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PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH BEFORE CONFERENCE OF
DEFENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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(APPLAUSE)

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Thank you. Merci beaucoup. Thank you very much. Bonjour mesdames et messieurs. Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much General Manson for your kind introduction. Greetings to the foreign ambassadors who are here with us today, and of course special greetings to all the serving members and veterans of the Canadian Forces who are in the audience, including General Hillier and his senior commanders. For 76 years the Conference of Defence Associations has been a passionate and eloquent advocate for the Canadian military. You understand the vital role it serves in defending our sovereignty, projecting our values and asserting our interests on the world stage, so I thank you once again for the opportunity to address this organization today.

J'aimerais parler aujourd'hui du rôle que le Canada devrait jouer en ce qui concerne la sécurité mondiale et du rôle que nos militaires devraient jouer afin de soutenir notre contribution à la sécurité mondiale.

Today I'd like to address the role Canada should play on the global security landscape and the role the military should play in support of our contribution to global security. I believe that all Canadians are proud of the fact that throughout our history, Canada has been a force for positive change in the world. We were a founding member of the League of Nations, the first concerted attempt by modern sovereign states to achieve international collective security. Through the League we championed our foundational values, freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We were also instrumental in the creation of the United Nations. In fact a Canadian, John Humphrey, authored the seminal United Nations Declaration on Human

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Rights. Former Prime Minister Lester Pearson was the architect of UN peacekeeping, and recognizing that economic and social development are essential to peace and prosperity, our country has long been an advocate of free and fair international trade. Canadians are also recognized far and wide for their humanitarian work among the world's poor and oppressed.

Ces nobles efforts internationaux reflètent une caractéristique fondamentale de la société canadienne. Contrairement à nos amis du sud, ce pays n'a jamais été isolationniste. Les Canadiens ont toujours voulu contribuer à un monde meilleur, plus sécuritaire. Cela découle des origines même de notre pays. La fédération canadienne n'est pas née d'un conflit. Nous n'avons jamais manifesté un goût pour l'impérialisme. Nous avons largement évité les agressions étrangères, et nous sommes un pays formé d'immigrants venus ici pour laisser derrière nous le passé violent de nombreux de nos terres ancestrales.

These noble international efforts reflect a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. Unlike our friends to the south, this country has never been isolationist. We have always harboured a strong desire to contribute to a better and safer world. It springs from the very origins of our country. The Dominion of Canada was not born of conflict. We have never displayed a taste for imperialism. We have largely escaped foreign aggression, and we are a nation of immigrants who came here seeking to leave behind us the violent histories of many of our ancestral lands. To a greater extent than most countries, we've also learned how to resolve domestic disputes through democratic debate, honourable compromise and peaceful evolution.

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Notre hésitation à prendre les armes découle de cette histoire. Pourtant, au même moment, notre pays est riche d'une histoire militaire longue, brillante et honorable. Lors des premières et deuxième Guerres mondiales, en Corée, pendant la guerre froide, lors d'innombrables missions de maintien de la paix et dans divers conflits régionaux jusqu'à notre mission en Afghanistan aujourd'hui, nous avons toujours manifesté la volonté de prendre les armes pour défendre nos valeurs et nos intérêts quand il fallait le faire. Nous avons toujours manifesté cette volonté, mais nous n'avons pas toujours maintenu la capacité nécessaire.

From all of this history stems our reluctance as a nation to take up arms. Our reluctance to take up arms is a virtue. Yet, at the same time, our country has also a long, honourable and distinguished military history. When the cause is just and the sacrifice necessary, Canada has always answered the call. In the first and second World Wars, in Korea, in the cold war, in countless peacekeeping missions and in various regional conflicts up to our mission in Afghanistan today, we have always demonstrated a willingness to take up arms in defence of our values and interests when it has been necessary to do so. We've always demonstrated this willingness, but we have not always maintained the capacity necessary. As our great military historian, CP Stacey, wrote in 1938, and I quote, "Canada's history is marked by an alternation of long periods when the national defences are utterly neglected with short, violent interludes arising out of sudden foreign complications when the country awakes to the inadequacy of those defences and tries to make up for earlier inactivity by measures taken in the teeth of a crisis." Unquote. This tradition of dramatic swings between armed to the teeth and armed to the toes, if I can put it that way, has been repeated throughout our history. But even if

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we stand down between military crises, we must always be prepared to stand up for Canada, its sovereignty and its interests in the world. That is as true today when the threats are diffuse and unpredictable, as it was in the era of nation versus nation wars.

De façon réfléchie et civilisée, les Canadiennes et les Canadiens ont démontré ces dernières années qu'ils veulent qu'Ottawa adopte une approche plus sérieuse face à la souveraineté et à la sécurité.

In their own thoughtful, civilized way, I believe our fellow citizens have demonstrated in recent years that they want Ottawa to take a more serious approach to our sovereignty and our security. They have showed it by turning out in the tens of thousands for the milestone anniversaries of the Second World War and by attending Remembrance Day ceremonies in ever-increasing numbers. They showed it with Red Friday rallies in cities across the country and other displays of support for the troops such as the ubiquitous yellow ribbons. They showed it by demanding that Ottawa show more respect for our brave men and women in uniform by paying them what they deserve, buying them better equipment, looking after them as veterans and providing them with real leadership.

Ces demandes sont devenues particulièrement pressantes en 2005 quand le gouvernement précédent a décidé de déployer des troupes canadiennes à Kandahar, la province la plus troublée de l'Afghanistan. Notre gouvernement est entré en fonction peu de temps après cette décision, et nous avons immédiatement commencé à respecter notre engagement à remettre nos forces armées sur pied.

These demands became particularly urgent in 2005 when the previous government took the decision to deploy Canadian troops to

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Kandahar, Afghans' most troubled and challenging province. The government took office not long after that decision, and we immediately began to deliver on our commitment to rebuild the military. Each branch of the Canadian Forces is getting new or upgraded equipment, new Arctic offshore patrol ships and modernized frigates for the Navy, new tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery and trucks for the army, new helicopters and tactical and strategic lift aircraft for the Air Force.

En fait, notre gouvernement est sur le point de finaliser un plan à long terme pour remédier complètement à ce qui est convenu d'appeler l'usure des Forces canadiennes. J'ai donc le plaisir d'annoncer que le gouvernement va assurer le financement stable et prévisible de ce plan en haussant l'augmentation annuelle automatique des dépenses de défense de 1,5 pour cent à deux pour cent à compter de 2011-2012. Ce financement, combiné à de l'équipement nouveau et modernisé, améliorera non seulement l'efficacité générale de nos troupes, mais aussi leur sécurité.

In fact, our government is close to finalizing a long-term plan to thoroughly reverse the so-called rusting out of the Canadian Forces. I'm therefore pleased to announce that the government has decided to set aside stable and predictable funding for this plan by increasing the automatic annual increase in defence spending from 1.5 to two percent beginning in 2011-2012. This funding, together with new and upgraded equipment, will not only improve the general effectiveness and enhance the safety of our troops; in some cases, it responds directly to the needs we have faced since deploying to Kandahar. In other cases it will provide us with entirely new capabilities. Strategic airlift, for example, is something Canada has lacked for far too long. In the past, when we needed to get people and equipment somewhere in a

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hurry, we often had the beg rides from our allies or commercial carriers, even for emergencies within our own borders. The first of the four new C-17 Globemaster aircraft arrived in August, just months after we signed the contract. Within days it was providing aid to hurricane victims in Jamaica and delivering supplies to our troops in Kandahar. Now, tomorrow you will be hearing from Defence Minister MacKay who's better placed to talk about equipment and procurement than I am. Instead, let me concentrate on the role we think Canada can and should play in the global security environment.

Il existe plusieurs points de vue sur la question de la sécurité mondiale chez les Canadiens, chez les partis politiques au Parlement et même au sein de ses partis. Nombreux sont ceux qui veulent un retour (inaudible) une concentration quasi-exclusive sur le traditionnel maintien de la paix. Mais comme l'a dit le groupe d'experts Manley sur le rôle futur du Canada en Afghanistan, à la lumière des catastrophes humanitaires dans les endroits comme la Bosnie et le Rwanda, les missions de maintien de la paix mandatés par l'ONU dépendent de plus en plus de l'usage de la force pour protéger les civils. Des missions d'imposition de la paix sanctionnées par l'article sept de la Charte de l'ONU ont lieu à Haïti, en Côte d'Ivoire et dans la République démocratique du Congo, tout comme en Afghanistan. Dans un avenir prévisible c'est la réalité de notre monde.

There are many competing views on this subject among Canadians, among the parties in Parliament, and even within the parties themselves. Many yearn for a return in some cases to a virtual exclusive focus on classical international peacekeeping. Peacekeeping is a wonderful concept, a Canadian invention, and frequently necessary. But it covers only a limited portion of the security challenges we face in today's international environment.

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As the Manley panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan observed in its report, in the wake of humanitarian disasters in places like Bosnia and Rwanda, UN-mandated peace missions increasingly rely on the robust use of force to protect civilians. These peace enforcement missions, sanctioned under Chapter seven of the UN Charter, have occurred in Haiti, Cote d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as in Afghanistan. That is the reality and will be the reality of our world for the foreseeable future. If Canada wants to contribute to global security, we will have to participate in UN peace enforcement missions, not just traditional peacekeeping, as well as intelligence sharing, aid and development and so on. And that means we will need a strong, modern, multi-faceted military backed by the political will to deploy. My party has been proud and consistent in support of the Afghanistan mission since the Liberal government first decided to send combat troops to that country in 2011. We believed and continue to believe that these actions are not only justified by the nature of the conflict, but also firmly rooted in the traditions of Canadian foreign and defence policy.

Ces dernières années nos hommes et femmes en uniforme qui servent en Afghanistan ont une fois de plus démontré qu'ils sont très bien formés, disciplinés et courageux. Ils assurent la sécurité de nos diplomates, travailleurs d'aide et équipes de reconstruction qui ont fait des progrès considérables dans le rétablissement des infrastructures, la formation des forces afghanes et la sécurité de la population. Nous devrions être fiers, très fiers, de notre contribution et de nos réalisations en Afghanistan.

We also believe very strongly that over the last few years, our men and women serving in Afghanistan have once again proven themselves to be highly skilled, disciplined and courageous. They have

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provided security for our aid workers, our diplomats and reconstruction teams who have made progress, have made substantial progress in restoring infrastructure, training the Afghan forces and making life safer and better for the Afghan people. We should be proud, we should be very proud of our contributions and accomplishments in Afghanistan. We are making a real, positive difference there, and we are demonstrating to our enemies and to our allies that Canada is a reliable and resolute partner in the quest for global security and the fight against terrorism.

Parliamentarians also demonstrated that resolve in 2006 when the House of Commons voted for a two-year extension of the mission. As the end of that mandate approaches, there has obviously been a vigorous debate over what happens next. To prevent that debate from becoming bogged down in the routine partisanship of the House of Commons, we created the independent panel on Canada's future in Afghanistan last October, and thanks to the efforts of the panel, led by former Deputy Prime Minister John Manley, I'm pleased to observe that there has recently been a coming-together of resolve. This is in no small measure due to the work of Mr. Manley and his colleagues, who deserve to be recognized by name, Derek Burney, Jake Epp, Paul Tellier and Pamela Wallin. To their enormous credit, they delivered a clear, fair and balanced assessment of the situation. Their thoughtful recommendations not only paved the way for the bipartisan parliamentary consensus that appears to be emerging on the future of the mission, but they also gave Canadians a much clearer picture of what's going on, what's at stake and what our options are as we move forward. We subsequently tabled a motion reflecting the panel's direction, including their direction that we increase pressure on our NATO partners to bolster their troop commitments in

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southern Afghanistan and specifically by about 1000 soldiers in Kandahar. In recent weeks, I've contacted the leaders of major NATO countries and advised them that Canada's continued role in the region is contingent on greater support from our allies.

Quand notre gouvernement a formé le groupe d'experts Manley l'automne dernier, c'était dans l'intention expresse d'arriver à une position bipartisane sur la mission du Canada en Afghanistan. Les libéraux ont répondu à notre mission sur la prolongation de la mission avec leur propre motion clarifiant certains aspects de leur position. Nous sommes ravis que le Parti libéral reconnaisse que le Canada devrait poursuivre la mission militaire jusqu'en 2011 et que nous devrions laisser des décisions opérationnelles à nos commandants qui sont sur le terrain en Afghanistan. Il semble évident que nous sommes arrivés à un consensus qui peut être soumis au Parlement pour ratification. C'est pourquoi plus tôt aujourd'hui notre gouvernement a présenté une motion révisée sur l'avenir de la mission en Afghanistan qui comprend plusieurs éléments de la motion des libéraux. Cette motion regroupe plus que jamais nos positions communes.

Of course, since we tabled our motion, the Liberals have responded with a motion of their own, clarifying a number of aspects of their position. We've examined the details of their position very carefully. We are pleased that there is some fundamental common ground. We both agree that Canada should continue the military mission until 2011 and that we should leave operation decisions to our commanders on the ground in Afghanistan. It seems clear that we have moved significantly toward the kind of bipartisan consensus that could be presented to Parliament for ratification. To that end, earlier today our government has issued a revised motion on the future of the

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Afghanistan mission that incorporates large elements of the Liberal motion. It remains my hope that this matter will be debated and put to a vote in the House of Commons before the NATO summit in April. Let me just say that this motion now embraces an even wider expanse of common ground than before. It acknowledges what is required for Canada's mission to succeed in Afghanistan.

Tout en réitérant notre engagement envers le mandat de l'ONU sur l'Afghanistan, la motion affirme que cette engagement n'est pas sans fin. Elle prévoit que le gouvernement va informer l'OTAN que le Canada mettra fin à sa présence à Kandahar en juillet 2011, terminant le redéploiement du sud en décembre 2011. C'est une prise de position claire et réfléchie, mais ce n'est pas une prise de position conservatrice ou libérale. C'est une prise de position canadienne qui, nous le croyons, sera soutenue par une majorité des représentants élus de la population canadienne. Ainsi nos alliés de l'OTAN, le gouvernement et la population afghane et, plus important encore, nos troupes sur le terrain sauront exactement quelle est la position du Canada.

While reiterating our commitment to the UN mandate on Afghanistan, this motion affirms that our commitment is not open-ended. It commits our government to notifying NATO that Canada will end its presence in Kandahar as of July 2011, completing redeployment for the south by December of that year. We believe this is a reasonable compromise that addresses the important questions Canadians have about the future of the mission. It is a clear and principled position, but it is not a Conservative position or a Liberal position. It is a Canadian position that can be supported by a majority of the elected representatives of the Canadian people so that our NATO allies, the government and people of Afghanistan and, most

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importantly, our troops on the ground know exactly where Canada stands. First and foremost, this is a duty we owe to our troops. Every day they are putting their lives on the line for our country, and it was politicians of both parties who asked them to do this. Our overwhelming obligation is to support them with certainty about the future of the mission and the terms of engagement. They especially need to know that we understand as well as they do the unbreakable link between security and development. Without security, there can be no aid or development, not today, not for some time in the future. And without aid and development, there can be no security in the future. This is a timeless universal truth.

La défense efficace de tous les intérêts du Canada dans le monde, commerciaux, financiers, diplomatiques et humanitaires, dépendent de la sécurité. Sans sécurité, les consommateurs et les entreprises canadiennes ne peuvent pas profiter des possibilités d'investissement et de commerce offertes par les pays étrangers. Sans sécurité nos travailleurs d'aide ne peuvent pas offrir la nourriture, des médicaments et un soutien au développement, et sans sécurité, nos diplomates ne peuvent pas partager la paix et la prospérité dont nous bénéficions avec les peuples moins fortunés du reste du monde, assurant ainsi que nos futures générations en profitent également. Voilà pourquoi nous devons bâtir et maintenir des forces armées modernes et pleinement efficaces.

The successful pursuit of all of Canada's interests around the world – trade, investment, diplomatic and humanitarian – all ultimately depends on security, on the willingness of some of our fellow citizens to put their own lives on the line. Without security, Canadian companies and consumers cannot take advantage of foreign trade and investment opportunities. Without security, our aid workers can't provide food, medicine

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and development assistance. And without security, our diplomats cannot work to share the peace and prosperity that we enjoy with less fortunate people in the world, and thereby ensuring for our own future generations. That's why we need to build a first-class, modern military, and to keep it that way.

Mesdames et messieurs, je crois que le Canada devrait être un chef de file sur la scène mondiale, pas à la fin de la file.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that Canada should be a leader in the world, not a follower, and in today's dangerous world, Canada must have a credible military to be a credible leader. You understand that countries that cannot or will not make real contributions to global security are not regarded as serious players. They may be liked by everybody, they may be pleasantly acknowledged by everybody, but when the hard decisions get made, they will be ignored by everybody. That is not what Canadians want. They want us to make a positive difference in a dangerous world. They want us to lead. Our government is resolved to provide that leadership and to provide the best military men and women in the world, the men and women of the Canadian military, with the equipment and the mandate they need to demonstrate that leadership. Thank you again for inviting me, merci beaucoup, God bless Canada, à la prochaine. (APPLAUSE)

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