

and liberty. That's been a hallmark of my agenda. But I—there's no such thing as short-term history, so I am very confident in telling you that I'll be long gone before somebody finally figures out the true merit and meaning of the Bush administration.

#### *Six-Party Talks/North Korea*

*Mr. Suthichai.* Were you impressed by the meeting between Secretary of State Condi with the North Korean representative in Singapore recently?

*The President.* I thought it was—what impressed me was that the foreign ministers all—at the six-party talks, all said the same thing to the North Korean: If you want to move forward, verify, honor your commitments; if you don't honor your commitments, then there will be additional sanctions and additional measures.

*Mr. Suthichai.* Are they positive?

*The President.* The visits? Yes, I think they've been positive. There's just some fundamental questions. There's a lot of doubt as to whether or not the six-party talks will bear fruition. One thing is for certain: They destroyed their cooling tower. Everybody saw that.

*Mr. Suthichai.* Right, right.

*The President.* But will they verify their plutonium programs and HEU programs and proliferation programs? I hope so. They said they would. Now, whether or not they put a verification regime in place that we can trust, we'll see.

#### *President's Future*

*Mr. Suthichai.* Sir, last question—is there life after the White House?

*The President.* Absolutely. I'm only 62 years old.

*Mr. Suthichai.* What do you plan to do?

*The President.* You know, I'm going to write; I'm going to share my experiences. I'm going to build a policy center and library at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Hopefully, I will contribute to mankind in positive ways. I haven't really had time to think about it because when you're the President of the United States, you got a lot to think about day by day. But I'm looking forward to finishing strong, and then I'm going home to Texas. That's where I was raised, that's where I'm from, and that's where I'm going to retire.

*Mr. Suthichai.* That's good, sir. Thank you very much.

*The President.* Yes, sir.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 2:25 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma; Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea. Suthichai Sae-Yoon referred to Foreign Minister Pak Ui Chun of North Korea. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 31. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

## Interview With Fuqing Yang of CCTV in China July 30, 2008

*Mr. Yang.* So thank you very much, Mr. President, for joining us.

*The President.* Thank you, sir.

#### *2008 Beijing Olympics*

*Mr. Yang.* The much anticipated Beijing Olympic Games will be opening in Beijing in just about a week's time. And you will be attending the opening ceremonies on

August the 8th. And the Chinese people are very much looking forward to your visit. So at this moment, what are your expectations for the Beijing Games? And what kind of messages will you bring to the Chinese people?

*The President.* First message to the Chinese people is, I respect the Chinese people, respect the history, tradition. And I'm coming as the President of a friend, and I'm coming as a sportsman. And I'm looking forward to the competition.

I'm looking forward to seeing—I think I'm going to go to the U.S.-Chinese basketball game. I understand Yao Ming is back on the court, and it will be an interesting challenge for the U.S. team. It will be exciting for me to see the athletes compete and to watch the Chinese fans respond, in this case, to the basketball game.

It's going to be exciting. And I'm not coming alone. My wife is coming. A lot of my family is coming as well. So it's going to be great.

#### *2008 Beijing Olympics/President's Decisionmaking/China-U.S. Relations*

*Mr. Yang.* Okay. You are under a kind of pressure from politicians here in Washington who call on you not to go to Beijing.

*The President.* Yes.

*Mr. Yang.* But you insist on going. So out of what consideration did you make such a decision?

*The President.* Well, first of all, I'm under pressure from politicians on a lot of fronts. I mean, this isn't the only issue that I get pressured on. And Presidents need to make their decision based upon what's best, not what's political.

And I think it's best for U.S.-China's relations that I go. I know it's important for me to send a clear signal to the Chinese people that we respect them. I tell people that, of course, we've got differences with China on issues. They've got differences with us on issues.

But the best way to conduct our diplomacy and conduct our relations is out of

mutual respect. And it's much more likely a Chinese leader will listen to my concerns if he knows I respect the people of China. And so I'm looking forward to going. I'm going to have a dinner with President Hu Jintao, who I like. I respect the man a lot.

And do we agree on everything? Of course not. But do we agree to have good, cordial relations and work hard to make our relationship unique and strong? Absolutely.

#### *President's Visit to China/Chinese Embassy in Washington, DC*

*Mr. Yang.* On the agenda of your visit to Beijing, you will be attending the opening ceremony of the new U.S. Embassy in Beijing?

*The President.* Absolutely.

*Mr. Yang.* And the new Chinese Embassy was just opened in Washington.

*The President.* Last night. Yes, I know it. Isn't that exciting?

*Mr. Yang.* Yes, very exciting, a very beautiful building. I attended the opening ceremony.

*The President.* That's what I hear. You know, I.M. Pei is a famous architect who did the Chinese building.

*Mr. Yang.* Yes.

*The President.* So it just shows 30 years of a relationship that grows. And I found it very interesting, somebody said, "Well, what does that mean?" Well, first of all, we wouldn't be opening new Embassies or celebrating a 30th anniversary of relationship if, one, the relationships weren't important and the relationships weren't good.

I mean, if the relationships were terrible, no one would be celebrating anything. But it's interesting that both countries are opening new Embassies in the same month. And so I am looking—well, not exactly the same month. Today is July and August—but in the same couple of weeks.

And so yes, I'm going to go. And guess who is going to join me? President Bush 41, my father, will be there as well. And

he was the man that introduced me to China in the first place, in 1975.

*Mr. Yang.* And you were only 18 years old?

*The President.* No, no, no. I was older. I was—'75, I was 31.

*Mr. Yang.* Thirty-one?

*The President.* Yes, I was born in '46. My brother—see, my sister was 18 during the time.

*Mr. Yang.* Okay.

*The President.* But yes—no, look, I was a pretty old guy. And I explored around Beijing on a bicycle. It was a interesting time. Totally different city then than it is today.

### *China*

*Mr. Yang.* Yes. And you also paid three visits in your capacity as the President of the United States to China. And in a sense, you bear witness to the changes in China too.

*The President.* Absolutely. It's amazing.

*Mr. Yang.* So yes, how would you elaborate on the changes in the past 30 years, since this year also marks the 30th anniversary of China's opening up and reform?

*The President.* Yes, 30 years ago, there were hardly any automobiles. And everybody was on bicycle, truly. Masses of people, me included, riding along on our bike. Everybody wore the same clothes, except for me. People—I can remember going to a department store, and nobody had seen a westerner. And they were amazed when I would go. And I would go with my mother and my sister. And they were amazed. It was like we were, like, from a different planet.

Today, it's a much different society. First of all, there's—very colorful. And obviously, there's a lot of automobiles. It seems like more automobiles than bicycles. And people are used to a relationship between the West and China. It's a common occurrence. There's a lot of exchanges.

One of the first—I think the first graduation speech I ever gave as President was

to Notre Dame, and they were honoring the honors graduates in the sciences. And many of the people there were Chinese citizens, young Chinese students, girls and boys, got their degrees at the Notre Dame University. It was just—just shows how different things are after 30 years.

### *China-U.S. Relations*

*Mr. Yang.* Okay. So there's also, like, China and the United States are going to celebrate 30 years of diplomatic relations in January 2009.

*The President.* Yes.

*Mr. Yang.* Yes. How would you evaluate the developments between our two countries in the diplomatic field in the last 30 years? And particularly, during two of your administrations, if you can give us a self-assessment?

*The President.* Well, I think—look, I think they've grown very strategic. For example, the strategic dialogue on economics that Secretary Paulson is leading, that is very unique. And so he goes to China, and the Chinese leaders come here. And our Cabinet—many of our Cabinet works with their counterparts. And it's a broadening, a strengthening relationship.

We've dealt with some tough problems in a way that's cordial and respectful. And I would say that they're very good relations. And I told somebody the other day that it's amazing that the United States now has very good relations with China, South Korea, and Japan and the ASEAN countries, all at the same time. And I think that's positive for the region.

And take the six-party talks. There's a common problem. If North Korea were to end up with a nuclear weapon, it would be very destabilizing and very troubling for all of us. So we decided to work together, sit around the table as five parties, saying the same thing to the North Koreans. And I'm hopeful that it'll work. But it shows our relationship has matured.

### *Six-Party Talks*

*Mr. Yang.* You mentioned the six-party talks. Also, six-party talks are high on your agenda during your administration for the last couple of years. With the demolition of the Yongbyon facility, the cooling tower, specifically, it makes some tangible progress, probably gave momentum before the talks. So how do you see this mechanism will go on?

*The President.* Yes.

*Mr. Yang.* What kind of messages, if you want to say, to the six-party talks?

*The President.* Well, first of all, I value our partners. The only way to solve this peacefully is for us to work together to send a common message. I thank the Chinese Government for their leadership on this issue.

I firmly believe multilateral diplomacy can work this issue better than bilateral diplomacy; secondly, that we're at a very critical moment now for the North Korean Government to make a decision as to whether or not they're going to verify what they said they would do. It's one thing to say it, but I think it's going to be very important for them to understand that we expect them to show us.

Now, there's no question the cooling tower went down. That's perfect verification; everybody saw it. But there's going to be—need to be verification on the plutonium program, the enriched uranium program and the proliferation program. And the decision is theirs. And if they make the decisions that we're comfortable with, then we move the process forward. And I certainly hope they make the right decision.

*Mr. Yang.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Yes. I'm looking forward to going to Beijing.

*Mr. Yang.* Good wishes to you for a very pleasant visit to Beijing.

*The President.* I bet I have one. Thank you, sir.

*Mr. Yang.* Thank you very much.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 2:35 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Yao Ming, center, National Basketball Association's Houston Rockets. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 31. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

### Remarks on the War on Terror

*July 31, 2008*

Good morning. This has been a month of encouraging news from Iraq. Violence is down to its lowest level since the spring of 2004, and we're now in our third consecutive month with reduced violence levels holding steady. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker caution that the progress is still reversible, but they report that there now appears to be a degree of durability to the gains that we have made.

A significant reason for this sustained progress is the success of the surge. Another is the increasing capability of the

Iraqi forces. Iraqi forces now have 192 combat battalions in the fight, and more than 110 of these battalions are taking the lead in combat operations against terrorists and extremists.

We saw the capability of those forces earlier this year, when the Iraqi Government launched successful military operations against Shi'a extremist groups in Basra, Amarah, and the Sadr City area of Baghdad. Because of these operations, extremists who once terrorized the citizens of these communities have been driven