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## CHINA IN THE WORLD PODCAST

Host: **Paul Haenle**

Guest: **Ambassador Chris Hill**

Episode 109: Ambassador Chris Hill on the Trump-Kim Summit

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**Haenle:** Today I sat down with Ambassador Chris Hill on the “China in the World” podcast. Chris is in Beijing this week as part of Carnegie’s distinguished speaker’s program, meeting with Chinese scholars and experts, business leaders and government officials. Ambassador Hill was a career diplomat and a four-time U.S. Ambassador. His most recent post was as U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, but he also served in his career as ambassador to the Republic of Korea, Poland, the Republic of Macedonia, and Special Envoy on Kosovo. I had the opportunity to work with Chris when he served as assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs between 2005 and 2009, where he was also the lead negotiator on the U.S. side in the six-party talks. During that time, I served on the National Security Council and was the NSC Rep to those negotiations. Chris also served as a special assistant to the President and Senior Director on the staff of the National Security Council from 1999 to 2000 and the Clinton administration. He recently joined the Carnegie Endowment as a non-resident senior fellow and is currently at the University of Denver, chief adviser to the chancellor. We were very fortunate to have Chris here this week in Beijing, just days before the Trump-Kim summit in Singapore, and during our discussion on the podcast, we discussed the interests of regional countries entering the summit, as well as the summit’s likely outcomes. I hope you enjoy our discussion and also encourage you to listen to our previous episode featuring Carnegie President, Ambassador Bill Burns, who also shared his outlook on the Trump-Kim summit just a week beforehand.

**Haenle:** Thanks again, Chris. Thank you for joining the China in the World podcast here just before this historic summit in Singapore. The Singapore summit between President Trump and the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un will take place the morning of June 12th on Santosa Island in Singapore at the Capella Hotel. The world's attention will be on the summit. There’s a lot of interest on this for obvious reasons. They’ll be I anticipate a huge TV aspect to this. I mean this is President Donald Trump we’re talking about here, but the stakes for this are extremely significant. If there’s anybody in the world that understands the stakes in what’s in play, it’s you given your role as the chief U.S. negotiator to the six-party talks during the Bush administration. You helped broker the September 19 2005 joint statement, which laid out a roadmap to get North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons. You also helped

broker two implementing agreements in February and October of 2007. Ultimately, those talks fell apart. Kim Jong-il, the leader of North Korea, got sick and the country went into a leadership transition. And ultimately, the last meeting of the six-party talks was in December 2008. We haven't had a lot of engagement with the North since then. This is really the first real opportunity for progress we've had since that point. When you led the six-party talks, the diplomatic statecraft was very strong. There was a real effort to engage the countries that had stakes on the issue, whether that was our South Korean allies, Japan, China, Russian, to understand how they saw the issue and to try to weave together an outcome that took into account the interests of other countries. Why did you, at the time, Secretary Rice, President Bush, why did you think that was an important way to approach this issue?

**Hill:** I think the issue of North Korean nuclear ambitions is one that engages more than just U.S. foreign policy. I think it engages, frankly, all the countries in the region. And I think each of them has a kind of particular take on it. Different weights they assigned to the various issues. Obviously, for the United States, it's an enormous security issue, enormous security problem. We have some 30,000 troops on the Korean Peninsula, and so we are not indifferent to the development of nuclear weapons in North Korea. Not that anyone else is, but others have a different perspective on it.

**Haenle:** And is there a risk then if the U.S. brokers an agreement, President Trump brokers an agreement with Kim Jong-un that doesn't adequately address the interests of the other countries. Is there a risk that it won't work over time?

**Hill:** Well, for example, if he brokers an agreement that does not take into account Japan's great concerns about missiles that could hit their homeland, that would be a major problem for the Japanese.

**Haenle:** There's been some reports that they'll broker an agreement that only contains intercontinental long range intercontinental ballistic missiles protecting the United States. But of course you're suggesting if it doesn't include those short range missiles, then we're not thinking about our allies.

**Hill:** That's right. And I think part of why this error the world is important to us is that we have two key allies there. We have the Japanese and the South Koreans, and so I think there's complexity to it. I do believe there is strength in numbers. I think when you have six parties there, all of whom want denuclearization, I want to be clear about that, but each of whom wants something else in the equation. So I think it does raise the degree of difficulty in doing it multilaterally. At the same time, I think it creates more strength and more insistence that North Korea needs to do this.

**Haenle:** And you've mentioned before President Bush felt pretty strongly about this as well and why he sort of was behind the idea of brokering it the six party.

**Hill:** I think the fundamental reason for multilateral diplomacy from our perspective is if you're one-on-one with North Korea, you're one-on-one. And when there's an impasse, maybe half the world will say, come on Americans, you can do better than this. You can make more sessions. But when you're in effect five-on-one and we found ourselves in a five-on-one situation. I think the pressure comes to bear on North Korea. So I think it's in our interest to have more countries there, and then looking beyond that, I think what interests us is not just the nuclear weapons, but rather the U.S. position in that part of the world. And frankly, the need to have a kind of security mechanism in that part of the world that's lasting. You know for all the criticism of US foreign policy over the years in in Northeast Asia, we've kept the peace, and the peace has been, I think, a very strong one. And to some extent Northeast Asia has become a major exporter of goods and services. And we need to be careful that we maintain it that way and not turn Northeast Asia into an exporter of instability.

**Haenle:** Yeah, I remember and worked closely with you in the last couple years of the Bush administration. And I remember he felt very strongly if North Korea agrees to an agreement with all of us and then walks away, it's much different if he's walking away from an agreement not just that he made to the U.S. but that he made also China, South Korea, Japan, and that's much more powerful I thin.

**Hill:** And the agreement they made with their neighbors. And you know you can choose a lot of things in the world, but usually you can't choose your neighbors.

**Heanle:** Let's talk a little bit then about how each country perceives this issue. I mean, first up is that North Korea Kim Jong-un has made a significant shift as of late. I mean, to remember of the last couple years, he's really wrapped up considerably his missile tests and, nuclear tests, trying to develop this nuclear capability. China grew, I think, quite irritated with North Korea. They joined on to increasingly strong sanctions and pressure. But as of other new year, he's made this pretty significant shift. Why has he made the shift? What's behind it? Is it the U.S. developing military options? Is it, you know, the maximum pressure campaign? Is he coming into this from a position of weakness, or is it something different?

**Hill:** First of all, I think they have made a shift, but I am not, and nor should anyone be, one hundred percent sure that they have. You can argue that the shift is designed to create tensions between us and South Korea. You can even argue that the shift is to try to enhance prestige that it sits across from the U.S. President and, frankly, not make concessions about their nuclear program. So I think we have to be careful about any conclusions we draw from what has happened since January 1. But on the other hand, I think we need to take note and we need to test the proposition. My own view is North Korea does not look at nuclear weapons at its means of survival. This is often said that somehow nuclear weapons are what keeps them afloat. I think it's more complex than that. I think they have a concept that nuclear weapons are sort of a shortcut to a status as a world power. It's also a means to put pressure on neighbors, and that with nuclear weapons could come kind of tribute from their neighbors, and that North Korea feels it might be better off economically as a result of its nuclear weapons.

**Haenle:** In terms of the tribute aspect, if that's there, could you then make an argument that it's playing out well for the North Korean leader? Apparently the Russian President is trying to get an agreement. See people seem to be wanting now to meet the North Korean leader. And if that's been part of his plan. Maybe pretty clever.

**Hill:** I think there's certainly an argument to be made that they have enhanced their prestige in the world. Everyone wants to see the North Koreans, but on the other hand, I think you can still make a very convincing case that nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons ambitions for North Korea have been an albatross. After all, it's a desperately poor country. Would it have been as poor without nuclear weapons? I think you can argue now it would have been a little better off as a result if they had kind of joined the international community and not subjected themselves to pretty tough and punitive sanctions. So I think nuclear weapons may have enhanced their prestige in the short-run if everyone in the world wants to try to persuade them otherwise. But at the same time, I think they have really taken a lot of losses, especially in their economy, for the fact that they have nuclear weapons.

**Haenle:** On the issue of the economy. In our discussions this week with Chinese experts, now we heard many Chinese experts making the case that this is really part of Kim Jong-un's effort to improve the North Korean economy, that he's decided it's time to really focus on the economy, to reform the economy. Many Chinese seem to have hope that he'll undergo an economic reform and opening up. Much like Deng Xiaoping led in China. What's your perspective on Kim Jong-un and what he wants to do with the economy?

**Hill:** My sense is this is a very fluid situation. Which what which is what makes it so fascinating. But my sense is that the American administration especially, has no interest in relaxing sanctions in any significant way until North Korea is clearly on the path toward denuclearization. And so I think there are real limits to what Kim Jong-un can do in terms of improving his economy as long as he retains this these nuclear ambitions. Now the question of course is, let's say he does move toward denuclearization. Of course, President Trump has been saying they've got to go all the way before anything happens in the way of sanctions relief. We'll see if that's a tenable position. But in any case, let's say he moves toward denuclearization. Then the issue is can he improve his economy with the kind of command structures they have? And when I say command structures, I mean, this is like no other state we've seen in the world in the last fifty years and closed off travel restrictions.

Everything is restricted. Everything is either prohibited or compulsory in that country. At the end of the day, China is still there. Anyone who went abroad and wants to come back, it's an enormous place, an enormously important place. Would the same dynamic exist in North Korea? If you're North Korean and you went abroad, would you want to come back? Is that a country that you feel you can be a part of? Or, would you end up with a country that's de-populated and has an enormous brain drain and is unable to make its way in the world. People often say, you know to give up nuclear weapons puts the regime at risk. In fact, to open up may put the regime at risk.

**Haenle:** When you were the chief negotiator on the U.S. side, Kim Jong-il was the leader of North Korea. Now we have this very young up until the point where he took over inexperienced leader and Kim Jong-un. How do you see them in terms of the differences?

**Hill:** Well, it is very interesting. On the one hand, you cannot expect a sense of the father to have been visited upon the son. In short, the son may have a very different perspective and we need to test that proposition at the same time. It was almost eerie the way some of the issues that we dealt with some ten years ago and some the phraseology of the North Koreans today absolutely mirrored what we heard ten years ago. For example, the North Koreans a few months ago allegedly said to the South Koreans something along the order of that my father's dying wish in this case Kim Jong-un talking about his father Kim Jong-il. His dying wish was to have denuclearization. Well, incredibly enough, that's the exact same formula that Kim Jong-il used in talking about his father are Kim Il-sung and his dying wish that denuclearization take place. So it's kind of hard to say whether you're going to see a repeat of the era ten years ago and since it is unknowable at this point, I think it's important to test whether you're going to see that. And I think it's the right thing to see if there's something new here.

**Haenle:** And do you see any big differences with Kim Jong-un? I mean, you've talked about sort of consistency, but is there are there things with regard to him that are clearly different?

**Hill:** Well, I think he has a different style. Ah. Is there a different substance? Hard to say. Does he show signs of, not wanting to rely on party cadres? I don't see those signs yet, so that kind of looks the same. Is he very much beholden to the military? I see signs of that. So that's kind of similar, but certainly his willingness to go to South Korea, his apparent willingness to say, you know, we have problems in my country that was kind of unheard of for a North Korean leader to acknowledge problems in North Korea when he told the South Korean President the roads will be as nice. That was very unusual. I don't think we should expect him to be the same as his father are. I think there are signs that he would be different. But whether it amounts to a different perspective, I think time will tell.

**Haenle:** Let's talk about the U.S. in August of 2017. Not that long ago, within the last year, Trump said that the US was willing to rain fire and fury like the world had never seen on North Korea. The two leaders, Trump and Kim Jong-un, were comparing the sizes of their nuclear buttons, and Trump was calling him "rocket man." Kim called him "dotard." Just recently, however, President Trump shocked the world when he said he'd be willing to meet with Kim, and the rhetoric that President Trump uses now is much softer. What's he looking to achieve here, President Trump? What would be a success for him?

**Hill:** I think strategically, he's looking to see if kind words and respectful words cannot be reciprocated by significant deeds. I suspect kind words can help the atmosphere. And in fact, when we were doing this, even though I got instructions such as don't toast in front of the North Koreans with your glass, I frankly checked with Secretary Rice, and she agreed I needed to ignore those instructions. So I think there's a value on being polite, showing some civility here, respect, but I never expected them to take unilateral actions in response. I think so far the Trump administration is hoping that that's what they'll do, and I'm not sure that we will get real action in response to civility on our part. So what can the Trump administration expect? I would hope they would be expecting that North Korea will agree to give up their nuclear weapons. I would hope that that phrase to abandon their nuclear weapons on their nuclear programs could be repeated. It was taken from the 2005 statement that they agreed to at the time, and I would hope they could get that and something on the order of some kind of time frame because we don't want a situation where

they agree that they want to do away with their nuclear weapons, but they have a timeframe that's more biblical than political. So I would want some kind of time mark like that in the 2005 statement where we referred to an early date.

**Haenle:** The Trump administration to date has been pushing for that to happen almost immediately.

**Hill:** Yes, although the President seems to have backed off that a little and so indicates this is a process. That was surprising.

**Haenle:** Is this part of his learning process, or has he known this and the sort of the negotiating strategy was to come in hard and sort of back off?

**Hill:** According to my senses, it's a learning process. I am not convinced that we have political leadership in our country that's all-knowing. So I suspect there was a learning curve involved here, but whatever it was I think there's an understanding that this is not going to happen in one meeting. So, the second thing, I think if they cannot get immediate results on denuclearization beyond a declaration, I think perhaps they should look to go broader in the agreement. That is, if you can't go deeper, go a little broader and see what could be done to enlist North Korean support to do something about their chemical and biological weapons, and perhaps as well their missiles with the understanding that we don't want to cut some missile deal that leaves our allies high and dry.

**Haenle:** And these are areas that previously were not sort of included in the agreement. And he could claim that this is a better agreement because as you say, it's broader.

**Hill:** That's right. And you know, we chose to go after the nuclear weapons back in 2005. We could have added missiles. We could have added chem-bio, but we decided to really focus on the nuclear weapons because I think that is the more existential threat to everybody. So maybe he could go broader on these issues and it would show a certain comprehensiveness that I think is necessary. So I hope there's something like that. And then the question will be, often it's assumed that this is kind of odd discussion of what is the definition of denuclearization. I don't think that's the issue. I think the North Koreans

know full well, especially from the negotiations in 2005. I think the real question is what do they want in return? They wanted a number of things in 2005 that we are enshrined in the 2005 statement joint statement. For example, they seem to want a peace treaty to replace the armistice. We put that in there, except once we put it in there they seemed to lose interest. So they were interested in it until they were not interested in it. They seem to want economic and energy assistance. We put it in there and then afterwards they said no, they don't want that. So it is a little difficult to try to negotiate with yourself. You need to get a much clearer understanding what the North Koreans actually want.

**Haenle:** And lastly, on the U.S., how do you see President Trump factoring in domestic politics with this? What does he have to do because he's obviously very attuned to the politics in the U.S. and the midterms coming up in November. What's he thinking about in that regard? Going into the summer? I think he's understood something that sometimes in the past people did not understand. And this sort of hyper tough view in Washington, you know, will never give in to anything this kind of stuff that we had to deal with. The so-called neoconservative thinking, which was essentially, you know, tell your adversary to do everything after which you'll think of doing something. So I think he's kind of understood that that's a bit of one of these Washington echo chambers. And the real question is, if you go out into the rest of the country through a lot of people who are inspired by the fact that our President is taking on a threat by dealing with it directly and trying to work something out. So I think the mirror active of having a process going forward with the understanding it can't be never-ending it does need to be more movement there, but that he probably has more slack from the American people that he might from these various uh angry types in Washington.

**Haenle:** As he backs off to a certain degree from the sort of extreme position that he has held and the notion that he's gonna broker an agreement much better than any previous administration. Does he run the risk then of the question is what you got on the North Korea deal better than what Obama got on the Iran deal?

**Hill:** I think he does run into that. I think he'd run into it pretty quickly because I don't think the North Koreans are prepared to give us some of their fissile material and have it carted out of the country, which was part of the Iran deal. So you bet. I think it doesn't necessarily look good in comparison. But I think the president, who considers himself sort of the ace salesman here, would have a way of saying, look, unlike Iran, this is a permanent arrangement. We're not going to have an eight year window on this. Unlike Iran, we're dealing with other issues, including missiles, including chem-bio. So we're gonna deal with some human traits, the regional threat that doesn't seem to be as interested in that. Well, I don't think the president is interested in that, and probably this is not a time for it. I always remember the issue of when we engaged human rights in the process. I remember the Russian counterpart saying to me what, you don't think this is hard enough? You're going to add another element to it. But as I told the Russian and as I discussed internally I felt that when we get to the point of recognizing North Korea of establishing diplomatic relations, it's important to understand that when I proposed to the North Koreans that we have interest groups, that is interest sections, that is the kinds of arrangements that worked so well in U.S.-China relations in the 1970s. The North Koreans said they're not interested in interest sections. We're interested in diplomatic relations. So let's say we get to the point of diplomatic relations. We'll set up some working groups. Economic relations will set up something of the logistics of opening embassies and what the reciprocity would be in that arrangement. And then we'll set up another group. And that is the issue of human rights. And so we anticipated that in the in the joint statement where we talked about cross recognition of states according to each country's customs referring to the fact that we do need to have a dialogue on human rights, and that's where I think the dialogue on human rights needs to be. That is when we get to the point of a bilateral agreement on the establishment of relations, there needs to be something there. By the way, the North Koreans won't like it, but it would be in the context of establishing relations. And you know, I don't like a lot of things either and so they wouldn't like that. And we just have to say this is the way it's going to be. And I think what you look for in human rights is not to turn them into some kind of flowering democracy, but rather make sure that they understand the importance we attach to it. Understand we want see some benchmarks and understand we want to see the issue going in the right direction.

**Haenle:** So we talked about the North Koreans. We talked about the U.S. side. Let's talk about South Korea. You served as the U.S. Ambassador in South Korea. You know the South Koreans well. President Moon played a very important role in driving this diplomacy to this point, keeping the negotiations on track. What's important here to the South Koreans? And what outcomes are they looking for? Where are we aligned with South Korea? I think there's a lot of areas, it seems to me as one of our key allies in the region where we're aligned. But maybe, you know, where is the daylight between our positions?

**Hill:** Well, I think to understand the South Korean perspective, or frankly, either Korean perspective is to understand a people who were brutally divided in the middle of the twentieth century through no fault of their own. People always draw analogies between what happened to the Korean people and what happened to the German people. And without delving too much into the history, it is pretty obvious that there were very different dynamics. So I think it's always been important for Americans, especially American diplomats, not to be lecturing the South Koreans or what there are attitudes should be to their cousins in the North, but rather to be supportive and to expect from the South Koreans some kind of timely consultations on what is coming next. What I'm leading to is the fact that South Koreans may not want unification. North Korea may not want unification. But South Koreans, Koreans generally have a right to peaceful unification. And so I think it's very important that we understand that and that we acknowledge they have other issues that are important to them. For example, family, unification, family business. I've heard American officials say that's a concession to North Korea, is it? Or is it something that a South Korean family with maybe 94 year old grandmother who wants to see five year old grandson, I mean, grandfathers in North Korea, that they may want the right to see each other. And so I think we need to understand this issue of family. And then there's the issue of humanitarian assistance. I've sat in meetings in Washington. I was embarrassed to hear Americans say we don't want to give them any humanitarian assistance. If you're Korean and you're talking about humanitarian assistance, you're talking about starving another Korean if you don't want to extend humanitarian assistance. So we need to understand there's a different perspective from the human level. So I think we need to understand the

Koreans look at this a little differently, and then for every American who has gotten up in Washington and shook his fist at the North Koreans, they need to understand that Washington is a long way from the DMZ and for many South Koreans, they can actually see North Korea from their bedroom window. And so they need to understand it's a different perspective. I like to think that over the years we've done a better job of that, but we'll have to see.

**Haenle:** In the past few days. You've been speaking with a number of Chinese scholars. So I want talk a little bit about China and China's perspectives and their interests here, and what they're hoping will be achieved from your discussions this week. What do you see as China's perspectives? What do they consider most important in all of this? What would be a desired outcome of this summit and the diplomacy taking place? From a Chinese perspective?

**Hill:** I think geography is one of the most powerful facts in the world. And when you look at a map, you see how close China is to the whole situation. And so I have no doubt, certainly no doubts, based on my discussions in Beijing or frankly, on past discussions with the Chinese, I have no doubt that China wants to see a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. I have no doubt about that at all. The issue for China, however, is they don't see a denuclearized Korean Peninsula as something that they should be accomplishing as a sort of subcontractor to American foreign policy objectives. They have their own reasons to want to see the Korean Peninsula calm down. They have their own reasons for why they want to extend their relations with South Korea and at the same time maintain their relations with North Korea. So they have a different perspective born of their geography and certainly nurtured by a long and sometimes bitter history. So I think we need to understand that we cannot outsource this problem to China. We cannot make them a sub-contractor, but nor should we try to ignore them in this, and I hope that in the fullness of time, China will be brought into this front and center, because at the end of the day, China needs to be a part of this.

**Haenle:** Here in Beijing, I found it very interesting when President Trump announced he was willing to meet with Kim Jong-un. Initially, the reaction from Chinese experts was that this was a good thing because as you and I remember in the days of the six-party talks, the Chinese would encourage the

U.S. side to engage bilaterally with the North Koreans in dialogue. And here we were announcing that we'd be willing to do it at the presidential level, but very quickly, it seemed to me the Chinese grew worried that Trump could come in as an unconventional president brokering some big deal and China could be sort of isolated or left on the sidelines. What's behind that kind of thinking in your perspective, and how important are geopolitics to the Chinese?

**Hill:** I think China is mindful that the United States, with our tremendous power, is present in Japan, present in South Korea, present actually throughout Asia. And I think the Chinese have learned through bitter experiences, including relations they had with the Soviet Union in the past, that they don't want someone else, a foreign power, to try to use relationships in the region to somehow cramp their growth or to somehow encircle them. So I think these are kind of instinctive reactions from the Chinese, and I think there needs to be a much deeper dialogue between China and the United States to address the factors arising from mistrust and, frankly, arising from events in history. So I don't see why the U.S. and China cannot have this kind of adult dialogue, and I would hope that they do in the context of this North Korean issue. Because frankly speaking, this whole question of North Korean nuclear weapons goes far beyond the question of what to do with little North Korea. This has to do with the U.S. relationship in this part of the world, and frankly, it has to do with China's relationship with the entire world.

**Haenle:** Let's talk a little bit about another U.S. ally in the region, Japan. You've mentioned Japan in the context of the concerns about missiles, making sure the U.S. doesn't broker an agreement that somehow leaves Japan exposed. How does Japan view this issue and where are their consistence with the U.S. approach and differences.

**Hill:** Well, Japan is in the neighborhood, and that's an obvious fact that can't be ignored. Japan has been a victim of North Korean behavior in the past, the abduction issue, which, you know, we recall we worked on that. We spent a lot of time talking to the North Koreans, but that's not just going to go away. I mean, when you have a situation where one country is snatched, the citizens of another country, and don't expect that other country to sort of wash their hands

of it and passed. That's a serious issue. We need to be respectful of that. But I think looking more strategically, as Japan looks at China, you know people have pointed out that in the course of history, the rise of China and the rise of Japan usually have not happened at the same time. One's up and the other's down. So Japan has to be very aware of how this situation will leave China and Chinese power. And then if you look at Korea, it's very close to Japan. You know, back in the early part of the twentieth century, the Japanese always referred to it as a dagger pointed at Japan. Well, it's not a dagger pointed at Japan, but it's also not something that the Japanese can be indifferent to, so they need to have a role. And all this I think is very important to the U.S., that we make sure our allies, especially Japan and South Korea, feel that as we go forward, we're doing it in the spirit of the alliances.

**Haenle:** And I understand prime minister Abe will be traveling to Washington meet with President Trump before he goes to the summit. What do you think President Abe's message to President Trump will be?

**Hill:** If I were Prime Minister Abe speaking with President Trump, I would want to make sure he understands the full dimensions of these questions and Japan's particular interests here, and to make sure that it's going forward. And if I were Prime Minister Abe a I would want to be very supportive of the president as well. But as we go forward to make sure we do so in a sustainable way that will enhance our alliance with Japan. And I'm sure Prime Minister Abe will do something along those lines.

**Haenle:** When you and I were part of the six-party talks, the diplomacy would go from Tokyo to Seoul to Beijing, sometimes Pyongyang. And then you know, we were very tired, but we would travel on to Moscow because it was important at that point to keep the Russians on board in this six-party process. Right now, the U.S.-Russia relationship is about as low as it I've ever seen it. Is it important to keep Russia involved in these negotiations and in the diplomacy that we're planning?

**Hill:** I think it is, and I think diplomacy offers no refuge for the weary. I think you just have to keep at it. And I think it's important to understand that Russia also has an interest in this part of the world. It shares a border with North

Korea. It has aspirations in this part of the world. And I take its important in the context of these very troubled relations we have with Russia to look for areas points of light if you will where we can do things do things together and have a kind of shared interest. And I would hope the North Korean issue should could be one of those. Because I have no doubt that Russia just like China, just like us and the rest of other countries has no interest in having a nuclear North Korea.

**Haenle:** The last country I want to ask you about is Singapore. Why is the summit in Singapore? I know the North Koreans have an embassy there. We know that because you and I met with the North Koreans in Singapore. Singapore has official relations with North Korea. The Singaporean foreign minister apparently is traveling to North Korea today. What are Singapore's interests in all this? And why in your view is the summit taking place there?

**Hill:** I think Singapore uh has always been more important than its size may indicate, but it's also been more important because of its location. And it has uh over the course of the centuries, it's been a place where civilizations have met. And I think Singapore has a great interest in dealing with these problems. A great interest in reducing the tensions produced by these problems and therefore great interest in the U.S. and China working on things together. And ultimately, I think an interest in the whole, in all of Asia and trying to make sure that these problems are addressed in a way that helps Singapore and the rest of the country. I think it's an excellent venue. And you know, when I have looked at Singapore diplomats and talk to Singapore diplomats over the years, I think they're pretty darn good, so I think we're having it in a very good place.

**Haenle:** Well, let me end on the last question. I'm not going to ask you to pull your crystal ball out and to predict what we are gonna see on Tuesday. I don't know that anyone can do that, but what are you optimistic about and what are you concerned about going in?

**Hill:** Well, I'm optimistic that I think our president has understood the complexity of this issue and why it needs to be solved. It's not just about North Korea. It's about relationships across the Asia-Pacific, as we have just

suggested with Singapore. So I think our president is coming to understand that. I think it's important to understand what happened before you, and I think it's important to respect the efforts of your predecessors. And so I hope in the fullness of time, the president will come to understand that he needs to rely on the advice and wisdom of his predecessors, whether it's President Obama, President Bush, or President Clinton. And I think the sooner he does that, the sooner he can bring our country a little more together, and the sooner, frankly, he can address some of these complex problems. So perhaps one of my fervent hopes for this Singapore summit is that our president comes to understand that America really means something in this part of the world, and that an America that is united and that is able of deploy its values and strength is better for addressing these problems. So we'll have to see, and frankly we're going to know soon enough.

**Haenle:** I want to thank you for visiting the Carnegie–Tsinghua Center in Beijing this week and for joining the China and the World podcast. The timing for us worked out spectacularly. There are not many people like you that have the experience that you have to be able to come to Beijing and talk about these issues again. So thank you very much and look forward to having you back.

**Hill:** It almost makes you nostalgic about those days. Thank you.

**Haenle:** That's it for this edition of the Carnegie–Tsinghua China in the world Podcast. I encourage you to explore our site and see the work of all our scholars. Thank you for listening. And be sure to tune in next time.