

longer with us. More than 2 million people have been forced from their homes. They're fleeing the violence. And they go into refugee camps, and they head into neighboring countries like Chad and Central African Republic.

And that's why I appreciate your leadership, Mr. President, to help these countries help these refugees. The resolution adopted today addresses the plight of the refugees in Chad and Central African Republic. In other words, it's a step in the right direction. It's a practical solution to a big problem. It's a part of a grand solution, Mr. President. That's why your leadership is appreciated.

The resolution authorizes the deployment to these two nations of a robust European peacekeeping force and several hundred police and military advisers. This U.N. mission is going to help national and local governments exercise sovereignty over their territory. It's going to allow workers to deliver humanitarian aid. That makes us feel good. We're spending \$2 billion so far on providing aid, and we want to make sure our aid gets to the people who need help.

And that's why the United States strongly supports the resolution and the mission. We continue to support swift implementation of existing resolutions of this Council. We want the words of this Council to mean something. We want it to be said, when the Council speaks on behalf of suffering people, those words will be followed by action.

And so we call on the Government in Khartoum to facilitate the deployment of a robust U.N. peacekeeping force to save life. We call on all parties to cease arm sales to the combatants. We expect people gathered around this table to send a focused message that innocent life matters. We expect President Bashir to observe a cease-fire during next month's peace talks, and we want the rebels to do the same.

We're tired—the message has got to be, we're tired of people trying to escape the noose of pressure. We want the pressure to be uniform. Why? Because we believe in universal freedom and peace.

The conflict in Darfur has claimed too many lives, and there's too much suffering. The innocent victims of this conflict want only to return to their homes. They want to

live in peace. And it's our duty to help them realize that dream.

Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:35 p.m. in the Security Council Chamber at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, in his capacity as President of the United Nations Security Council; Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairperson, Commission of the African Union; and President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan.

Statement on the 50th Anniversary of the Integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas

September 25, 2007

Fifty years ago today, nine students endured bitterness and violence because of the color of their skin and because of their convictions. As an Arkansas high school turned into a battleground for equality, the bravery of the Little Rock Nine inspired a generation of Americans.

Today, we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the integration of Central High School. This anniversary reminds us of our Nation's struggle to fulfill its founding promise for all Americans. We are also reminded of the resilience of the heroes who sacrificed for justice and equality. We honor their courage, and we resolve to continue their work to make America a more perfect Union.

Statement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress

September 25, 2007

Earlier today, the 2007 Nation's Report Card, also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, was released. The news is outstanding. Eighth graders achieved their highest scores ever in math, while fourth graders set records in both reading and math. African American and Hispanic students posted alltime highs in a number of categories, which represents progress toward closing the achievement gap.

These scores confirm that No Child Left Behind is working and producing positive results for students across the country. Since No Child Left Behind became law in 2002, the States have been setting standards and holding schools accountable for ensuring that every child can read and do math at grade level. We are successfully challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations and continuing to make significant progress in reforming our schools.

As we commemorate the integration 50 years ago of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, we are reminded of the sacrifices students and their families have made in pursuit of a better education. Today's results demonstrate America's progress in making their dreams a reality, but we have more work to do. Now is not the time to turn back the clock on educational accountability and real options for parents, which No Child Left Behind provides.

The successes detailed in the Nation's Report Card highlight the importance of reauthorizing No Child Left Behind. I have proposed a number of ways to improve the law, by increasing flexibility, helping struggling schools, and empowering parents with more choices. I look forward to continuing to work with lawmakers of both parties to strengthen this important law.

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, 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 inter-

national 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 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