manage and administer the country in the security situation. Of course, as the President referred, also we have some spending legislations—that we will continue to exert every possible efforts to have those spending legislations passed. They've been sent to the Iraqi Parliament. But also, we continue to work on the basis of the existing law, and we continue to work to have those legislations passed.

We also discussed the importance of the region where we live. It is a vital region. It is important for Iraq and the region to be away from conflicts, to have a stable region and a stable Iraq, and to uproot terrorism in that part of the world and in that country. Iraq's security is very important, and we have talked about the importance of mutual respect between our two sides and working together for our mutual goals. We have a great deal of confidence that we will be victorious. *Shukran*.

President Bush. *Shukran*.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Hoshyar Mahmud Zebari and Speaker of the House of Representatives Mahmud al-Mashhadani of Iraq; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. Prime Minister Maliki spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting on Democracy in New York City

September 25, 2007

Thank you all for coming. This is a meeting of people who love liberty and who understand that freedom is universal. I appreciate the ability to share thoughts about how to embolden those who seek reform to stand with those who are willing to fight tyranny, and ways for us all to be effective.

As you know, there are people around the world who are desperate to live in free societies. I think, for example, of those in Burma. And it's incumbent upon those of us who live in free societies to help them. I can think of no better way to work toward freedom than to strategize with leaders from around the world who are willing to take the hard steps necessary to spread liberty.

And so I'm looking forward to our strategy session. I appreciate your time. I want to thank you very much for your interest in this vital subject. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:34 p.m. at the United Nations Headquarters.

Remarks During a Meeting With the United Nations Security Council in New York City

September 25, 2007

Mr. President, thank you. And thank you for convening this meeting of the United Nations Security Council. I appreciate the opportunity to join you. And I appreciate your focus is—your focus on the challenges to peace and security in Africa, particularly in Sudan and Darfur.

The reason I say that is, my Nation has labeled what's taking place in Darfur as genocide, and when we find genocide, it's time to do something about it. Time is of the essence. And so, Mr. President, you're focusing our attention on this crucial matter.

I want to thank the Secretary-General, as well, for your support of the people of Darfur. I appreciate your determination to make relieving their suffering a priority of the United Nations.

And I want to thank Chairperson Konare for the leadership of the African Union. After all, you deployed 7,000 troops. But 7,000 troops is not enough, if you believe what's taking place on the ground is genocide. Now maybe some don't think it's genocide, but if you've been raped, you think it's—your human rights have been violated. If you're mercilessly killed by roaming bands, you know it's genocide. And the fundamental question is, are we the free world willing to do more? You've made a strong effort, and we appreciate you. But you know better than me that the area of Darfur is bigger than France, or Texas, and both are plenty big for 7,000 troops.

Your Excellencies, the fighting in Darfur between the rebels and the Government continues. Two hundred thousand people have lost their lives; 200,000 innocents are no

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.