

out of opportunity. This future is not fixed, but it is a destination that can be reached if we pursue a sustained dialogue like the one that you will commence today and act on what we hear and what we learn.

Thousands of years ago, the great philosopher Mencius said: "A trail through the mountains, if used, becomes a path in a short time, but, if unused, becomes blocked by grass in an equally short time." Our task is to forge a path to the future that we seek for our children, to prevent mistrust or the inevitable differences of the moment from allowing that trail to be blocked by grass, to always be mindful of the journey that we are undertaking together.

This dialogue will help determine the ultimate destination of that journey. It represents a commitment to shape our young century through sustained cooperation and not confrontation. I look forward to carrying this ef-

fort forward through my first visit to China, where I hope to come to know better your leaders, your people, and your majestic country. Together, I'm confident that we can move steadily in the direction of progress and meet our responsibility to our people and to the future that we will all share.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:35 a.m. at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to Yao Ming, center, National Basketball Association's Houston Rockets; Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; Secretary of the Treasury Timothy F. Geithner; Gov. Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., of Utah; Sen. John McCain, 2008 Republican Presidential candidate; Secretary of Energy Steven Chu; and Secretary of Commerce Gary F. Locke.

Remarks Honoring the 2008 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Detroit Shock

July 27, 2009

The President. Hey, guys. Hello, hello, hello. Please, everybody, be seated. Be seated. Well, welcome to the White House, everybody. And we are so pleased to have the Detroit Shock here. We want to congratulate them and all your fans for your third WNBA championship in 6 years. Give them a big round of applause.

We've got some special fans from Capitol Hill here who take great pride in Detroit: Senator Carl Levin is in the house; Representative Sandy Levin is in the house; and Representative Carolyn Kilpatrick is in the house.

I want to thank Donna Orender, the president of the WNBA, who's here today. Where's—Donna is right back—there she is right there. Congratulations on the success of this league and the inspiration it provides to young women everywhere.

I also want to thank the owner of the Detroit Shock and the Detroit Pistons, Karen Davidson, for coming. Your husband—go ahead, give him a round of applause. [Applause] Your husband Bill had a great impact not just in the

NBA and the WNBA, but also on countless individuals who benefit from his giving spirit.

Now, I have to say, everybody knows I'm a Chicago Bulls fan. And a few years ago, when the Bulls and the Pistons were thick in the middle of their rivalry, I never imagined that I'd be saying, "Congratulations, Bill Laimbeer," or, "Congratulations, Rick Mahorn." [Laughter] And if I knew I was President then, to think that I'd be inviting them to the White House is hard to take. [Laughter] But let's face it: These guys are winners. They always have been. They know how to win. And I want to congratulate the finals MVP Katie Smith, team captain Cheryl Ford, and all the other women that make this such an outstanding team.

I also want to salute this organization—this team for donating so much time and energy to lifting up the Detroit community. They've given free tickets to underprivileged youth, mentored abused women and children, donated backpacks filled with school supplies to foster kids, restored a rundown library into a safe, clean place for kids to play and to grow.

And I want to thank them for participating in our United We Serve summer of service. Earlier today these players took time to host a WNBA Fit Clinic for young boys and girls at a local's Boys and Girls Club to teach fitness and nutrition and self-confidence, and I understand they brought some of the young participants along with them to the White House. I suspect it must be these young people here today.

Let me also say something as a father—I was mentioning it to the team before we came out—it's hard to believe the WNBA has already been around for 12 years, and that means that my daughters have never known a time when women couldn't play professional sports.

They look at the TV, and they see me watching "SportsCenter," and they see young women who look like them on the screen. And that lets them and all our young women, as well as young men, know that we should take for granted that

women are going to thrive and excel as athletes. And it makes my daughters look at themselves differently; to see that they can be champions too. So as a father, I want to say thank you and thank you to all the WNBA athletes who work hard each day to set a positive example to which all our daughters can aspire.

Congratulations again on your championship season. Good luck this year. And, Coach, congratulations.

Former Detroit Shock Head Coach William Laimbeer. Thank you.

The President. Congratulations. All right, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. on the South Portico at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Derrick A. "Rick" Mahorn, head coach, Katie Smith, guard, and Cheryl Ford, forward, Detroit Shock.

Remarks at a Reception Honoring World Ambassadors

July 27, 2009

Hello. Thank you very much. Well, I want to welcome all of you to the White House. Michelle and I are honored to host you here tonight to get to know you and to underscore the importance of cooperation between our nations.

Now, diplomacy has always been critically important to all nations. But in many ways, it grows more important with each passing year, because the interconnectedness of our world means that in the 21st century, we cannot solve our problems until we solve them together. For centuries, diplomats have come together to discuss war and peace, commerce and exchange. But now it is hard to think of an issue that matters to our people that does not depend in some way upon cooperation among nations: health and education, energy, the environment, the arts, and even athletics.

And that's one reason why I came into office with a strong commitment to renew American diplomacy and to start a new era of engagement with the world. This must be a moment when we engage on the basis of mutual interest and mutual respect, so that we can build new part-

nerships for progress. And it is in that spirit that I welcome all of you here tonight.

I'm also pleased that we've put together an extraordinary team to lead America's diplomacy. I have an extraordinary Secretary of State in Hillary Clinton. I'm so pleased to have Susan Rice, our talented Ambassador to the United Nations, here with us tonight, as well as our outstanding Trade Representative, Ron Kirk. And I couldn't be more proud of the job that American diplomats are doing around the world as well.

In the months and years ahead, I know that we are going to do important work with each of you. We will depend on you to connect us to your Government, to help make progress on our common challenges, and to build bridges among our people.

Of course, one of the wonderful things about America is that so much of the world is represented in our own cities and towns. I think we likely have immigrants who have come to our shores from every country that is represented here tonight. In fact, my own hometown of Chicago is probably pretty close to being able to make that claim all by itself. *[Laughter]*