

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan
in New York City

September 12, 2002

President Bush. Mr. President, it's great to see you again. Thank you for your leadership.

Our Government believes you're doing a really fine job of setting a vision for the Afghan people and leading towards that vision, that you love freedom and that you are working hard to make your country more secure. And we appreciate your leadership. We also appreciate your understanding that jobs are important for your country. And today I had the honor of informing President Karzai that the United States, along with Saudi Arabia and Japan, will be providing \$180 million for road improvement projects in Afghanistan. We'll help develop a modern infrastructure so that the Afghan entrepreneur will be able to move product from one city to the next and so that people will be able to find work; people will be able to put food on the table.

Our commitment to a stable and free and peaceful Afghanistan is a long-term commitment, Mr. President, and we're confident in your leadership. And I want to thank you again. It's good to see you again.

President Hamid Karzai. Thank you. Good to see you.

Well, Mr. President, I'm very happy to be meeting with you again, after the meeting in January. We are, as before, very, very grateful for the help the United States of America gave to Afghanistan to liberate itself from the scourge, from the occupation of terrorism that murdered and killed and

destroyed our country for so many years, that brought about the disaster in New York and your own country. The Afghan people continue to share that pain with you. And I came here earlier than the General Assembly to participate, to mourn that date. And we've had a commemoration of that in Kabul as well, yesterday.

The Afghan people know the help that you have given to us, and the Afghan people will know the announcement that you've just made. They'll be very happy. Mr. President, I assure you that you will find the Afghan people as your very best partners in the fight against terrorism. And as your very best partners wherever you bring justice in this part of the world, we'll be with you.

The Afghan people, as you rightly say, would like to have some bread on their table, and they would also like to, in some time, to make that bread themselves, to earn it themselves. So the help that you are giving us to have our highways, to have other infrastructure correct in the country is a step in the right direction towards self-reliance in Afghanistan. And I must thank you very much once again.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:13 p.m. at the U.S. Mission at the United Nations Headquarters. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.