

## **A conversation with Paul Haenle, January 26, 2016**

### **Participants**

- Paul Haenle – Director, Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy, part of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Elie Hassenfeld – Managing Director, Open Philanthropy Project
- Helen Toner – Research Analyst, Open Philanthropy Project

**Note:** These notes were compiled by GiveWell and give an overview of the major points made by Paul Haenle.

### **Summary**

The Open Philanthropy Project spoke with Mr. Paul Haenle of the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy (Carnegie-Tsinghua Center), a part of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Carnegie), as part of a follow-up on a grant to support its work in China and India. Conversation topics included the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center's activities, the challenges it has faced in China, and Carnegie's Nuclear Policy Program.

### **Carnegie-Tsinghua Center**

The Carnegie-Tsinghua Center is a foreign policy think tank that was established as a collaboration between Carnegie and Tsinghua University in 2010.

### **Recent challenges**

Recent challenges the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center has faced include:

- An increasingly constrained political environment.
- Increased scrutiny and stricter regulation of foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the last 2 years.

### **Constrained political environment**

The current political leadership in China has tightened control over public discourse in recent years. The State Council has published documents that specify what topics can and cannot be discussed in universities, and has banned topics including ones generally viewed as crucial to a functioning civil society. There has also been an anti-corruption campaign that has removed from office officials at all levels of seniority, from very senior party officials to provincial and local leaders, including former standing committee members and former vice chairmen of the Central Military Commission.

This shift in the political environment has caused some in China to act increasingly cautious because they worry about inadvertently doing something wrong and being

held responsible. Within the bureaucracy, these concerns make some people reluctant to take action, which can present new challenges for the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center's work in China.

The center has been able to continue to operate, in part due to its good relationship and high level of trust with its partners at Tsinghua University, and in part because as a foreign policy think tank, the issues the center focuses on are international in scope, which tend to be inherently less sensitive than domestic political issues. The center has not been greatly affected by the shift in the political environment, but has experienced some delays in getting approval for its programs due to the increased level of caution.

### **Registration and oversight of foreign NGOs**

Ten years ago, China's Ministry of Civil Affairs started working toward writing a new law concerning registration of foreign NGOs, but this was shelved in 2005. The Ministry of Public Security recently restarted this effort, primarily out of concern that foreign NGOs may pose a security threat by potentially inciting social unrest. The current draft of the law would put the Public Security Bureaus, which are managed by the Ministry of Public Security, in charge of managing foreign NGOs. If the current draft of the law is passed, it is likely to cause an increase in oversight that may cause potentially more significant delays. Further, the creation of a new system led by the Ministry of Public Security may increase the already problematic level of caution within the bureaucracy. These two factors may make it difficult for foreign NGOs in China to get work done as efficiently as they have previously, potentially resulting in a slowdown of activity and difficulty in raising funds.

Concern about the outcome of the law has caused it to be put on the US-China political agenda, and the law has been temporarily put on hold after the issue was raised in senior political channels. However, some believe that the National People's Congress may be interested in trying to pass the law when it convenes in March, and it is unclear whether another draft will be made public before then. Uncertainty about what the final draft will look like is causing anxiety among foreign NGOs in China.

### **Nuclear Policy Program**

Carnegie's Nuclear Policy Program in Washington, D.C. works on issues including nuclear non-proliferation and increasing safety standards of nuclear power plants. After the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, the Nuclear Policy Program led a multinational effort to get organizations that build nuclear power plants to agree to a common set of safety principles and to address some of the shortcomings that arose in the aftermath of the Fukushima disaster. Carnegie wanted to ensure the involvement of all major countries that build nuclear power plants, including France, Israel, the US, China, and Russia. Having close contacts in China who

understood the systems and culture and were trusted in local politics was critical to convincing China to participate in this effort.

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<http://www.givewell.org/conversations>