

Remarks at a Dinner Hosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the
United Nations in New York City
September 25, 2007

Mr. Secretary-General and Mr. President, distinguished members of the United Nations community, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen: It's my pleasure to welcome you to New York. We look forward to concluding a successful 62d session of the United Nations General Assembly under the leadership of President Kerim.

Mr. Secretary-General, I appreciate your determination to ensure that the United Nations lives up to its high ideals, takes responsibilities seriously, and helps more people live in freedom and justice. You have urged this organization to help the suffering people of Darfur. You have strengthened international resolve to deter regimes pursuing the world's most dangerous weapons. You have supported freedom and independence for the people of Lebanon and Afghanistan and Iraq.

Under your leadership, the United Nations is addressing global challenges, such as the important issue of climate change. I welcome your efforts to advance the work of U.N. reform and uphold the highest ethical standards throughout this organization.

So, Mr. Secretary-General, in honor of your first year of leadership and in anticipation of your continued leadership in the years to come, I offer a toast to you and to the United Nations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:44 p.m. at the United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Srgjan Kerim, President, 62d Session of the U.N. General Assembly. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-General Ban.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Hamid Karzai of
Afghanistan in New York City
September 26, 2007

President Bush. Mr. President, welcome back to the States. It just seemed like yesterday we were at Camp David.

President Karzai. Yes.

President Bush. We had a fruitful set of discussions there, and we've had some this morning.

First of all, I thank you for your courage and your leadership. I appreciate your full understanding that a government that responds to its people is a government that is—provides hope and opportunities. I thank you for the progress report you've given me. This country has gone from a brutal tyranny where women and girls were repressed to a country where women and

girls have hope. The department has got strong women in the ranks. Young girls are going to school. Health care is now available in ways like never before.

President Karzai. Child mortality.

President Bush. Child mortality rates are down. And this is a tribute to you and your Government, the people of Afghanistan's desire to live in peace. It's in the interest of the United States that we continue to help you. It's in our security interests that this democracy flourish because when freedom takes place in Afghanistan, it will set an example for what's possible in other parts of the broader Middle East. When people see that there's hope in a

part of the world that had been ravaged by war, had been terrorized by brutal extremists, when people realize there's a different way of life, they'll demand the same things. And it's peace that we all want, and it's liberty that will help us keep that peace.

So, Mr. President, you've got strong friends here. I appreciate your courage. As you know, every time we meet, you—I ask you, “Are you making progress; are more children going to school; are more health care clinics operating; are the security forces more capable of dealing with the extremists?” I expect progress, and you expect progress. And I appreciate the report that you have given me today. So thank you, and welcome.

President Karzai. Thanks very much, Mr. President. And, as always, thank you for the great hospitality that you have always given to the Afghan people and to me personally, to my delegation. Camp David was a lovely place—I wish one could stay there longer sometime in the future. [Laughter]

Afghanistan, indeed, has made progress, but, Mr. President, that should be a tribute to you, your leadership, and the American people for all that we have achieved there in Afghanistan, especially the thing that you

mentioned, reduction in child mortality—from a country that was the worst in the world to a country that's coming up and saving 85,000 lives, especially this year, of children under 5; and for a country that was self-sufficient 40 years ago in zero production to becoming again self-sufficient in the production of food after the years of drought and misery and want and the roads and education and the Afghan flag flying around the world. So there is an endless list for which we have to be grateful to you.

And most important of all, Mr. President, something that we tend to forget from time to time, the liberation of Afghanistan, such an important thing for the Afghan people. I don't know if you feel it in the United States, but we feel it so immensely in Afghanistan that we are now, once again, a free country, liberated from the grips of terrorism and Al Qaida and their associates. And we love our flag flying around the world; I love to see it in this room, by the way.

Thank you very much.

President Bush. Good. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:53 a.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

Remarks on the No Child Left Behind Act in New York City September 26, 2007

The President. Good morning. Laura and I are really pleased to be here in New York City and really pleased to be able to be here with the mayor and the superintendent and our Secretary of Education. And particularly, we're pleased to be with the students and principals of—the principal and students of PS 76.

These are hard-working students who are learning to read and write and add and subtract. And we had a chance to visit with them and learn about their dreams, and

we really appreciate you all being here. It's exciting for us to be here.

Last week, the school system here in New York City received the Broad Prize for Urban Education. This is one of the most prestigious education prizes in the country. The award is given every year to large urban school districts that have shown the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement, while narrowing the achievement gap amongst poor and minority students.