

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 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, 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, 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

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 hardworking 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.

In bestowing this recognition on New York City, the Broad Prize Committee highlighted the city's strong leadership. And that starts with Mayor Mike Bloomberg. The mayor is a no-nonsense guy who understands that if you set a goal, you expect to see results in achieving that goal. He knows how to ask tough questions, and he's pretty good about moving aside bureaucracy that will inhibit the people he has selected to achieve the goal. And the person he selected to be the