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PRIME MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT IN ST. STEPHEN

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(APPLAUSE)

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Thank you very much. Merci beaucoup, tout le monde. First of all, thanks to Minister Thompson for that kind introduction, and I want to thank you, Greg, for all your hard work over the years to see this project through to fruition. Greg truly played an instrumental role in making this new border crossing facility a reality. As New Brunswick's chief representative at the cabinet table, he's also been the minister responsible for Veterans' Affairs, the minister responsible for the men and women who have embodied the highest of citizenship and loyalty to our country. I should also say that Greg, throughout his career, and it has been a long career, has made a continually a solid contribution to Parliament, to our caucus and to our government, so I'm going to ask you all to give a well-deserved hand to a man who has epitomized service to his community and country. (APPLAUSE)

Greetings also to all of our special guests here, to Premier Graham, of course, to his colleagues from the Legislature, the leader of the Opposition, to Tony Hutchins, a local Member of the Legislature – great job leading us on the anthem – to local mayor, mayor of St. Stephen, Jed Purcell, and to all of the local mayors and municipal representatives from the region who are with us today, to Minister of State Keith Ashfield, to Members of Parliament Moore, Weston, Tilly O'Neil-Gordon, to Senators Kinsella, Mockler and Stuart-Olsen who are with us as well, officials led by Stephen Rigby from the Canada Border...Canadian Border Services Agency, and of course a special welcome to the American Ambassador to Canada, David

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Jacobson. It is a great honour to have you here, and let's give David a big hand. (APPLAUSE)

C'est toujours un immense plaisir d'accueillir un ami américain chez-nous dans notre grand pays.

It's always a great pleasure to welcome an American friend to our home, the true North, strong and free. In honour of today's event, I'd like to share with you an anecdote involving...an anecdote involving another illustrious American visitor, who often spent his summers on Campabello Island here in New Brunswick. During a state visit in 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt read in a newspaper that he would be received in Canada with all the honours customarily accorded to, I quote, "a foreign ruler". (LAUGHTER) While he was greatly honoured, FDR was nonetheless somewhat taken aback. The President had never considered himself a foreigner when in Canada. And nor did he feel that Canadians considered him to be one. As he remarked, and I quote, "I've never heard a Canadian refer to an American as a foreigner. He is just an American. And in the same way, in the United States, Canadians are not foreigners. They are Canadians. That simple little distinction illustrates to me better than anything else the relationship between our two countries." (APPLAUSE)

Voisins pacifiques et alliés de toujours, le Canada et les États-Unis sont les meilleurs des amis. En fait, j'irais plus loin. Il n'y a pas deux pays dans le monde qui se préoccupent aussi peu de la ligne qui les départage sur la carte.

Peaceful neighbours and enduring allies, Canada and the United States are the best of friends, but I would go farther. No two nations on Earth have worried less about the line on the map that divides them, and

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more about how to build goodwill across it. (APPLAUSE) This relationship is exemplified by border communities like St. Stephen and Calais. For more than 200 years, these two towns have enjoyed peaceful coexistence on opposite banks of the beautiful St. Croix River. So harmonious have been the relations, so harmonious have been the relations – this is a great story – that even on the one occasion where our two countries came to blows, beginning of course in the summer of 1812, St. Stephen actually gave Calais gunpowder (LAUGHTER) to bolster its Independence Day celebrations. (LAUGHTER) Just as these communities have come to rely on each other as neighbours and friends, so too they have come to depend on the stream of commercial traffic that crosses the border every day. In this sense, as in so many others, St. Stephen and Calais are a microcosm for the larger Canada-US relationship.

Le Canada et les États-Unis sont les deux plus grands partenaires commerciaux du monde de l'histoire. Chaque jour plus d'un milliard et demi de dollars de biens et de services traversent notre frontière. Ces échanges commerciaux continus sont le moteur de nos économies nationales; aussi quand des camions sont bloqués d'un côté de la frontière, l'activité économique ralentit des deux côtés.

Canada and the United States are the world's two largest trading partners, the two largest trading partners in history. Every day over a billion and a half dollars of goods and services cross our border. This steady flow of trade is the lifeblood of our national economies, so when trucks idle on one side of the border, economic activity slows on both.

Maintenant, plus que jamais, mesdames et messieurs, nous devons chercher à faciliter le flux des échanges à travers les voies commerciales de l'Amérique du Nord, et c'est pourquoi j'ai l'immense plaisir

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aujourd'hui d'ouvrir officiellement cette installation aussi au coin du passage le plus utilisé entre le Canada atlantique et le Nouvel-Angleterre, le premier nouveau poste frontalier de la région en 30 ans.

Now more than ever, ladies and gentlemen, we must work to ease the flow of trade through North America's veins of commerce. That's why I'm so pleased today to officially open this facility, the region's first new border crossing in 30 years. (APPLAUSE) Here at the busiest crossing point between Atlantic Canada and New England, state of the art security features will keep our border secure without unduly slowing the flow of traffic. And I'm proud to report that the new crossing is already proving a big success. Since the new bridge opened, local traffic flow has greatly improved, while at the same time, commercial traffic has increased by 20 percent. (APPLAUSE)

J'aimerais remercier le gouvernement du Nouveau-Brunswick pour sa contribution considérable à cet important projet qui, une fois de plus, illustre ce qui peut être accompli quand deux gouvernements collaborent.

And I also want to thank the government of New Brunswick for its significant contribution to this important project, which once again illustrates what can be accomplished when governments work together. Ladies and gentlemen, one does not build a border crossing like this one to exclude neighbours. It is the kind of border crossing you build to welcome friends and to foster greater trade between them, for friends we are, and friends our two peoples shall always be. Merci beaucoup. Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

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