin L. Powell  
Secretary of State  
United States Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W. Room 7226  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretaries Mineta and Powell:

I write in continued support for the ongoing effort to reach an "open skies" aviation agreement with the United Kingdom. I believe the time is long overdue to modernize the antiquated bilateral aviation agreement that controls access into London's airports from the United States. The existing framework, referred to as "Bermuda 2," was agreed to in 1977, and has not been substantially modernized despite the intervening twenty-four years of sweeping changes in global commerce, technologies and the aviation industry. This framework no longer serves the interest of the American nor British peoples. Each day we delay in making open skies a reality means unnecessary costs and restrictions on transatlantic travel and commerce.

Under Bermuda 2, my home city of St. Louis is prohibited from having non-stop service to the most prized overseas airport, London Heathrow. This leaves St. Louis at a competitive disadvantage in attracting air travel and in expanding our international air service. It is also a particularly unfair prohibition in light of the fact that existing service from the U.S. to Heathrow is disproportionately distributed to coastal cities and Chicago. Large regions of the United States, including most of the heartland of our country, have no service at all. In an increasingly global marketplace where mobility and access are vital components to economic growth, this injurious limitation on and distribution of air access to Heathrow cost communities like St. Louis jobs and the opportunity for greater economic growth.

That is why I am continuing to fight for the opportunity to establish St. Louis to Heathrow access, operated by St. Louis-based flight crews. Not only should eliminating the Bermuda 2 constraints lead to improved service for many areas in our country, it would also offer the added benefit of creating the opportunity for increased competition that would lead to lower prices for all consumers.

It is my understanding that the British government has linked negotiations on an open skies agreement, with the American government's pending review of the proposed American Airlines and British Airways operating alliance. I note that other competing transatlantic airline

CHARD A. GEPHARDT  
THIRD DISTRICT, MISSOURI  
DEMOCRATIC LEADER

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-2503

1238 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2502  
PHONE: (202) 225-2571  
e-mail: gephardt@mail.house.gov  
http://dickgephardt.house.gov

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
11140 SOUTH TOWNE SQUARE  
ROOM 201  
ST. LOUIS, MO 63123  
PHONE: (314) 894-3400

998 E. GANNON DR.  
PO BOX 382  
PESTUS, MO 63028  
PHONE: (636) 937-6399

December 19, 2001

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It is my understanding that the British government has linked negotiations on an open skies agreement, with the American government's pending review of the proposed American Airlines and British Airways operating alliance. I note that other competing transatlantic airline

alliances already have earned approvals for similar operations from the United States government. I believe reasonable conditions, such as requiring expanded service to more U.S. airports, including St. Louis, can and should be agreed to on the proposed American and British Airways alliance, assuring the proposal meets the public's best interest.

I urge you to move forward on reaching a new aviation agreement with the United Kingdom.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard A. Gephardt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Richard A. Gephardt  
House Democratic Leader