

# President Bush, PM Chretien Announce Progress in Smart Border Plan

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Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Jean Chrétien on Implementation of the Smart Border Declaration and Action Plan

- [Fact Sheet: Summary of Smart Border Action Plan Status](#)
- [Fact Sheet: United States - Canada Nexus Program](#)
- [Fact Sheet: United States - Canada Free and Secure Trade program the FAST Program](#)

Nearly one year ago, terrorists launched an attack on our common commitment to freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and an open world economy. The United States and Canada have responded together with the shared determination that has always characterized the partnership between our two great nations.

American and Canadian troops have fought side-by-side to free the Afghan people from Taliban rule, and to destroy the Al-Qaeda terrorist network. Our governments are sharing intelligence and coordinating law enforcement action to address threats to our societies. We have partnered diplomatically, working together at the G-8 Summit in June to secure the commitment of the world's largest economies to increase the security of the global transportation and trading system. Officials from dozens of American and Canadian agencies have worked together with determination and dedication and our citizens have found countless ways to support each other.

When we met on September 24th last year, we resolved to prevent terrorists from undermining the national and economic security of our citizens. We charged Homeland Security Advisor Tom Ridge and Deputy Prime Minister John Manley with coordinating our governments' cooperation along the longest, non-militarized border in the world. They recognized the urgent need to enhance security in a way that strengthened the extraordinary trading relationship between our countries and the prosperity that it provides our citizens.

On December 12, 2001 Governor Ridge and Deputy Prime Minister Manley signed "The Smart Border Declaration," and immediately began implementing an aggressive and sweeping 30-point action plan to build a smart border for the 21st century -- a border that is secure and efficient; a border open for business but closed to terrorists.

On June 28, 2002, they reported on the tremendous progress that has already been made in implementing the Smart Border Action Plan. We are on-track to implement many action plan elements over the coming months and years, bringing continuous and steady improvement to the efficiency and security of our shared border. Today, we mark important milestones in two of the programs that are central to building a smart border.

The United States and Canada have the largest trading relationship of any two countries in the world, and more trade flows between Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario than through any other border crossing. Today we announce a major step forward in ensuring the secure and efficient flow of goods across the border with the opening of registration for the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program. This revolutionary program partners the United States and Canadian governments with the private sector to ensure a secure supply chain for low-risk goods. FAST will make many cross-border commercial shipments simpler, cheaper, and subject to fewer delays -- all while enhancing security. FAST will be open by December 2002 at the following crossings: Blaine/Douglas, Detroit/Windsor, Port Huron/Sarnia, Buffalo/Fort Erie, Lewiston/Queenston, and Champlain/Lacolle.

The closeness of our two societies is evidenced by the fact that over 200 million people cross our shared border every year. In order to allow known travelers to cross the border quickly and easily, the United States and Canada have begun fielding a new program called NEXUS that provides dedicated "fast lanes" for pre-approved, low-risk travelers. NEXUS is already running at four border crossings. Today we are opening the

joint NEXUS application center in Detroit. NEXUS will be operational at both Detroit/Windsor and Buffalo/Fort Erie beginning in January of 2003 and will be expanded to all other high-volume crossings between the two countries by the end of 2003. We have also developed a NEXUS-Air program, which we will begin piloting in airports in early 2003.

A secure and efficient border is key to our economic security. We must continue our efforts to involve the private sector as we proceed with modernizing our shared border. To this end, Governor Ridge and Deputy Prime Minister Manley will work with our key agencies and departments to ensure that they have in place efficient and effective mechanisms for consulting with the private sector. This will be part of an ongoing process of formally involving private sector leaders in our border work.

More work remains, and the United States and Canada reaffirm our commitment to fully realize the smart border vision. Some of the smart border action items will take sustained cooperation, effort and investment. We have directed Governor Ridge and Deputy Prime Minister Manley to continue overseeing implementation of the Smart Border Action Plan, and provide us periodic progress reports. In addition, we have asked that they identify and initiate work in other areas where close cooperation serves our mutual interests, such as biosecurity and science and technology research and development.

Our relationship has never been stronger. We are neighbors who share a common border, but more importantly we are neighbors bound together by common values: freedom, democracy, the rule of law, the inherent dignity and rights of every human being.

We are also neighbors who share a common mission: to protect the security and enhance the prosperity of our citizens. Working together, we will fulfill this mission.

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