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I applaud your leadership, Mr. President. And I want to thank those around the table for showing courage and vision and resolve. Many of the troops of the countries represented here have returned home, but they have done so on success. And I want to applaud your steadfast leadership and thank the people of your respective countries for making the sacrifices so that others can live in a free society.

Mr. President, we've still got work to do, but there is no doubt that the situation in Iraq has changed substantially. There's no doubt that mothers are able to send their child to school without fear of carnage. Oh, there's still killers amongst your—in your midst, but your Government has been steadfast in bringing people to justice who are trying to undermine your democracy.

So I look forward to working with you. And I want to thank you for being here, and I thank you for honoring those in this room today and the peoples of their country.

Mr. President. Yes, please.

President Jalal Talabani of Iraq. Mr. President, I am grateful for your kind words. And I'm here, on behalf of the Iraqi people, to express my deepest appreciation for all countries who participated in the breaking Iraq from worst kind of dictatorship.

Of course, noble and responsible nations must bear their sacrifice in order to free the oppressed and bring citizens from the worst kind of dictatorship. Nevertheless, on behalf of the people of Iraq, I want to express my deepest condolences for your brave soldiers and civilians who have lost their lives while standing up for our shared values of freedom and democracy.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your brave leadership and your decision to liberate Iraq from worst kind of dictatorship. And thanks for all friends and their countries and Governments who participated from the beginning to liberate our country and rebuild a new Iraq, a democratic, federated, united, independent Iraq, which will help to promote democracy in the Middle East and help peace and security in the Middle East.

Thank you again, all of you, and you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:08 p.m. at the United Nations Headquarters. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Dinner Hosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations in New York City

September 23, 2008

Mr. Secretary-General, this is my eighth chance to welcome you to New York, and I'm honored to do so. You did mention, I'm heading into retirement—[*laughter*]—but it has been a joy to work with you, the staff, and many of the leaders here in this hall.

It is my honor to propose a toast, Mr. Secretary-General, to you and to your hard work. May God bless all in the room, and Mr. Secretary-General, may God continue to bless you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:45 p.m. at the United Nations Headquarters. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-General Ban.

Remarks to Leaders of the Western Hemisphere in New York City

September 24, 2008

Listen, thank you all very much for being here. I'm joined by leaders throughout our hemisphere to discuss trade and prosperity. I know they're going to want to hear about the rescue plan that we have submitted to the Congress. They can see our legislative process is full of give-and-take, that there's ample debate. But I am confident that when it's all said and done, there will be a robust plan, and there needs to be.

Each of the 11 countries here has a free trade agreement with the United States or one pending before Congress. Free and fair trade is in our mutual interests.

What's interesting about free and fair trade amongst the nations is that the people benefit. For example, the Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement is in its early stages, but trade between participating countries with the United States is up