



# The White House

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
September 21, 2004

## Remarks by President Bush and Secretary General Annan in An Exchange of Toasts

United Nations Headquarters  
New York, New York

1:41 P.M. EDT

SECRETARY GENERAL ANNAN: Good afternoon. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to welcome you all to U.N. Headquarters. Over the next two weeks, nearly a hundred heads of state and government and other leaders will be here for the general debate. I must admit that these numbers have taken us a bit by surprise. It is encouraging, indeed, to see such strong show of support for the United Nations, our United Nations.

That said, I hope that next year's turnout will even be better. By then, you will have in your hands some very important reports and proposals on our collective security, on our prospects for achieving the Millennium Development goals, and on the future of this organization.

Of course, every Assembly session is important, but I hope next year will be a time when change is the order of the day, and when bold and fundamental decisions can be taken. I said last year, and repeated it again this morning, that we were at a fork in the road. As ominous as that might sound, and as difficult as the challenges we face, a fork in the road is not just a threat or a crisis, it is also an opportunity. I remain convinced that we can heal divisions and find common ground. Your presence here tells me you recognize the need for international cooperation to keep growing. This year and next, let us be creative, let us act with urgency and let us move from ambitious pledges and to concrete action.

In that spirit, I would like to propose a toast -- a toast to peace, to progress, and to making our organization an effective instrument for all. Thank you. Cheers.

(A toast is offered.)

PRESIDENT BUSH: Mr. Secretary General, distinguished members of the United Nations community, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, my country is honored to welcome you to New York. This is my fourth General Assembly, and I'm very pleased to be among you as we open the 59th session of the United Nations General Assembly this year under the leadership of Foreign Minister Ping of Gabon.

We last met in the shadow of a great tragedy. In August, 2003, a terrorist attack in Baghdad took the lives of 22 servants of peace, including Sergio de Mello, who gave his life for the values of liberty and peace. We pledge, once again, to carry on their essential work.

That work is moving forward. U.N. officials are helping the people of Afghanistan as that nation moves toward an historic presidential election this October. In Iraq, you're helping to build the infrastructure of democracy and prepare the way for free and fair nationwide elections. In Sudan and Liberia, Haiti, and other nations, this body has been working hard to bring security, humanitarian assistance, and stability to the people in desperate need. Much credit for these efforts is due to Kofi Annan, who has shown strong vision.

Mr. Secretary General, with admiration for your leadership, and with confidence in this organization, I offer a

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toast to you and your service, and to the United Nations.

(A toast is offered.)

END 1:45 P.M. EDT

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