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Mayor Emanuel Interviews Ambassador Ivo Daalder on Chicago Stories Podcast

On this week's episode of [Chicago Stories](#), Mayor Emanuel sat down with Ivo Daalder, president of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and former U.S. ambassador to NATO, to help make sense of the latest developments from Iran, North Korea, and beyond, and how America's role in all of it is changing in the age of Trump.

With President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un's negotiations only a few weeks away, Mayor Emanuel and Ambassador Daalder wasted no time diving in to the complexities surrounding the talks and its possible outcomes.

As Ambassador Daalder's explained, North Korea is at the table for two reasons: military and economic pressure from the U.S., and its own nuclear weapon capabilities.

"Kim Jong Un has proved his point, and in return he's coming as a nuclear power who just met twice with the Chinese president who he had never met before, and now he's going to meet with the president of the United States as an equal," Ambassador Daalder said. "He's achieved a lot in just three months."

The issues facing the president during the negotiations are extensive, but ultimately come down to one question: is Kim Jong-Un willing to give up his nuclear weapons.

"The key here is to say: 'How serious are you?' What are you willing to do give up your nuclear weapons, and what price are you asking me to pay," Ambassador Daalder said. "I think that's the only thing that matters."

Mayor Emanuel and Ambassador Daalder also spoke extensively about President Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and its serious ramifications around the globe.

"Basically the lesson is allies don't count in Washington, they don't matter anymore," Ambassador Daalder said, "and if that's what you think when you're in London, or in Berlin, or in Paris, you say: 'ok, if we don't count in Washington, why should we listen to what Washington wants.'"

Ambassador Daalder added that such an absence has allowed China and Russia to step in.

“Our influence is being reduced,” Ambassador Daalder said. “Our allies are the richest, most militarily capable countries in the world, and we’ve just told the allies in the last 12 months ‘actually we don’t really care about you,’ so the Chinese and Russians are saying ‘we care about you, we’ll work with you.’”

Ultimately, what is at stake is the United States’ standing as the singular world leader dating back to World War II, a role that is quickly changing in the age of Trump.

“This is a new order,” Ambassador Daalder told Mayor Emanuel. “Basically since FDR, the United States has said ‘we need to lead internationally’...we had Democrats and Republicans who disagreed about tactics, but we never disagreed about strategy and the fundamental premise.”

Be sure to tune in to the entire episode as Mayor Emanuel also talk about Syria, the role of global cities, being raised with a passion for foreign affairs, and much more.

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Additional Quotes from Ambassador Daalder:

On the Iran Deal:

“The message the president sends is that when you sign an agreement with one American president, the next American president can get rid of it.”

“If you are serious about denuclearization, and you are serious about diplomacy and negotiations and agreements, then it’s very important when you become a new president that you adhere to the agreements of the past. This administration is not a very good example of that.”

On European Relations:

“The Europeans now have learned whether you flatter him, whether you do a business-like approach, whether you say ‘no mas,’ or whether you engage in negotiations, the result is always the same. He walked out of Paris, he walked out of TPP, he walked out of the Iran agreement.”

“They want the United States to lead, but they’re also saying ‘I’m not sure we can do business with this guy,’ and they’re going to wait him out. The question is what happens in the meantime.”

On China’s Growing Influence:

“In much of the rest of the world the Chinese are filling in. I talked to a U.N. diplomat, and he said that every time the United States says we won’t pay anymore, the Chinese says ‘we will.’ So now we have more Chinese diplomats than any other country at the United Nations. They’re in Africa where they’re buying up resources and building infrastructure. They’re doing the same in Latin America. They’re doing the same in Eastern Europe. They have a whole infrastructure project that they’re doing in Eastern Europe, giving them the money, and creating ties that are not allied ties, they’re mercantile ties. They’re buying the countries, and our influence is being reduced.”