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JOAN B. KROC INSTITUTE FOR PEACE & JUSTICE
University of San Diego
San Diego, California

Ambassador Christopher R. Hill

U.S. Policy in East Asia and the Pacific

Edited by Emiko Noma
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The mission of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice (IPJ) is to foster peace, cultivate justice and create a safer world. Through education, research and peacemaking activities, the IPJ offers programs that advance scholarship and practice in conflict resolution and human rights. The Institute for Peace & Justice, located at the University of San Diego, draws upon Catholic social teaching that sees peace as inseparable from justice and acts to prevent and resolve conflicts that threaten local, national and international peace. The IPJ was established in 2000 through a generous gift from the late Joan B. Kroc to the University of San Diego to create an institute for the study and practice of peace and justice. Programming began in early 2001 and the building was dedicated in December 2001 with a conference, “Peacemaking with Justice: Policy for the 21st Century.”

The Institute for Peace & Justice strives, in Joan B. Kroc’s words, to “not only talk about peace, but to make peace.” The IPJ offers its services to parties in conflict to provide mediation and facilitation, assessments, training and consultations. It advances peace with justice through work with members of civil society in zones of conflict and has a focus on mainstreaming women in peace processes.

The Women PeaceMakers Program brings into residence at the IPJ women who have been actively engaged in peacemaking in conflict areas around the world to document their stories, share experiences with others working in peacemaking, and allow time for reflection on their work.

A Master’s Program in Peace & Justice Studies trains future leaders in the field and will be expanded into the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, supported by a $50 million endowment from the estate of Mrs. Kroc.

WorldLink, a year-round educational program for high school students from San Diego and Baja California connects youth to global affairs.

Country programs, such as the Nepal project, offer wide-ranging conflict assessments, mediation and conflict resolution training workshops.

Community outreach includes speakers, films, art and opportunities for discussion between community members, academics and practitioners on issues of peace and social justice, as well as dialogue with national and international leaders in government, non-governmental organizations and the military.
JOAN B. KROC DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

Endowed in 2003 by a generous gift to the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice from the late Joan Kroc, philanthropist and international peace proponent, the Joan B. Kroc Distinguished Lecture Series is a forum for high-level national and international leaders and policy makers to share their knowledge and perspectives on issues related to peace and justice. The goal of the series is to deepen understanding of how to prevent and resolve conflict and promote peace with justice.

The Distinguished Lecture Series offers the community at large an opportunity to engage with leaders who are working to forge new dialogues with parties in conflict and who seek to answer the question of how to create an enduring peace for tomorrow. The series, which is held at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego, examines new developments in the search for effective tools to prevent and resolve conflict while protecting human rights and ensuring social justice.
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The New Nuclear Danger

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U.S. Department of State
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Former President of Ireland and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
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Former President of the Republic of Botswana
Perspectives into the Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Contemporary Peacebuilding Efforts

January 27, 2006  Ambassador Christopher R. Hill
U.S. Department of State
U.S. Policy in East Asia and the Pacific
BIOGRAPHY OF AMBASSADOR CHRISTOPHER R. HILL

Christopher R. Hill was sworn in as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs on April 8, 2005.

Ambassador Hill is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service whose most recent assignment was as Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. On February 14, 2005, he was named as the Head of the U.S. delegation to the Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear issue. Previously he has served as U.S. Ambassador to Poland (2000-2004), Ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia (1996-1999) and Special Envoy to Kosovo (1998-1999). He also served as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Southeast European Affairs in the National Security Council.

Earlier in his Foreign Service career, Ambassador Hill served tours in Belgrade, Warsaw, Seoul and Tirana, and on the Department of State’s Policy Planning staff and in the Department’s Operation Center. While on a fellowship with the American Political Science Association he served as a staff member for Congressman Stephen Solarz working on Eastern European issues. He also served as the Department of State’s Senior Country Officer for Poland. Ambassador Hill received the State Department’s Distinguished Service Award for his contributions as a member of the U.S. negotiating team in the Bosnia peace settlement, and was a recipient of the Robert S. Frasure Award for Peace Negotiations for his work on the Kosovo crisis. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Ambassador Hill served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Cameroon.

Ambassador Hill graduated from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine with a B.A. in Economics. He received a Master’s degree from the Naval War College in 1994. He speaks Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian and Albanian. Ambassador Hill is married and has three children.
INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR
CHRISTOPHER R. HILL

The following is an edited transcript of an interview with Ambassador Christopher Hill, conducted by Susan Shirk on January 27, 2006 at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice.

CH: Christopher Hill
SS: Susan Shirk

SS: When you were a kid, what did you think you were going to be when you grew up? Did you think you were going to be a peacemaker?

CH: I wanted to play second base for the Boston Red Sox.

SS: Wow, so it’s been a big disappointment to you.

CH: When that didn’t work out, I had to look at other things. I went off to the Peace Corps, and while I was in the Peace Corps, I took the Foreign Service Exam. After the Peace Corps, I did two more months in Africa as a contractor for AID [U.S. Agency for International Development], and then I got a call from the Foreign Service inviting me in. I started off having had only one job, and that was in the Peace Corps.

SS: So you’ve really been in the Foreign Service your whole life and you’ve served in a lot of different places, but a lot of time in the Balkans, right?

CH: That’s right. And that does go back to my childhood because my dad was a Foreign Service officer. I first went to Belgrade when I was five years old, six, seven, and left when I was eight years old. My first assignment in the Foreign Service by, sort of, wild happenstance was back to Belgrade. So that was kind of neat—I met my second grade teacher there.

SS: Oh, that’s great, that’s great. So your dad is still alive. Was he proud?

CH: Yes, I think he was pleased about it. So basically my career has been: I went off to the Balkans, then I went to Poland, then I went to Seoul, Korea in the mid-'80s.

SS: As a political officer?

CH: As an economic officer. Then I went back to the Balkans during the 1990s, and then back to Poland from 2000 to 2004, and then back to Korea. Two laps around the track.

SS: Well, the Balkans are so complicated that they’ve given their name to a verb. I’m wondering how the Korean problem looks in comparison to the Balkan problems.

CH: The Balkans are complicated, and I think a lot of problems are complicated, but that doesn’t mean they’re impossible to understand, and that doesn’t mean that they’re necessarily things that are intractable. But you do need to ask yourself the question, why does something happen? You have to be kind of respectful of the situation, and when you see a situation, it’s not usually just one factor that has caused the situation: it’s a whole bunch of things. When you start to intervene and start to look at ways to come out with a different outcome, I just think you have to be respectful of how it got there and you have to be a little modest about your ability to change it.

SS: In the case of Korea right now, you’re engaged in what many people think is one of the most difficult tasks of trying to convince North Korea to give up its nuclear program. What do you see as the biggest challenge in that task?

1 Susan Shirk is Professor of Political Science in the Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, San Diego and Research Director at the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation.
CH: Well, first of all, Korea is one of the great tragedies of the mid-20th century, and certainly any Korean who talks about the peninsula feels this sense of tragedy. And to some extent among Koreans, there’s a feeling that somehow their country, their lands, were divided during a period of great weakness for them. So it’s kind of understandable that often they look outside for the reason why their nation, their peninsula, was divided. It’s a source of really deep-seated anxiety, and I suspect that that anxiety extends to people in North Korea. I mean, anyone who has seen the scenes of family unification, as I did when I first got there in ’85—a searing image, I mean, you can never forget seeing families unified, in that case by the Red Cross in 1985, for the first time—knows it’s a very emotional issue. We need to respect the emotion of the issue. As we approach it, we have to understand that we’re not going to be able to see this in an identical way as the South Koreans are going to see it, and certainly from the point of view of the North Koreans, it’s a whole other world. So it’s a very complex, psychological problem, quite apart from the geopolitics of it.

SS: You think this aspiration for reunification is a big part of the subtext of the problem?

CH: And I would emphasize subtext. I think people look at this in different slices of their consciences. I think for many South Koreans, they’ve looked at the economic magnitude of what North Korea, at their doorstep or in their lap, would mean in terms of paying for it.

SS: They’re not too eager to do that.

CH: Exactly. If you look at the West German experience with East Germany—by the way, that’s something the South Koreans have studied to death; I mean, they send whole delegations over there all the time—it was enormous, and it is still a tremendous burden to Germany. I think the South Koreans are very aware of that. They have a per capita income some thirty times more than the North Koreans, and the idea of absorbing 20 million people with that kind of per capita income is very frightening.

SS: So that’s a contradiction.

CH: That’s a contradiction. Absolutely. But that said, the Koreans really feel that they have the right to determine how they want to live, whether it’s in a confederal arrangement or more likely, an eventual unification, they feel it’s their job, their decision. We, on the other hand, have a particular issue in North Korea, which is the development of these nuclear weapons—by the way, these nuclear weapons have been developed for 20, 30 years; this didn’t just start with the Bush administration.

SS: The 1980s.

CH: Exactly. We have to be very concerned about this. We have to be concerned about what North Korean nuclear weapons could mean to the region; we have to be concerned about what they could mean for proliferation elsewhere. And those are issues—the nuclear issue and some of the other issues, ballistic missiles, etc.—these are issues that go beyond the peninsula. That’s where we have to kind of work things out with the South Koreans.

SS: This Six-Party Talk format is a pretty novel experience for the Americans, although in several of these Balkan negotiations you’ve been involved in, you always had partners. Do you want to say a little something about the dynamics of trying to coordinate among the five as to how to move forward?

CH: Well, there are advantages and disadvantages obviously. I do believe the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, but it doesn’t mean that it’s easy. Often what you’re doing, in regard to the contact group in the Balkans, for example, often the negotiation was not so much between us and one of the warring factions, or the three warring factions which was the case in Bosnia, but it was negotiations between us and the other Europeans. But we understood that the Europeans brought a lot to the table. They brought a lot to the table in terms of what they were prepared to do economically—they’ve got these countries on their feet; they brought a lot to the table in terms of what they were prepared
to do institutionally to bring these countries eventually into the European Union. So the notion of a U.S. negotiation with these warring factions, in my view, would not have solved the problem, or created the platform to stabilize or to have a solid framework for the future. We needed them, but often it was kind of difficult to negotiate because we had different perspectives on it. The French were sometimes more solicitous of the Serb position than others were; the Germans were sometimes more solicitous of the Croat position than others were; in fact, I would say the burden of history weighed very much on a lot of the participants.

SS: By “burden of history” you mean old grudges?

CH: Old grudges and old alliances. It was not an impossible thing to understand, but Americans needed to spend a little time understanding it. Sometimes Americans consider history as what happened last Tuesday, and that’s not going to do. So we had to understand that. I think as we move to Korea, this, too, is not an American problem, this is a problem for the whole region. I mean, if North Korea is allowed to keep its nuclear weapons, what is going to happen in Japan? I’d like to think they would not go nuclear, but what is going to happen? I can’t answer that. What is going to happen in South Korea? I mean, what does this do to the region? So we need the participation of the neighbors, but I think we also need to understand that everybody has a different perspective on North Korea. I mean, the Chinese have a very complex picture when they look at North Korea: they see an ally, they see a country where the communist party in North Korea has a long history with the communist party in China—what would that mean if you don’t have a communist party in North Korea? What would that do to the kind of relationships? How does that affect China’s civil military relationships within China? The military in China has had relations with the military in North Korea. It’s complicated stuff. It’s something you’ve got to figure out if you’re going to make progress.

SS: Actually, if you think about it, it’s kind of like three levels of negotiations, starting with the domestic ones to get everybody on the same page within our own government; then you’ve got the one with the other countries you’re trying to work with; and then you’ve got the target country, in this case, North Korea.

CH: That’s right. Three levels or a three-ring circus. I mean, basically your best diplomacy should start at home. You’ve got to work the inter-agency process. You’ve got to make sure that if you’re the negotiator that the other agencies feel comfortable, otherwise you’re going to have problems back at home. And when you have problems at home, you can’t do your job abroad.

SS: Do you think that American negotiators, not just in the North Korea situation, but typically, are delegated more discretion than negotiators from other countries?

CH: It’s hard to say. It kind of depends. I’ve been in negotiations when my boss back in Washington just says, “Do the best you can. You’re going to get credit for trying in this one.” And then I’ve had negotiations where I feel like I have some sort of helmet cam on where they want to tell me every little block and every move I’m supposed to make on the field. To be sure, you have people that want real time updates by telephone; then you have people who say, “Hey, we trust you. Just go out and get it done. Phone in when you need help.” So it is very important that you have a good relationship with people in Washington.

SS: Now, in the case of the Kosovo negotiation, the threat of force—American use of force—was very important to get Milosevic and the Serbs to finally agree. And we had to not just threaten, but actually use force. In the case of Korea, back in ’94, there was a real threat to use force. It doesn’t appear that there is one right now. Is that a problem? Does that make things more difficult?

CH: Usually you want a threat of force in order to prevent having to use force. So the best threat we had was in Kosovo and alas, that was the one place where we really had to use it. In short, in Kosovo—I keep saying the problems were more complex—basically Milosevic was not going to give up Kosovo without a fight. Whether you threaten it or didn’t threaten it, ultimately, you’re probably
going to have to use force because of the relationship of the average Serb peasant to Kosovo. But in terms of those three issues, I think you have to look at also the stage of war termination. In Bosnia, the war had been going on for some time, and there was certainly a sense that the parties were ready.

SS: Weariness. Exhaustion.

CH: Yes, they were weary and ready for a settlement. So in Bosnia—and my friend, Dick Holbrooke, would not like to hear me say this—but in Bosnia, I always felt we were absolutely going to get a deal. In Kosovo, given that it had been a pretty low intensity—and I would argue also a low-IQ—warfare there was no real sense of exhaustion or weariness.

SS: They still had a lot in them.

CH: They had a lot of fight in them. I just did not believe we were going to get there because I could understand what we could offer the Albanians; I couldn't figure out what we could offer Serbia. For example, given that Milosevic was in power, it was not viable to say to the Serbs that you can choose between Kosovo and the European Union, for example, European Union membership, because European Union membership was not on the table.

SS: So no carrots for Milosevic?

CH: I just couldn't see what we had to offer him, apart from him giving up a part of what Serbs consider the heart of Serbia: to ask Milosevic to do that was to ask him to cut his entire political base out from under him and he wasn't prepared to do that. So in Kosovo, I really had the sense that we were not going to get there. Bosnia, I thought we'd get there; Kosovo, I thought we would not get there. And in Korea, I just don't know. And the reason I don't know is I don't understand what is going on in the minds of the North Korean leadership. I do know that if you rank in order the top one hundred problems in North Korea, nuclear weapons aren't going to solve any of them. I do know that the weapons program they have in North Korea is something they thought—that many North Koreans feel—is a great symbol of strength, but actually it's been quite a weight on their shoulders and has really done a lot of damage to that country. So the logic of it is to get out of this thing and get a good price and get out of this mess. Fundamentally, I don't know if what we have on offer is what they want, really want.

SS: A lot of people believe that North Korea genuinely feels threatened by the United States, although it's always very hard for us to understand how that could be. They often argue that our action in Iraq made them feel even more threatened, although of course the nuclear program started a long time ago. When you're dealing with the North Koreans, do you think that's a genuine feeling, or is that just something that's a good excuse, or just a negotiating tactic?

CH: Well, whether they feel threatened by us or not, this weapons program has been going on for 25 years. I don't quite understand that if they feel threatened by us, what nuclear weapons are going to do about it.

SS: Because they're more threatened if they have them.

CH: Exactly. I don't quite understand the dynamics. If they're worried that we're going to attack them, then what? Are they going to attack one of their neighbors with nuclear weapons? Realistically speaking, I don't think they can fire off nuclear weapons at anybody. The notion that these are some sort of ultimate defensive weapon for North Korea I don't quite buy. I think if they really were concerned about the U.S. threat, they'd try to reach a settlement with us, and they know a settlement is quite possible with us.

SS: Is it easy for us to convince them that we're not a threat and that we are ready to have a normal relationship with them? Isn't that a challenge? And then on the other hand, isn't it a challenge for them to convince us

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2 Richard Holbrooke was Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs during the conflict in Bosnia. He helped lead the negotiations that resulted in the Dayton Peace Accords which ended the war in the former Yugoslavia.
that they really are willing to denuclearize after this long period of trying to develop weapons and cheating on the agreements?

CH: They’ve been at it for 25 years, and so to expect them to give up these weapons, it would be a very big step. They’ve agreed in principle to do it, and it was encouraging in September; in the Beijing agreement they agreed in principle. But clearly these weapons have been something that they’ve spent a lot of money on, precious resources on, so it would obviously be a big step to get rid of these weapons. But the notion that they’re being an ultimate defense against a U.S. attack, really, I just don’t think stands up under scrutiny because if they were really worried about us attacking them, they would have been interested in a negotiation a long time ago: CBMs [confidence building measures], some de-confliction of forces in the DMZ, the demilitarized zone area. And they’ve never shown much of an interest in that sort of thing. On the contrary, they’ve been really quite hostile during these two and a half decades.

SS: Certainly we know a lot less about North Korea than the other countries you were dealing with in the other negotiations, so that uncertainty must make things very difficult.

CH: I’m sure to some extent the North Koreans regard their own opaqueness as some sort of strength: by being hard to figure out that gives them some sort of advantage. I can imagine a sense of paranoia looking around the world and seeing the number of natural allies they might have decreasing and decreasing, but that’s not a reason to get nuclear weapons, that’s a reason to change your ways.

SS: But of course their conventional forces are much weaker than they were. They’re so poor.

CH: They’re so poor and they have difficulties modernizing, so I agree, they’re going to have troubles keeping that going. But it’s unclear what benefit they can get from nuclear weapons.

SS: In this case, do you see that the carrot is big enough?

CH: I think that what we’ve got on offer, if they’re interested in developing their country, would be very attractive. There’s no question it would be a road toward a much brighter future, and with a multilateral agreement—I think it’s the multilateral agreement that gives them the sense of security that some people say they need. I think it’s just a very fundamental question for them about giving up a weapons system whose purpose is to give them prestige that they otherwise do not get.

SS: Talk a little bit about the relationship between the United States and South Korea. South Korea is our ally and we fought alongside South Korea, and yet, public opinion in Korea is now as critical of the United States as it is in a lot of other countries. So is this just the casualty of the backlash against Iraq or is there more to it than that, and is that making a problem for our efforts vis a vis North Korea?

CH: First of all, I’m very optimistic about our relationship with South Korea. I think we can have a really excellent relationship with that country. I think from South Korea’s strategic point of view—they lie between two great powers in Japan and China—and from their strategic point of view, it seems to me to make a lot of sense that they maintain a relationship with a distant power. I think a strong U.S. relationship is a good thing for South Korea, and I think many South Koreans—if you look at the polling data—believe in that. By polling data I’m referring to when the public is asked about the views of the U.S. alliance. Now that said, it’s a different South Korea. It’s not your father’s South Korea. It’s a different country. I think we need to understand that. There’s definitely been a generational shift there. There’s also been a tremendous democratic shift there and the country is truly a democracy. I think rather than wringing our hands about that, we should celebrate that fact.

3 The Beijing agreement, signed on 19 September 2005, was the result of the Six-Party Talks, of which Ambassador Hill led the American team. He discusses the process of the talks further in his lecture.
Now to be sure, South Korea is a bit of a red-blue situation going on: you ask two South Koreans something, you’ll get three different answers. To some extent there’s some polarization, but there’s just a lot of “opinionization.” People are very political there; they have really lively newspapers, both left and right; and I think we just need to understand that. Now I must say, when I hear people talk about the good old days, I remember the good old days as not being so good. I remember lots of problems dealing with the South Koreans, so I’m not sure we were always on the same page with the South Koreans. I remember being there in 1985 during the Chun Doo-hwan government and that was no fun for our relationship. So I’m not sure it was ever that easy, and certainly now there are challenges, and certainly we have to approach things differently and work with them, but I’m a real optimist about our relations there.

**SS:** The number of South Koreans studying Chinese is huge now, and the economic relationship and the political relationship, but even the strategic relationship, between South Korea and China has really developed very fast. How do you see that? Do you think that’s a natural thing and is that compatible with the U.S.-ROK [Republic of Korea] alliance?

**CH:** I think it’s very natural and I think it’s totally understandable when you consider how historically close the Koreans have been to the Chinese people—to China rather—and the artificial barrier that existed for some 40 years, so I think it was entirely natural that once relations were re-established, there was a lot of Korean interest in China. But, you know, Koreans still comprise one of the largest student populations in the U.S.; there is still a great deal of English spoken in Korea, and I have no doubt that English remains the number one language of anyone who wants to learn a foreign language there. So the fact that Korea has a greatly improved relationship with China, I think is very much in our interest and Korea’s interest and, frankly, in China’s interest. It doesn’t bother me at all.

**SS:** Do you see two camps in the Six-Party Talks: the harder camp and the softer camp—the harder camp being the U.S. and Japan, the softer camp being the Chinese and the South Koreans, and the Russians not being terribly active one way or the other?

**CH:** On January 27th, the Japanese are announcing their schedule for their upcoming bilateral talks with the North Koreans. I think you’re going to see a lot of effort by the Japanese to make some progress in that channel. Rather than look at it in hard-line and soft-line, I’d rather look at it as those who see this as a long-term proposition and something that’s going to take many years, versus other countries that are more concerned with making progress quickly. Our concern is clearly on the nuclear side. We have no confidence really in the North Koreans not proliferating; we’ve seen them out there selling all kinds of strange things to strange people. So the notion that they would never do this—it’s interesting, they would not put in any anti-proliferation features in the agreement because they wanted to get some compensating measures for it. I think we have some very legitimate, real concerns about proliferation. I sometimes think that countries that are so close to North Korea and see all the other stuff maybe don’t spend enough time being worried about the proliferation.

**SS:** Let me ask you one last question. In the Balkan negotiations, it seems to me that in most of them, the negotiators would go some place and they’d stay there for a long time until they made some progress. They negotiated for extended periods, and certainly that’s the way arms control negotiations in Geneva have always been. How do you feel about this episodic—a few days this month and wait another three months—approach as you are doing in the Six-Party Talks? Is it going to work?

**CH:** Earlier in the first three rounds in the Six-Party Talks, they just did these three-and-out negotiations: three days and then they were done. In the fourth round, it was my strong view, which I really worked closely with my South Korean and Japanese counterparts on, that once we got them to the table, we shouldn’t just let them go after three days—we ought to keep them there. And we did. We made a lot of progress, I thought.
SS: It was six or seven days?

CH: No, it was more like 11 days and nights. When it was clear the North Koreans needed guidance from North Korea, and it was clear we weren't going to get there unless they got home for a recess, we agreed to a recess, but we also said they had to come back in September, where we spent another eight days maybe. We stayed a long time until we got something. And that was a departure from the previous three days and out. It's very clear that the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] negotiators go with fairly limited discretion. But the issue was to really stick with it until we got something, and we did. We would have done more of that just before, in the beginning of the fifth round in November, but we had APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] coming up, and frankly speaking, countries weren't quite ready to put forward comprehensive programs, implementation programs. I hope that when we get going again it won't be three days, but we'll stay until we get something.
know whether it was the insular environment I grew up in in Tennessee, but
this was really novel to me.

Now, one thing which is not in Chris’ bio that I am sure he would want me
to say is that he was a lacrosse star at Bowdoin. I think our senior year we were
New England champs or something. Another thing that is not in his bio is that
to this day, I cannot listen to John Denver without thinking of Chris wailing
out “Rocky Mountain High” on his guitar—crooning out “Rocky Mountain
High.”

Upon graduation, Chris went to the Peace Corps, and went to Cameroon.
Fortunately for Chris, he met his wife, Patty, there. And I wish I could tell my
younger daughter, who is interested in the Foreign Service, that immediately
after the Peace Corps, Chris became an ambassador. But, alas, that is not quite
the case. Now forgive me, but I am going to read a little bit from this official
bio: on February 14 of 2005, Chris was named as head of the U.S. delegation
to the Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear issue. He has previously
served as the U.S. Ambassador to Poland, the Ambassador to the Republic
of Macedonia, and Special Envoy to Kosovo. He has received the State
Department’s Distinguished Service Award for his contributions as a member
of the U.S. negotiating team in Bosnia, and was a recipient of the Robert S.
Frasure Award for Peace Negotiations for his work on the Kosovo crisis.

I think I should say a little side note here: my family and I were fortunate
each to visit Patty and Chris in Warsaw during his ambassadorship there,
and I have to say, I was concerned because there were two things that bothered
me. First of all, Chris beat me in ping pong, which I never recall him doing
at Bowdoin; and secondly, I saw that he speaks Polish, Serbo-Croatian,
Macedonian, and Albanian. I was trying to reconcile this with the Chris I knew

Petrified is what I would be if my
college roommate were introducing
me. However, Chris, my wife has put
me under threat of major duress that
only a husband could understand, so
I am going to be nice.

Chris and I met, I would guess,
the first day we both entered Bowdoin
[College]. We lived across the hall
from one another. I think Chris’
sophomore year, he took a year at
Smith. I could never understand why
anybody would want to go to an all-
girls’ school for an exchange year, but
nevertheless, Chris decided it might
be a good idea. By senior year, Chris
and I and these two other gentlemen
roomed together in IIB in the senior
center at Bowdoin College. Well, we
spent a lot of time—I know this is a topical point here at the university—in
the student center, especially late at night, I mean, we would brave sub-zero
temperatures to go have, as I recall, this rather large chocolate chip cookie.
Bob and Ted and I would mostly discuss when our next date was going to
be; actually, if there was going to be another date. Chris—not that he was
immune to the social ills of Bowdoin—could often be found in discussion
with a professor, whose name I could not pronounce, from a country I was
clueless on the map where it was, about a situation I had never heard of. My
earliest memories of Chris were his interests in foreign policy, and I do not
at college, and I was really concerned there might be some kind of nefarious identity theft going on here, but I do feel comfortable at this point that this really is indeed Chris Hill.

Chris and Patty have three children: Clara, Amy and Nat. Clara is doing a post-graduate year in Poland at the moment. Amy is at Wellesley [College]. And Nat is with defense intelligence outside of Washington, kind of keeping it in the family. Anyway, Chris has done 11B from Bowdoin College very proud, and I am delighted to introduce to you Ambassador Chris Hill.

U.S. Policy in East Asia and the Pacific

Ambassador Christopher R. Hill
Thank you, I think I need to take some more blood pressure medication. No, that was OK, that was good, Bob. I just was not sure what was coming next, but it was good, it was fine. Anyway, it is great to be here, it is great to be out of Washington. I really enjoy that airport—you know, we were landing, and I saw these buildings on the left and buildings on the right, and I thought, “My God, we are going to park the airplane in a parking lot.” But, I cannot wait to do that again: knuckles are turning pink again. It was exciting.

It is truly great to be here to the University of San Diego. I know how engaged this college, this university, is on some of the issues that are dear to my heart—although not when I was in 11B; I think I talked mainly about lacrosse back then, with a minor in frisbee. I really am so pleased to see the interest in foreign affairs, the interest in international relations, and the interest in the study of peace and justice because I really think that our country faces a lot of problems out there in the world, and I think it is very important we have people trained to deal with those problems. Those problems are not going to go away; in fact, they are going to become more and more numerous and we have got to deal with them. And we are not going to be able to deal with them by sending our military to each and every one of those problems because there are too many for our military to handle, and besides that, we need to use our military for situations where only the military can take care of the problem. I am sort of an old-fashioned guy, I think we ought to try to see what we can do diplomatically, and I think we need to gear up a generation of Americans capable of doing that, so I really applaud what the Institute here is doing, what the University here is doing. I really feel very positive about it.

I am going to talk a little about U.S. relations in an area of the world that I think is pretty important to us because for something like two centuries, people have been predicting “the century of Asia,” and now, I think, in this 21st century—ready or not—it is here. There is no part of the globe that holds more benefits and challenges for the United States than the East Asia/Pacific area. It is home to some of our most stalwart security and trade partners. It is home to China, and China is rapidly assuming a prominent place in the global stage. It is far and away our most important relationship in the world. The region of East Asia/Pacific counts for nearly a third of the earth’s population, 25 percent of the global GDP, some 27 percent of our exports, 37 percent of our agricultural exports—in all, some $750 billion in two-way trade with the U.S. In every regard—geographically, geopolitically, militarily, diplomatically, economically and commercially—East Asia is vital to the national security interests of the United States. We have to be out there, we have to be dealing with those situations, we have to be dealing with the challenges there.

There is no part of the globe that holds more benefits and challenges for the United States than the East Asia/Pacific area.

To be sure, there are some very favorable trends out there in East Asia/Pacific. Democracy is very much on the march. We have had successful elections in countries that never dreamed they could have elections in any event, let alone successful ones. We have had successful elections in countries like Mongolia, in South Korea, in Taiwan—just a few years ago, the idea of free and fair elections was unheard of, and yet those countries have done extremely well. Thailand is coming along with that. And of course, we have some very old and very good partners, including Japan and Australia. Prosperity is growing in the region. It is fueled by China’s rapid development. You know, for years and years, decades and decades, we looked for a second engine of development: there was the U.S. and who else? And now we have that second engine of development: it is called China. So China has really helped bring up those countries in the world. We see the recovery among the Southeast Asian states, the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] states, after the financial crisis of 1997. These economies are really stronger than ever.
In addition, as East Asia has grown economically, I think it has come together as a region. And so we are seeing expanding regional cooperation—politically, economically and culturally—and through a number of institutions, some of which we are members, some of which we are observers, and some of which we, frankly, don’t know what to do with. But we have seen an ASEAN in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and now, in the East Asia Summit, we are seeing these countries come together in a way that I think could not have been anticipated only a few years ago.

Finally, we see an East Asia that is really, largely, at peace. There has not been a single major military conflict there for over 25 years, and we want to keep it that way. We have to work very hard with a number of the countries there. We need to be very engaged in the countries because ultimately, if we ignore those places and step away, we will find that there are problems that happen and the problems will leave us in a worse position because we will be coming in late. So very much I think the Asia century is upon us and now, we have to deal with this and make sure that we can be a part of this growth.

I would like to talk about the three main sub-regions—that is, Southeast Asia, China and Northeast Asia. In Southeast Asia, we have some partners that have done well. We continue to work very closely with Singapore; indeed, we are treaty-allied with Singapore. But we are seeing some new partners that have emerged recently, namely Vietnam. I was in Vietnam just a couple of weeks ago. In fact, someone tonight came up to me and said, “You know, I cannot quite get used to the idea of having a friendly relationship with Vietnam.” And my response was, “Neither could I,” because for my generation, we look at Vietnam as a country that, in many ways, destroyed or harmed our generation. And yet, Vietnam is very much, very clearly, making the right decision. It is moving in the right way; it is looking for ways—and has made a strategic decision—to introduce a market economy. It wants to make the right decisions in making sure that people have economic freedom. And I am convinced that it will also make the decision on political freedom. So we are looking at a country that only a few years ago seemed like another communist laggard that was unable to move ahead, that was continuing to imprison people for their political views and their religious views, and now, we see a country that is really on the march, and in many respects, it is a country that is really taxiing out to the runway to be the next Asian country that takes off. And we want to be a part of that.

Vietnam has a big interest in keeping the U.S. engaged in Southeast Asia. Vietnam, for reasons that go back centuries, does not want to see a Southeast Asia where the only main player there, the only large country there, is China. They want to see the U.S. also be a part of it. So when one goes to Vietnam, one sits down and one has some serious discussions about how the U.S. can be more engaged—what can we do to work with Vietnam, not only bilaterally, but also in its status as a major member of the ASEAN countries? It is really quite heartwarming to see this development, and we want to see it continue. President Bush will be in Vietnam in November; I am hoping Secretary [of State Condoleezza] Rice will be there some time in the summer. This will be a real opportunity to continue this relationship, and in a way that will be very surprising to the general public of the United States: that this country which we are accustomed to seeing the word “war” come after Vietnam, is a country that is really making the right decision. I think we can look back at the sacrifice in this country—those 50-odd thousand names that are on that wall in Washington—and realize that it was a sacrifice that I think led this country, ultimately, in the right direction. So I think that is one of the most exciting things going on in Southeast Asia.

Another, looking over on the other end of Southeast Asia, is Indonesia. This is far and away the world’s largest Muslim population. It is a country of some 225 million people, of whom some 90 percent are Muslim. It is very important that we get this place right and that it do the right thing, because if Indonesia is not successful in developing its civil society and developing its democracy and developing its economy, we could have very serious problems here for years to come. So there again, we work very hard bilaterally. In fact, Secretary Rice will be going there in March, and we will continue to make sure that Indonesia is heading in the right direction. Again, if that country of 220, 230 million people can succeed, I think it will be an example for many of the Islamic states in the Middle East to take some heart that it can be done; you can
have an Islamic state together with a market economy, together with democratic institutions, and make it work.

So Vietnam and Indonesia are two countries we need to work very carefully with. Thailand is also a very old friend, a very old ally, and there, too, we have to continue to ensure that that is the case. Malaysia is a country with whom we have had a very troubled relationship over the last 20 years, and now with new leadership, it is clearly a country that we can have a good dialogue with. I was just there some 12 days ago. We had very good discussions with the government there; we have some real common endeavors—Malaysia is very interested in a successful Middle East process. I think that is another country we can work with. It is a smaller country than Indonesia—only some 20 million people—but with a very large Muslim population. It is very much a Muslim country, and I think there, too, we can have a relationship that will serve our interests very well.

I think we can be encouraged by our ability to have a strong dialogue with China.

So, overall, in Southeast Asia, we see excellent bilateral relations developing; but perhaps more importantly, we see these countries coming together as never before in multilateral structures—through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, through ASEAN—and there, too, we want to encourage this type of ability to have multilateral structures. These are countries that have not been used to that in the past, and so we want to work with these structures to see what can be done to lower trade barriers, to ensure that ASEAN—which together, those ten ASEAN countries comprise our fifth largest trading partner in the world—that we can make sure our businesses feel that they can invest there, that they have a home there, and those countries can also feel that they can export to us and we can continue this very strong economic relationship. So that is something we are working very hard to develop.

We want to make sure that as we work in Southeast Asia, we do it in a way that does not create a competition with the Chinese. We find that with China, there is a host of misunderstandings on how we deal with these countries, and in fact, in addition to the misunderstandings, we have some flat-out disagreements with the Chinese. And so as we sit with the Chinese, we try to work hard to identify where we disagree and to talk this through. We have a new senior dialogue that has been under way in recent months under the aegis of our Deputy Secretary of State Bob Zoellick and his Chinese counterpart, Dai Bingguo [Executive Vice Foreign Minister], and they work together and work on the various issues that we need to have understanding with the Chinese. For example, in Southeast Asia, there is the country Burma, and we do not see much good coming out of Burma these days. It is a very repressive government, a government that has really, I think, denied its people certain basic rights, a government that has really failed to develop economically; and yet, we see China increasingly working with Burma, buying up mineral resources in Burma and otherwise creating a situation where no matter how tough our message is in Burma, and no matter how tough the message is of the other ASEAN countries to Burma, Burma is not listening. Burma is listening more to China. So we need to have a conversation with the Chinese, and we are developing the ability to have this type of conversation.

We are working very closely with the Chinese to ensure we do not have misunderstandings on what China is doing in terms of buying oil capacity. China is very active in East Africa, it is very active in Latin America, in terms of gaining mineral rights. So we need to work with the Chinese, and we are doing that. I think we can be encouraged by our ability to have a strong dialogue with China. To be sure, China—which has a surplus with the United States that is closing in on some $200 billion annually—is going to have to understand that in developing the U.S. market, they need to develop it with a sense of developing it in a sustainable way. China needs to understand that when thousands of Americans are losing their jobs every year to restructuring, to transformation in the economy, and frankly, to imports, that more and more,
Americans look at these difficult transformations and they blame China for them. Even if you took away all the surplus that China has, you would still have a rather substantial deficit with the rest of the world as well. So China needs to understand that they are very much becoming the focus of the frustrations of many Americans—at our inability to safeguard manufacturing jobs—and I think China needs to develop a sustainable notion of our market. So that is an enormous challenge when we deal with the Chinese.

Another enormous challenge that we have with them is dealing with the human rights record. It is very clear that China has a different view of how their political process is going to develop, and it is quite different from ours, and quite different from many of our allies. So here, too, we have some fundamental disagreements, but we have to keep talking to them; we have to be engaged with them.

I would say one of the areas where we have been engaged—and I would say fairly successfully engaged with the Chinese—is through something called the Six-Party Talks, which I have been very much involved in with North Korea. China understands that ultimately, if North Korea is to develop nuclear weapons and is to develop a nuclear arsenal, that this will be absolutely unacceptable to the United States. It is destabilizing in the region; the Chinese understand that. It will cause other countries to be tempted to have nuclear weapons, and it will create the prospect that North Korea, a country that has really not shown any scruples about selling anything to anyone, could well proliferate nuclear material. So I think China has some of the same concerns we do, and I think it is important that China understands—and they do understand—what our views are on that: that ultimately, we want to work with China through the Six-Party process—that is, a process that involves China, the United States, South Korea, Japan and Russia; a process that basically says the North Korean nuclear issue is not just a U.S. problem, but rather a problem for the entire region.

We work day and night with the Chinese, who are the host of this process, to see if we can get to the point where the North Koreans will understand
there is no choice but to give up these weapons. We have, together with the Chinese and the other partners, put on the table, I think, a pretty good proposal to the North Koreans. It is a proposal whose central feature is to say to the North Koreans that if you give up your nuclear ambitions, we will show you an open road to international recognition, international integration. The concern we have is whether that is in fact what the North Koreans want, because the North Koreans have traditionally used not only this belligerence in developing a nuclear weapons capability, but also a sense that somehow their country is surrounded by enemies and what is safe for North Korea is to be isolated. So the concern is whether what we are offering them is in fact what they want.

So we are working very hard on this with our partners. As you may know, we reached an agreement in September with the six parties—the first time we reached any kind of agreement among the six parties, the first time the six parties agreed on a single piece of paper—which was that in a list of principles, North Korea is willing to give up its weapons, and give up all of its nuclear programs; and by the way, that does not just mean weapons-related programs because if we agreed only to weapons-related programs, we would get into protracted arguments about which nuclear program involves weapons, and which involves something else, so what they agreed to was all nuclear programs. And now we come to the real hard part which is to sit down and figure out how to implement that.

We are going to have to work very hard with our partners to get the North Koreans to agree to a declaration of what precisely they have, and it is a declaration we want to work with them on—that is, we do not want them to give us a piece of paper which is wholly inadequate and then declare the whole process void. We want to make sure that when they put their declaration on the table, it is a complete declaration and it acknowledges all of their nuclear programs. And we have real agreement from the Chinese and the other partners on this. And when we get that declaration, then we would look for a dismantlement effort; we would look to identify U.S. funds and other funds that would fund the process of taking nuclear materials out of the country, fund the process of dismantling the nuclear reactor in Yongbyon, a graphite-moderated reactor that was originally purchased from the Soviet Union starting in the 1950s. It is going to take some time because the answer to the question of how to take apart a nuclear reactor is “slowly.” You don’t just take a wrecking ball to it, so this is a process that will take some years.

But if we can get there and then begin a process of offering economic assistance through international financial institutions and otherwise bringing North Korea into the world—North Korea is a country of some 20 million people, it is a country that has really been left to the side in international development, especially development in Northeast Asia; it is truly a tragic situation. It is a government that has failed miserably to meet its people’s needs. And if anyone thought there was any competition between North Korea and South Korea, well, that is long ago over. In the 1960s, North Korea had per capita incomes that were higher than South Korea; today, North Korea’s per capita incomes are something like one-thirtieth of those of South Korea. It is over as far as competition. The only question is how to deal with the situation, how to get them out of the nuclear business, and how to get them started in the right direction. This is a problem of great trauma to the South Koreans, obviously, because for many South Koreans it is a very difficult proposition on how to integrate North Korea. After all, they looked at the experience in Germany, an experience where East Germany had some one-third per capita income, rather than one-thirtieth—they do not want to have a situation where they have 20 million North Koreans show up at their doorstep, resulting in the impoverishment of South Korea.

At the same time, for the South Koreans it is a deeply emotional issue. You know, the Chinese often talk about the fact that they have been divided from Taiwan, and this happened during what the Chinese refer to as a “century of shame,” and how difficult this is for the Chinese—that they do not have sovereignty, or they do not have control of Taiwan. But imagine for China, or anyone else, to have a demilitarized zone running across the central spine of the country. Imagine the difficulty that any country would have with this situation,
When some people see the U.S., Japan and Australia working together and dealing with strategic issues, they think that this is somehow some effort to contain China. This is not the purpose of the strategic dialogue. We want to be able to talk to Japan and Australia, like-minded states, about problems the world over. We want both of those countries, especially Japan, to have a good relationship with China because the current situation where Japan and China are at loggerheads over historical issues is not helpful to us and certainly not helpful to them. So we encourage Japan to figure out how to do better with its neighbors in Northeast Asia, especially China, but also South Korea. And we feel if we can get there and see some improvement there, we can see that Japan will be able to play a greater and even more positive role in the region.

We cannot allow North Korea to be building these nuclear weapons. It is truly destabilizing to the region; it is truly affecting our interests.

Finally, let me say that with respect to our relationships in the Pacific—that is, with Japan and moving south to Australia—we have excellent relations with both those countries. Japan is the world’s second largest economy; it is still a force to be reckoned with, even though it is making room in the region for China, now the world’s fifth largest economy. But Japan is a country that we work with very closely, not so much in Asia, not so much in the neighborhood there in Asia, but in many other places. Japan is the second largest donor in the United Nations. It is a very serious player in the United Nations, and for this reason, Japan has been very interested in gaining a seat in the Security Council, and we have supported that aspiration for a seat in the Security Council. Japan does take a great burden in underdeveloped countries; it has assumed a burden in the Middle East in terms of providing assistance there. Japan has been helpful to us in Iraq and elsewhere, and so we stay in very close contact with the Japanese. And for that reason, we have a strategic dialogue with Japan and Australia.

I would just like to mention one other issue that as I went through this geographic swath, I skipped, which was Taiwan. Taiwan is a country that we do not recognize as a sovereign state. It has some 20 million people. It is a pretty big economic player, but it is the view, the policy of the United States, that there is but one China. But we maintain relations with the people of Taiwan, but what we especially need from Taiwan and China is to resolve their issue through peaceful means. When we hear the Chinese in some way reserving the right to use force in Taiwan, we are clearly long past the time when force could ever be considered. There is more Taiwan investment in places like Shanghai than there is of any other foreign country in that coastal part of China. It is simply unacceptable for people to be talking about using force. So what we look for from the Chinese is to reach out and talk with the Taiwanese.
I must say, it was a little discouraging just the other day—I was in Washington on Tuesday [24 January 2006] and I met with the head of the Taiwan National Assembly—to get the kind of criticism we were getting from the Chinese about meeting with these people. China remains extremely sensitive about U.S. contacts with Taiwan, even though we have made abundantly clear to the Chinese on numerous occasions that we do support the one China policy. So we want to see some resolution of that issue. We are not going to get in the middle of it; we are going to expect Taiwan and China to try to resolve that. There have been some positive trends. China did pull away from a resolution by the People’s Assembly last spring that certainly added some fuel to the fire.\(^4\) They have also restarted flights so that Chinese tourists and Taiwanese tourists can go and visit the sites, so there is some encouragement there, but I think a lot more needs to be done.

Finally, let me say the U.S. maintains—really keeps the peace—in East Asia. We have a huge navy still based out of Pearl Harbor, out of Hawaii; we have a very active Pacific Command there. We maintain bilateral relations, and what we are trying to do with these bilateral military relations is to try to assist and work together with countries more multilaterally through the security area. So it is a very active portfolio. I often joke to people that I went from being Ambassador to South Korea to being Assistant Secretary of North Korea, since I spend so much time on the North Koreans; but I think, in fact, we have interests well beyond the North Korean issue. We have interests, as I said, throughout Southeast Asia and especially in China, and I think we will be able to cover all our bases there.

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\(^4\) In March of 2005, the National People’s Assembly of China passed a resolution known as the Anti-Secession Law, which formalized China’s policy against the secession of Taiwan, and outlined steps that would lead to “non-peaceful means” China would take if there is no longer any hope of reunification.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions were submitted by the audience and read by Dr. Joyce Neu, Executive Director of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice

JN: We'll take some questions from the audience.

CH: Yes. I haven't met Kim Jong-Il yet, and in fact, our direct contact with the North Koreans has been fairly limited. One of the reasons is they flat-out lied to us in the late 1990s because they denied having a highly-enriched uranium program, which is the other way to produce nuclear weapons besides the one they have acknowledged, which is plutonium. And so, since they lied to us—rather directly—we have preferred to have our contacts in a multilateral way. So while I've had bilateral meetings with the North Koreans, I do it in the context of the Six-Party Talks. One of the reasons is the North Koreans would prefer just to talk to the U.S. and cut everyone else out, and that's not how we think this problem can be solved.

But with respect to Kim Jong-Il's psychology, I've got to tell you, every time someone tells me so-and-so is nuts, and then I go meet the guy, you know, I just don't find those clinical assessments to be terribly helpful or even accurate. Usually there's a logic there and you try to figure out what it is. I think Kim Jong-Il is very concerned about retaining power, and so how he goes about that may not be the best thing for the North Korean economy, but actually it may be the best thing for keeping him in power. I'm reluctant to go with the idea that he's got some mental problem. Sometimes I feel like I do after talking to him. [laughter]

JN: It's sometimes an easy way, I think, to get around dealing with people. A question from the audience: what will be or should be a next U.S. policy toward political reform in Burma after pushing the issue through the U.N. Security Council and ASEAN countries?

CH: Hun Sen, too.

JN: Hun Sen in Cambodia. So I wonder whether you could address this issue of the psychology of leaders and how one develops relationships and is able to talk to them.

CH: Yes. I haven't met Kim Jong-Il yet, and in fact, our direct contact with the North Koreans has been fairly limited. One of the reasons is they flat-out lied to us in the late 1990s because they denied having a highly-enriched uranium program, which is the other way to produce nuclear weapons besides the one they have acknowledged, which is plutonium. And so, since they lied to us—rather directly—we have preferred to have our contacts in a multilateral way. So while I've had bilateral meetings with the North Koreans, I do it in the context of the Six-Party Talks. One of the reasons is the North Koreans would prefer just to talk to the U.S. and cut everyone else out, and that's not how we think this problem can be solved.

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JN: It's sometimes an easy way, I think, to get around dealing with people.
This is a very frustrating problem in Burma. We did push this problem up to the Security Council, not to get any resolution on it—because we could not get a resolution because there are a number of countries in the Security Council that did not support that—but at least for the first time, Security Council members received a briefing from the U.N. representative on Burma to see precisely what the situation is. It’s clearly going in the wrong direction—we have very limited ability to affect the junta there. We believe that part of the problem is that, while he gets a tough message from us, he gets a different message from some other partners. For example, the Chinese have been very engaged in Burma; economically, they’re very interested in buying up mining capacity in Burma. What we need to do is make sure that we have some agreement with the Chinese, Indians, and in fact, Japanese, as well as the ASEAN states, on how we deal with Burma because if we just rail away at Burma and don’t work it out with these other partners, I don’t think we’re going to get very far.

We’ve had some, I think, improvement on how the ASEAN states are handling Burma. For example, the Malaysian Foreign Minister [Syed] Hamid [Albar] has made very clear—Malaysia is this year’s Chairman of ASEAN—he wants to visit Burma; the Burmese have invited him, but he will only go if they allow him to see Madam Aung San Suu Kyi. That’s something the Burmese have refused to allow anybody to do lately, so he’s been pretty tough on that. I think we have a pretty good understanding with the ASEAN states, but I am worried about how the Chinese perceive it. And of course, the Indians are concerned that Burma is tilting too much to the Chinese orbit, so the Indians are engaged there. I think what’s important to understand is while we in the United States tend to look at Burma as a human rights issue, countries in the region look at it as a human rights issue, but also as a strategic issue. So countries are worried about which way it is tilting, and for that reason they want to keep more contact with Burma than we’ve wanted to do.

JN: Thank you. We have two questions relating to China. With the looming global peak in oil production, how concerning is China’s massive stockpiling of raw materials like concrete, copper, steel, oil, etc., and their numerous military pacts with countries like Russia and Iran? And somewhat related is how long can China continue to develop economically without political freedoms?

CH: I think what is most worrisome about China’s military budget is not so much how large the budget is because, frankly speaking, the U.S.’ budget is, by several factors, far greater than China. What is worrisome is we really don’t know. China doesn’t publish their budget; they’re not open; there’s no transparency; there’s no debate. So you don’t really know what’s going on in the Chinese military budget. And generally, China is very careful about state secrets, and in fact, they’ll prosecute their people whenever they believe some government official has given out a state secret; you’ll find the guy hauled into court, and these are pretty serious charges. So China is not open with respect to these issues. It is open with respect to foreign investment; it’s not open with respect to these issues of budget and other accoutrements of a democracy. Clearly, with respect to that, China is a work in progress.

As to how it can continue to go with its current political system, it’s hard to say because China has some serious problems domestically in terms of a growing income disparity—they’re very concerned that people in the rural areas are feeling that the people in the urban areas are enjoying all the growth—so there are a lot of tensions in China. A lot of what we see in China is not so much attitudes to us or attitudes to foreigners, but rather, an effort to manage this growing divide between rural and urban. Ultimately, China has to deal with those problems. Although the Chinese middle class has grown enormously, they still have 200 million people living on a dollar a day. What would be interesting to see is to compare China with what is going on in India, which does have a democracy and which is beginning to grow at growth rates that are pretty close to those of China. I think it is quite likely that India could actually step up growth rates, and India could be poised to actually grow faster and to ultimately be bigger than China. I think when those trends become clear, China will have to look at the issue of political reform.

5 Aung San Suu Kyi is the leader of the National League for Democracy, the leading opposition party to the ruling military junta in Burma. She has been under house arrest since 2003. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.
JN: We have quite a few questions on North Korea, as you might imagine.

CH: I hope there are some ideas, too. [laughter]

JN: I don’t see any policies or strategies here, but maybe. The BBC characterized your approach to North Korea in terms of negotiation, and contrasted your style with Mr. [Dick] Cheney and Mr. [Donald] Rumsfeld, whose style appears to be more confrontational. If this is so, how do you deal with these kinds of differences? This is off the record. [laughter]

CH: This isn’t off the record. [laughter] I think your best diplomacy should be reserved for dealing at home. [laughter] To be sure, people in Washington are not always one big happy family, and we have to deal with differences from time to time. But I feel that I have had a tremendous amount of support for how I’ve been dealing with the North Koreans. I’ve been especially gratified with how my boss, Secretary Rice, has sent me out with guidance that is really adequate. You know, when you’re a negotiator and you’re going out there and you get guidance that doesn’t allow you to do your job, you know, you shouldn’t go out there. And I’ve always gotten guidance that does allow me to do my job.

So there are some people that find it more distasteful than others. When I was dealing with Milosevic, I didn’t deal with Milosevic because I liked him; I dealt with Milosevic because we had to deal with him because he was in power and we had to deal with a tough situation. And so, I think people understand that when you sit down with North Koreans, probably the best way to handle it is not to be angry; sorrow rather than anger is usually the way to go, and just to try to look at these problems more from a sort of a way of, let’s solve the equation, let’s figure out what can be done. I do believe that what we came up with in September in this statement of principles is a deal that is good for us and good for the North Koreans. So I think it can be done. If people want to do a lot of moral posturing on it and rail away at them, that’s fine, but we’ve got a problem there that needs to be solved, and to solve a problem you need to have some problem-solving skills. And so the way you do that is you’ve got to sit down and listen and talk. I’m OK with that, and if I’m not OK, I won’t be doing it.

JN: This is kind of a similar question and I don’t know if you want to address it any further, but how are relations between [the Departments of] State and Defense these days on issues such as North Korea, Taiwan, China, and the situation in Indonesia? Whose influence is paramount with the president?

CH: I think, you know, with respect to Indonesia, everyone’s on the same page. We really want to work with the Indonesians. They’ve come a long way, as President [Susilo Bambang] Yudhoyono has been doing the right thing. They have pursued some of the abuses by the Indonesian military and actually made some arrests. So we’re pretty much OK in Washington on that. Again, in Taiwan, everyone wants that situation calmed down. We don’t want a situation where the Chinese are rattling sabers in Taiwan. I think also there is a sense that the Taiwanese need to look at their military budgets because Taiwan right now is spending far less on its military, in per capita terms, than the United States is. This is something that is noticed by a lot of different offices and places in Washington. When I met with the Taiwan head of the National Assembly, I had on one side a guy from the NSC [National Security Council], and on the other side, a general from the office of the Secretary of Defense, so you know, I think we’re OK on Taiwan.

With Korea, I think we’re OK in the negotiating, but what will be very interesting is when we get to the point where we actually have to implement the thing because we’ll have some doubting Thomases there who will expect a wholesale disrobing by the North Koreans. And then we’ll have some problems because the North Koreans won’t want to do that, so we could have some inter-agency problems. But when I go out to negotiate with the North Koreans, I do so with an inter-agency group. The other agencies are not there just to tattle-tale on me, they’re there actually to participate in the process, and I think we’re basically OK. We don’t see eye to eye on everything, but it’s all right.

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Did I cover all the countries? China? You know, Secretary Rumsfeld went there and was kind of struck by what’s going on in China, and so he’s been very encouraging to Admiral [William] Fallon, the Pacific Commander, to be engaged and maybe to resurrect some of our military-to-military contacts,
which have atrophied in recent years. So I think there’s a growing understanding among everybody that we need a strategy that engages China and that helps shape the environment for China’s rise, because China is rising; it is a very serious player. I like to think that we don’t have any plans to go to war with Wal-Mart’s leading supplier. [laughter] We may go to war with Wal-Mart, but not with their leading supplier. I really like to think that we can figure out a way forward. China needs us, and last time I checked in a furniture store, we need China.

JN: Are you proposing a new theory to follow on the McDonald’s theory, that countries with McDonald’s don’t go to war with each other? Now we have the Wal-Mart theory?

CH: There was a McDonald’s in Belgrade, actually. I remember it very well.

JN: Well, that disproves that theory, I think. When has diplomacy ever convinced a nuclear country to give up its weapons?

CH: Well, actually, the combination of coercive diplomacy—that is, sanctions—certainly convinced South Africa to do it. A number of the countries of the former Soviet Union were kind of interested in maybe holding on to those weapons, and we made abundantly clear that countries like Kazakhstan and Ukraine were not going to be able to hold on to old Soviet nuclear material. So I think diplomacy has a pretty good record of convincing countries to give up their weapons. The problem we have in North Korea—if you look at North Korea’s top thousand problems, I can’t see how a nuclear weapon is going to solve any of them—but the problem is, I don’t think Kim Jong-Il cares about the top thousand problems that North Korea has, and he may have some misplaced notion of what nuclear weapons can do for North Korea’s prestige, or for somehow threatening their neighbors into giving them extra assistance or something.

So the real problem you have with these leaders like that is what is our track record for getting a guy like Kim Jong-Il to give up nuclear weapons? I don’t think it’s clear what the outcome is going to be on this. I’m not prepared to say he’s definitely going to give up his weapons, but I’m also not prepared to say he’s definitely not going to give up his weapons. I mean, I’m always amazed to sit in meetings in Washington and have these bold-faced assertions that he will never give up his weapons. Well, how do you know that? And if that’s your conviction, what are you suggesting? Should we be sending the National Guard to North Korea? I mean, what are we going to do?

So I think what’s important is to work with our partners here, and if we come to the end of the road and there’s simply no way forward, I’d like the Chinese to come to that conclusion, the Japanese, the South Koreans, the Russians—I’d like everyone to come to that conclusion together, and then we’ll think of
international community, you’ve got to buy a ticket. And part of the price of the ticket is going to be that your human rights record is going to get looked at. I’ve used that metaphor of buying a ticket—I’m not sure he understood it, so I tried ration card, and he still didn’t understand it, but anyway—I made the point that this is what happens when you’re in the international community. Everyone takes a few hits; everyone gets criticized; and the way to handle it is just to get used to it. I told him even the U.S. takes a few hits on human rights—it just happens. For them to think that there should be some North Korean exceptionalism—that is, North Korea should be treated differently from everyone else in the world—is simply not a sustainable policy. So I have absolutely raised that in the Six-Party Talks.

Now interestingly, the North Koreans kind of sat there; they didn’t enjoy it, but they took notes—they’re great note-takers—and it was interesting because some of my partners were saying, “Oh my goodness, don’t raise that. We’ve got enough problems with nuclear weapons.”

JN: I wonder what impact the challenges to the human rights record of the United States has in talking to other countries about human rights. Do you find with some of the problems the U.S. is experiencing with criticism of our observance of human rights in this country that that is, at any level, affecting your ability to talk human rights to other countries?

CH: You mean Abu Ghraib and that sort of thing?
I, like most people in the world, am very upset that over the course of history, a nuclear arms race developed, that we have thousands of them, that Russia has thousands of them—I mean, I’m not happy about it. It happened; we have systems for dealing with it; we have systems for reducing the number of weapons; we have negotiations for reducing them. We are really handling it in a way that has made the situation more stable and ultimately, the world more safe. But to suggest that the solution to the fact that we continue to have nuclear weapons, which are really a holdover from the Cold War, that that is an excuse to allow a country like North Korea, which does not have paved roads, which does not have health stations, schools, heat for the schools—I mean, trucks going on North Korean roads, they don’t have gasoline engines for the trucks, they put wood into this cavity that allows the truck to go—I mean, that is not a country that should be developing nuclear weapons. So that’s what I told the flight attendant. And then I ordered the chicken. [laughter]

JN: This is a somewhat related question, related to the development of nuclear power as opposed to nuclear weapons.

CH: This actually was a big issue because the North Koreans said they wanted something called a light-water reactor. A light-water reactor is a nuclear power station where there is less of a chance of diverting fuel to make weapons. This was part of the Clinton administration’s effort to deal with the problem—that is, they would provide a couple of light-water reactors and as a result, the North Koreans would do away with these very dangerous type of reactors, so-called graphite-moderated reactors. Our point to the North Koreans, and the point that the other four partners made to the North Koreans, was that if you want to develop nuclear energy in the future, you’ve got to do a few things. You’ve got to, first of all, get rid of the stuff you have right now because the North Koreans admitted to us that all of their nuclear programs are, in fact, weapons-related. And so, they admitted that anything they’ve got now is not for peaceful nuclear use, it’s for weapons. So get rid of all that. Get back into the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Remember—they were the first country ever

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6 The Partial Test Ban Treaty has been in force since 1963.
to do this—they pulled themselves out of the Treaty, and then they started harvesting the plutonium from this Yongbyon reactor. So get back in the Non-Proliferation Treaty; come into compliance with the so-called safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA; develop a clean record in terms of not selling stuff to nasty people; after that, we’re prepared to discuss the subject of a provision of a light-water reactor.

If North Korea were a stable, democratically-inclined country that didn’t try to develop nuclear weapons, including clandestine development of nuclear weapons through this program of importing stuff from the A.Q. Khan network, this arms smuggler, this nuclear weapons smuggler from Pakistan—if they hadn’t done all of that, you know, one could really talk about peaceful use of nuclear energy. But what they need to do is come into compliance. We have agreed that once they do that, we and the other partners will talk to them about this peaceful use.

JN: Why do we not pull out U.S. troops from Korea and Japan?

CH: Because to pull out U.S. troops from Korea and Japan could be destabilizing. We can be very proud of what our U.S. troops have done in both Korea and Japan. I mean, those countries have been able to develop in peace and to develop to be, I think, a couple of very important allies. I’m not saying U.S. troops are going to be there for the rest of time, but right now, the U.S. troops are there, and are there for our interests, not just [for] the Japanese and the Koreans. It is important for our country that they’re there. I think when there is movement— in fact, we’ve reduced our forces from some 45,000 in South Korea and it’s going down to 29,000—we can come out of South Korea or come out of Japan in a way that we can all feel very proud of what our troops have done there over the decades.

Having been Ambassador in Korea and having met Americans who served in Korea and the Korean War, or served in that, sort of, long and bitter peace in the 1960s—for them to come back and to see what has happened in Seoul, and to see that Korea has become the tenth largest industrial country in the world (when our troops were there in 1960, Korea had the per capital income of a country like Ghana) for Americans to see what that country has done, they can be very proud of their service. So we’ll pull them out when it’s in our country’s interest to pull them out, and when it’s in the interest of stability and peace to pull them out.

JN: I have two final questions. Do we need a Department of Peace and what could it do that the State Department does not do?

CH: I do that. [laughter]

JN: Are you the department?

CH: Look, we want peace. Could it do something the State does not do? No, we do that. I mean, that’s our job, we try to keep the peace. We have no interest in conflict. To have the strong bilateral relations, to encourage countries to work together—frankly, no country does it better than our country. I think we’ve been very important in heading off conflicts and we need more people involved in that line of work, and that’s why I’m very pleased that the University of San Diego is doing its part. It’s often thankless. I mean, you have people out in Nepal—who thinks about Nepal these days? Very few people. The American general public is probably not aware of what’s going on in Nepal, and you’re out there with people. And by the way, we’ve got an embassy out there: we’ve got political officers working these issues. It’s tough work. I mean, “blessed are the peacemakers” because they take a lot of grief, believe me. So it’s very tough work. We are totally engaged, and I’m not sure what a Department of Peace could add to it.

JN: Thank you. The question comes from some of the students in the audience and it says, a number of us here this evening are students from the law school, but I’m sure there are students from other schools and the college as well, and they are interested in careers in diplomacy or
international relations. What advice can you offer to someone trying to get started in the field?

CH: Well, first of all, read a daily newspaper. I mean, really know what’s going on in the world. But also, at the State Department we're looking for well-rounded people, so don't just read the international section of the newspaper, read the culture section. I mean, read the sports page.

JN: Lacrosse?

CH: Read about lacrosse. Play lacrosse. The point is we're looking for well-rounded people who can really represent America abroad. We don't want just international relations people, we want people who really understand what our country is, the values we represent, the diversity we represent. And then sign up for the Foreign Service Exam. It's free. It doesn't cost a nickel. It's a little humiliating when you don't pass, and by the way, I didn't pass the first time either. It's a tough exam, but stick with it if you really want to get in. Most people don't pass the first time, so don't be discouraged about that. I would encourage that even if, ultimately, the Foreign Service isn't for you, there are a lot of other areas of public service that can get you out in the international community: the Agency for International Development [USAID] is a great career opportunity, the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]—some of the most intrepid colleagues I've had were actually from the CIA. It's taken a lot of lumps lately, but believe me, it is a proud organization. I think there are a lot of things. And of course, the U.S. military. We know about deployments in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, but do you realize the U.S. military is probably in most countries in the world? We have defense attaches in every embassy; they have done so much. If you look at our assistance in the tsunami areas—down in Indonesia—there is a huge sea change, if you will, in our relations with those countries—that was spearheaded by the U.S. military. The U.S. military, frankly speaking, has some of our best peace officers.
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WEBSITES:


Association of Southeast Asian Nations. There are ten member countries of ASEAN: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Their stated fundamental goals are cooperative peace and shared prosperity. Retrieved March 2006, from http://www.aseansec.org


International Atomic Energy Agency. The IAEA is the world’s center of cooperation in the nuclear field. The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote safe, secure, and peaceful nuclear technologies. The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the IAEA and its Director General, Mohamed ElBaradei, in 2005. Retrieved March 2006, from http://www.iaea.org

Peace Corps. The Peace Corps has three goals: to help the people of interested countries in meeting their needs for trained men and women; to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; and to help promote a better understanding of other people on the part of all Americans. Retrieved March 2006, from http://www.peacecorps.gov

United States Agency for International Development. USAID is the principal U.S. agency to extend assistance to countries recovering from disaster, trying to escape poverty, and engaging in democratic reforms. USAID is an independent federal government agency that receives overall foreign policy guidance from the Secretary of State. Retrieved March 2006, from http://www.usaid.gov

United States Department of State: Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. The bureau is currently headed by Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill. Retrieved March 2006, from http://www.state.gov/p/eap

BOOKS, SPEECHES AND ARTICLES:


ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

Chartered in 1949, the University of San Diego is a Roman Catholic institution of higher learning located on 180 acres overlooking San Diego’s Mission Bay. The University of San Diego is committed to promoting academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse community, and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical and compassionate service.

USD is steadfast in its dedication to the examination of the Catholic tradition as the basis of a continuing search for meaning in contemporary life. Global peace and development and the application of ethics and values are examined through campus centers and institutes, such as the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, the Values Institute, the TransBorder Institute, the Center for Public Interest Law, the Institute for Law and Philosophy, and the International Center for Character Education. Furthermore, through special campus events such as the Social Issues Conference, the James Bond Stockdale Leadership and Ethics Symposium, and the Joan B. Kroc Distinguished Lecture Series, we invite the community to join us in further exploration of these values.

In recent years, the University of San Diego has hosted many distinguished guests, including Nobel Peace Laureates and former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Oscar Arias, Supreme Court justices, United Nations and United States government officials, as well as ambassadors from countries around the world. In 1996, the university hosted a Presidential Debate between candidates Bill Clinton and Bob Dole.

The USD campus, considered one of the most architecturally unique in the nation, is known as Alcalá Park. Like the city of San Diego, the campus takes its name from San Diego de Alcalá, a Franciscan brother who served as the infirmary at Alcalá de Henares, a monastery near Madrid, Spain. The Spanish Renaissance architecture that characterizes the five-century old University of Alcalá serves as the inspiration for the buildings on the University of San Diego campus. The architecture was intended by the founders, Bishop Charles Francis Buddy and Mother Rosalie Hill, to enhance the search for truth through beauty and harmony. Recent additions, such as the state-of-art Donald P. Shiley Center for Science and Technology and soon the new School of Leadership and Education Sciences building, carry on that tradition.

A member of the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa, USD is ranked among the nation’s top 100 universities. USD offers its 7,500 undergraduate, graduate and law students rigorous academic programs in more than 60 fields of study through six academic divisions, including the College of Arts and Sciences and the schools of Business Administration, Leadership and Education Sciences, Law, and Nursing and Health Science. The Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies is scheduled to open in the fall of 2007.