

Commission. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 1.

A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Eberhard Piltz of Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, Germany May 31, 2007

U.S.-EU Cooperation on the Environment/ Upcoming G-8 Summit

Mr. Piltz. Mr. President, the German Presidency of the G-8 has put the focus for the next meeting on climate change and what to do about it. Europeans want fixed caps. You have been opposed to that all the time. Now you announced a new proposal. Have you changed your position?

The President. First, let me, if I might—I think that my friend Angela Merkel, for whom I have great respect, wants to discuss a lot of matters, whether it be HIV/AIDS or malaria or hunger, depravation, as well as climate change. And I'm looking forward to it, I really am. I've been to this beautiful part of Germany before. It's a beautiful part of your country.

No, I've always taken the issue seriously. I've told the American people and those who are willing to listen that I take climate change seriously. And today I talked about a post-Kyoto framework in which the world can discuss this issue in a serious fashion.

Angela was concerned at one time whether or not I'd be willing to accept a post-Kyoto framework, and today I expressed my keen desire to work with her and other leaders on such a framework. And I also suggested that a good first step toward achieving serious accomplishments would be to have the major emitters gather and set a goal, an international goal by the end of 2008. And I'm very serious about that. I'm looking forward to working with G-8 partners and others.

I think one of the breakthroughs that I hope we can achieve in Germany at this G-8 is to get India and China as participants in setting an international goal. And

what that goal is, that will be determined as a result of these meetings. But Angela should be proud of leading the international community toward these kind of breakthroughs.

Mr. Piltz. Though this is the beginning of a process, at the end of which there could be fixed goals?

The President. There would be a goal, absolutely. And that would be determined by the major emitters, the major greenhouse gas emitters. Generally, sometimes people—some sit around the table and come up with what they think is the best solution. My view is, is that they need to get the United States, China, India, the EU, Russia, other countries as well around the table and say, okay, we agree on a goal. And each nation needs to come up with a way to achieve that goal.

And listen, the truth of the matter is, the best way to achieve, in our case, a couple of national objectives—energy security and economic security, as well as being good stewards of the environment—is a strong push for technologies. And I'll bring a very good record to the G-8. We've spent a lot of money here in the United States on developing clean technologies. We're driving a lot of our automobiles now with corn-based ethanol. That gets us off of oil, which is good for economic and national security, and it helps with the environment.

Missile Defense System

Mr. Piltz. Missile defense, sir—the harsh Russian reaction on U.S. plans on missile defense signals some sort of deterioration in relations. Are we headed back to colder times?

The President. Yes, that's a really good question. I certainly hope not. Our message to—and my personal message to Vladimir Putin is, there's no need to try to relive the cold war. It's over. And we don't view Russia as an enemy, we view Russia as an opportunity to work together. We don't agree with every decision Russia has made. She doesn't agree with every decision I have made. But I have worked hard to make sure that we can find common ground on issues like proliferation and dealing with Islamic radicals and Iran or North Korea.

You know, Vladimir Putin has spoken out very strongly on missile defense. And so frankly, it—I visit with Angela quite often, and one of the things she talked to me about, is there not a way to open a dialog with President Putin on missile defense? So I sent Bob Gates, our Secretary of Defense, there, and my message to Vladimir Putin—and it will be when I see him at the G-8 in Germany as well as here in the States—is, you don't have anything to fear. As a matter of fact, this system is aimed at protecting NATO allies, and if you want to participate, we would like you to participate with us. We'll be totally transparent in the technologies that we're deploying. We want you to come and inspect our sites. We want you to talk to our military. We want to be wide open because this system is not geared toward Russia; it's geared toward a rogue state that may be able to acquire a nuclear weapon.

Russia-U.S. Relations

Mr. Piltz. You mentioned Angela Merkel's role. Is there a role for Germany in this difficult dialog, as a bridgebuilder or something like that?

The President. Well, it sounds like to me, Angela has had some pretty difficult dialogs herself as the leader of the EU. And I think the key thing is for Angela and me to work closely together to have a—when we can in dealing with Russia. But each nation has to deal with Russia in her own

terms. I don't need any help dealing with Vladimir Putin, and he doesn't need any help dealing with me. We're sovereign nations; we have our positions.

One of the things that I have worked hard to do is to—and received some criticism here in the States—is, I've worked hard to have a personal relationship with Vladimir Putin so that when I discuss things with him, I can find areas of agreement, but I've also got a relationship such that I can bring up areas of concern without rupturing relations. And it's—you know, some have suggested, well, there's no need to have relations with Russia. Well, I strongly disagree with that. I think it's important for the U.S. and Russia to have relations.

War on Terror

Mr. Piltz. Sir, how satisfied are you with international burden-sharing in the war on terror?

The President. Good, it's good. As a matter of fact, the coalitions are much bigger than anybody could have envisioned. You know, one of my concerns, however, is that, just in general, people don't take the threat seriously. In other words, they say: "Well, there haven't been many attacks; there's been a few attacks; but we shouldn't be that worried about it." I'm deeply worried about it, and I really strongly believe the free world ought to be worried about radicals and extremists who will kill in the name of an ideology.

See, I view this as an ideological conflict between people who are willing to murder and want to spread their vision, and those of us who believe in liberty and the universality of liberty. And so my main worry is complacency over the long run. I am pleased with the cooperation at this point in time. We've got great relations with Germany. Obviously, if we know of a plot that may be taking place in Germany, we will share information on an instant basis, and vice versa. And that ought to be comforting to the German citizens.

Germany-U.S. Relations

Mr. Piltz. That was my next question, the state of the relationship between America and Germany. Are we back to, as your father put it, “partners in leadership”?

The President. I think we are. First of all, I had a decent relationship with Gerhard Schroeder. I never bore any—look, there was a difference on Iraq, obviously; it was a clear difference on Iraq. But that didn’t cause me to say, well, Germany isn’t worthy as a worthy ally. Quite the contrary, I felt Germany always was a worthy ally and an important ally for the United States and an important player in Europe.

Angela Merkel comes at a different time in our relationship. She’s a woman who I—for whom I’ve got great admiration. I don’t know if you know this or not, but she and I, we speak by secure video on a regular basis. And that’s what strategic partners do, and our discussions are important discus-

sions. She understands the issues very well. She’s the kind of person that can get a fellow to talk freely and candidly, and she speaks the same way to me. And I admire her a lot. I would say our relations are vital, and they’re strong right now. And that’s the way I intend to keep it.

Mr. Piltz. Thank you very much, sir.

The President. Glad to have you. Looking forward to coming to your great country again.

Mr. Piltz. I’ll be there too.

The President. Yes, sir. [Laughter]

NOTE: The interview was taped at 3:27 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Chancellor Angela Merkel and former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 1. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Interview With Andi Bejtja of Albania’s Vizion Plus TV May 31, 2007

President’s Upcoming Visit to Albania

Mr. Bejtja. Mr. President, first of all, I want to thank you for the opportunity you give to me and to Albanian public for this interview. And I have just a simple question in the beginning: What is the reason of including Albania in this European tour this time?

The President. That’s a fascinating question. First of all, I want to make sure the Albanian people understand that America knows that you exist and that you’re making difficult choices to cement your free society. I’m coming as a lover of liberty to a land where people are realizing the benefits of liberty.

Secondly, I’ve been impressed by your leadership. I have met your leaders at different times—

Mr. Bejtja. Impressed in what sense?

The President. In the sense that they’re committed to common values with the United States, that they believe in certain freedoms, and that people ought to be given a chance to live in a free society. And so my message is that we welcome our friendship, that I’m proud of the hard work that you’re doing, and I’m particularly grateful to be the first sitting President ever to come to Albania.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Mr. Bejtja. Yes, this is a historical visit. And Albanians hoping to get a—to receive