

the day that Afghanistan regains its place along the “Silk Road” connecting East and West in a highway of mutual understanding, commerce, and peace.

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

Remarks at a Luncheon Honoring Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations in New York City
September 12, 2002

The President. Mr. Secretary-General, and distinguished members of the United Nations community, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to New York. My country is honored to be the home of the United Nations. And I’m honored to be with you today for the opening week of the 57th Session of the U.N. General Assembly.

We gather in a city that was changed forever by the events of one year and one day ago. Secretary-General, the people of the United States will never forget your leadership in the days following September the 11th. Within a day, the General Assembly strongly condemned the terror, and very quickly the U.N. took strong action to support and strengthen a global coalition against global terror. The United States is grateful to the U.N. and to every person and every nation that has joined this cause.

We gather to address the urgent challenges of a world awakened to danger. Mr. Secretary-General, thanks to your leadership, the U.N. is playing a valuable role in meeting these challenges. The U.N. Charter commits each nation here to promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. Today we rededicate ourselves to these ideals.

Mr. Secretary-General, I offer a toast to you to continued cooperation between the United States and the United Nations.

[*At this point, the participants drank a toast.*]

The President. Thank you. Let’s eat.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:39 p.m. in the U.N. Delegates Lounge at United Nations Headquarters.

Statement on Proposed Legislation To Implement the Healthy Forests Initiative
September 12, 2002

Just 3 weeks ago, I visited Oregon to see firsthand the devastating effects of the catastrophic wildfires that have burned more than 6 million acres of forests across the West this summer. I also announced a new and commonsense initiative to restore forest health and prevent these un-

naturally severe fires. I directed Secretaries Veneman and Norton to work with Congress to develop legislation to address the crisis in forest and rangeland health that has put more than 190 million acres of public land—an area twice the size of California—at risk of catastrophic fires. We