

We're making progress, but there's more work to be done. Today, American schools are no longer separate, but they're not yet equal. Too many of our children still face what I have called the soft bigotry of low expectations. With the No Child Left Behind Act, we've raised expectations. We believe every child can learn, and we expect every school to teach. And we measure. And guess what's happening? Test scores are going up. There's an achievement gap for minority children that is closing in America.

Today, the minority homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. That's incredibly good news. I love it when more and more people open the door to their house and say, "Welcome to my home"—not just, "Welcome to where I live," but, "Welcome to my home." And we'll continue to expand opportunity for homeownership in America.

We'll work to strengthen families. Children from two-parent homes are less likely to end up in poverty or drop out of school. It's important that families be strong in America. HIV/AIDS brings suffering and fear into so many lives, and so we need to focus on fighting this disease among those with the highest rates of new cases, African American men and women. We need to give our young people, especially young men in inner cities, better options than apathy or gangs and jail. And I want to thank Laura for taking on this incredibly important initiative to help young men realize a great future in America.

You know, in the last half-century, the cause of liberty has made great strides in this country and around the world. At each stage and on every front, African Americans have helped to lead this advance. African Americans struggled peacefully for their own freedom on the streets of Birmingham and on the Mall here at Washington, DC. Some of you were probably there. They have fought for America's freedom on distant battlefields, and at this moment many are serving bravely in Afghanistan and Iraq. And we respect their courage, and we honor their sacrifice.

They know, as we do, that success of freedom on the homefront is critical to its success in foreign lands. As I said in my Inaugural Address, we cannot carry the message of

freedom and the baggage of bigotry at the same time.

We've made progress, and our work is not yet done. But we can proceed with faith in our country and confidence in our cause. See, history moves toward freedom because the desire of freedom is written in every human heart. As W.E.B. DuBois declared nearly a century ago, "The battle for humanity is not lost or losing . . . The morning breaks over blood-stained hills. We must not falter. We must not shrink. Above are the everlasting stars."

I want to thank you all for coming. Thank you for helping us celebrate this month as well as to make it clear to our fellow citizens we have a chance to build a fantastic museum, right here in the heart of Washington, DC, on the Mall, to stand proud. And I'm confident there will be an appropriate web page—[laughter]—for people to be able to tap in. Perhaps you should start, if you're interested, in going to the Smithsonian web page, and I suspect there may be an avenue that will direct you toward this important museum and cultural center, that will enable our fellow citizens to participate in helping to build it.

There will be a reception at the end of the hall here. We're really thrilled you're here. And may God continue to bless our great country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:19 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick of Detroit, MI, son of Representative Carolyn C. Kilpatrick; civil rights leader Dorothy Height; and actor Cicely Tyson.

Message on the Observance of the Lunar New Year, 2005

February 8, 2005

I send greetings to those celebrating the Lunar New Year, the Year of the Rooster.

For many Asian Americans, the Lunar New Year is a special time of thanksgiving and celebration. It has long been an opportunity for families to honor the past and welcome the future. In marking this special occasion, you help preserve your rich heritage and ensure that your values of family, faith,

and respect for tradition are passed on to future generations. This observance also reminds all Americans of the unique fabric that makes up our country and the diversity that has made our Nation stronger and better.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for peace and prosperity in the New Year.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on
Implementation of the Plan for
Securing Nuclear Weapons,
Material, and Expertise of the States
of the Former Soviet Union**

February 8, 2005

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 1205 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107-314), I am providing a report prepared by my Administration on implementation during 2003 of the plan for securing nuclear weapons, material, and expertise of the states of the former Soviet Union.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 8, 2005.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 9. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

**Remarks Following Discussions With
President Aleksander Kwasniewski
of Poland and an Exchange With
Reporters**

February 9, 2005

President Bush. The President and I will have opening statements. I'll answer a question from the American press; he'll answer a question—or somebody will answer a question from the Polish press. And we'll do this twice.

Thank you all for coming. Welcome back to the Oval Office. It is my great pleasure to welcome my friend back here to discuss important international policy and policy related to our bilateral relationship. We've discussed and will continue to discuss very important issues. We'll talk about, of course, Iraq and our mutual desire to train Iraqis so that they can defend their own freedom. We'll talk about my trip to Europe. I'm looking forward to advice from my friend.

We'll continue to discuss the Ukraine, and let me just step back and say that I'm impressed by the leadership of President Kwasniewski when it came to the Ukraine. He showed remarkable leadership. And the people of Ukraine are better for it, and the world appreciates that, and I appreciate it.

We'll spend time continuing to talk about the importance of our bilateral relationship, whether it be trade and commerce or whether it be the ability of Polish folks to travel to the United States of America. The visa policy of the country has been under review for a while, and now we've got a way forward to make trips to America easier for Polish citizens.

I want to thank you for your leadership on that issue, Mr. Prime Minister. I mean, Mr. President. Excuse me. I demoted him. [*Laughter*] Well, it's not a demotion.

President Kwasniewski. No.

President Bush. It's a lateral transfer. [*Laughter*] Anyway, I am thrilled you're here and look forward to seeing you not only over lunch but in Brussels on my trip. Welcome.

President Kwasniewski. Thank you. So I should speak Polish in the beginning.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, first of all, I would like to express my joy that this is my fourth visit already to the White House, visiting President George W. Bush.

I want to tell you that we talked about Polish-American cooperation, which has now a strategic, lasting character. And in the recent years, we have had many successful events in cooperation with the United States.

During our meeting today, we talked about Iraq. Poland participates in the stabilization mission in Iraq, and we are full of optimism thinking about that country and about the successful completion of our mission.