

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR KATHLEEN DOHERTY

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INTERVIEW

Q: So, today is July 2, 2020. We're beginning our interview with Ambassador Kathleen Doherty.

Q: Kathleen, we always begin with where and when you were born.

DOHERTY: I was born in 1963 in New York City, but I grew up in the suburbs of New York City, on Long Island.

Q: Which suburb?

DOHERTY: Lynbrook.

Q: Could you describe a little of what Lynbrook was like when you were growing up?

DOHERTY: It was solidly middle-class. This was the sixties and seventies when people fled the city to move to the suburbs, but Lynbrook is close to the city outlines. Queens is just a few miles away. The residents were mostly self-exiled New Yorkers — some high-income professionals — lawyers and doctors — but mostly middle-class— teachers, police officers and the like.

Q: Did you have brothers and sisters?

DOHERTY: I have two sisters and one brother; I'm the third of four.

Q: And a lot of people have done ancestry, background research. Have you looked back at where your forebears came from?

DOHERTY: My father was born in Ireland. He immigrated to the States when he was a small child with his mother. His father had come over earlier. We're very familiar with our Irish roots and background. My mother's side is not as clear. She's Irish American, German American. Probably came over in the late 1800s. We don't know as much about her history.

Q: How did they meet?

DOHERTY: My father was a couple of years older, but they met through mutual high school friends. They were very different in personality. My father was an immigrant kid and a little bit rough and ready around the edges. And my mom's father was a patent attorney. They stayed married for fifty-five years until my father passed away. It was a clear marriage of opposites, but they had a great marriage.

Q: Did you attend public school, private school?

DOHERTY: I went to Catholic school for the first eight years and then to a public high school in Lynbrook. It was a medium-sized high school. I don't remember exactly the numbers, but I think maybe a hundred students per grade or something, maybe a little bit more. I don't recall the size of it.

Q: At that time was the difference in your education in the Catholic school significantly different from the public school?

DOHERTY: My high school was one of the best public schools on Long Island. The main reason why I attended the public high school was that I was an athlete and the local Catholic high school was not that close. I would have had to take a bus to the school. If I played sports, which I did do in high school, I would have gotten home very late. Since the local high school had such a high-quality education, it was not a problem about me going there.

Q: From the period from kindergarten through eighth, were you involved in any other activities, band or Girl Scouts or Brownies?

DOHERTY: All of them, I was in band. I was in Girl Scouts. I ran track in elementary school. This was unusual in the 1960s, early 1970s. That's when I got my love for running, and I still run to this day.

Q: What about reading and news? Were you much interested in that as a kid?

DOHERTY: To some extent. I think the most formative experience was when I was thirteen and my family visited relatives in Ireland. I think at that point was when I first became aware of a world outside of my own existence. We would spend a lot of time going into New York. My father owned a bar in Queens; my grandmother lived in the city as well. I wasn't a sheltered suburban kid. But I think I didn't really think internationally until I was thirteen and went over to Ireland.

Q: Now, what are your main recollections from that first trip to Ireland?

DOHERTY: Ireland at that time was quite poor. This was in the mid-1970s. I was struck by the poverty of it. One place we visited only a few years earlier had electricity installed. That was a shock for someone who had grown up in a modern society. But I loved it. I

mean, I thought it was great and I loved the adventure of it. This sparked a sense of curiosity that I didn't have prior to being thirteen. And thirteen-year-old kids can be a real trial when they're traveling, but apparently, I just loved everything about it. This trip sparked my interest, unknowingly, in foreign affairs.

Q: That—at that age you're just about to go into the public school. So, did that at all affect how you—your experience of high school then?

DOHERTY: The school had a particularly strong history department. Coincidentally, after my father sold his bar, he became a high school history teacher. At home, we had *Encyclopedia Britannica* on the bookshelf, and I would read it for leisure. I picked random things in history to read about. Unknowingly I was getting a sense of what I was going to do in the future. But at the time I would never have guessed that was going to lead me to this path.

Q: Did your extracurricular activities follow you into high school?

DOHERTY: I played soccer and softball and ran track.

Q: But no more band?

DOHERTY: How could I forget that I played the flute? I played in the high school marching band for all four years. I think I had a very typical experience for a kid growing up in the 1960s and 1970s.

Q: Did you get interested in public speaking?

DOHERTY: Not then. In high school I thought about joining the debate club, but my brother, who is several years older, had been a great debater. I never wanted to compete with him. But I think I learned a lot about the world debating around the table at dinnertime. My father and my brother would debate political issues. I would chime in and have a voice. I learned to hold my own during family time dinner conversations. I wrote a few articles for the newspaper, but my childhood was mostly sports and academics.

Q: Other than the trip to Ireland, did your family travel in the U.S.?

DOHERTY: We traveled up and down the East Coast quite a bit. And then, when I was a junior in high school, I raised money to go with the high school language clubs to Spain and Italy. I washed cars and babysat, and my parents gave me money as an early graduation present to go. I think all these things were leading itself to a certain path. Though, when I went to Italy, I absolutely hated it. As a teenager little did I realize I would spend six years of my diplomatic life later living in Italy and enjoying it immensely. A sixteen-year-old has no idea what they like.

Q: While you were in high school, are there experiences or teachers that you recall that sort of helped you develop a motivation for international service?

DOHERTY: We all were cognizant about the kidnapping of diplomats in Iran, the gas prices, Jimmy Carter. But I was too young earlier in the decade to understand the Vietnam War and all that happened in the United States. My formative years were the Reagan years when I was in college.

Q: Now, as you're growing up in the late seventies, you did not run into people telling you, Oh well, you're a girl, so you really shouldn't be thinking about this kind of career or that kind of career. Or what was that like?

DOHERTY: I don't really recall any limitations being placed on me, neither by my parents or society. I wasn't really aware of them if there were.

Q: Speaking of which, through high school are your parents talking to you about college or how were you beginning to form your views about what kind of college you were going to?

DOHERTY: I applied to Ivy League schools – though my parents said we could not afford them - and a few New York State schools. I also applied to what is called a “semi-Ivy League school — Colgate University in upstate New York — a good academic school but importantly for me, it had a women's soccer team. I thought I was good enough to play college varsity soccer. I wasn't, but I did play club soccer. Colgate gave me a nice academic stipend to go there, which was the main reason why I decided to attend the school.

Q: You had mentioned raising money for your trip to Spain, but did you do any other work before college?

DOHERTY: I was a lifeguard. I also worked in a grocery store, an ice cream shop, drove a bus - anything to make money.

Q: Now, as you're approaching the end of your high school and you've made these applications, had you also thought about doing anything overseas? Were you thinking about maybe a year abroad or something like that?

DOHERTY: I had no real interest in overseas at the time, even though I had those favorable experiences of going to Ireland, Spain, and Italy. I was set on studying political science at Colgate and economics. I also took Spanish and did horribly in it. I assumed that I would never ever be able to speak another language. Colgate had study abroad programs but I did not participate. I decided to go to Washington for a study program. My whole focus at the time was on domestic policy. I was getting more and more interested in domestic policy, and I thought about working on the Hill. I planned to even at some point run for Congress. International work was not on my radar at all.

Q: Before we get too deep into college, you arrive there. Colgate is not a small school. What was your impression, what was your experience of arriving at sort of a university life, university community?

DOHERTY: It's a small school, a couple of thousand. It has a very small faculty-student ratio. There were no graduate students there teaching. It did not have a very diverse student body, mostly people from New York State or from the northeast. It was conservative in terms of its approach to learning, conservative in its approach to everything, and it had a fraternity dominated culture at the time. From an academic standpoint, it was great because classes were small in number and students had direct interaction with professors. I can honestly say that I learned how to learn there.

Q: You also said earlier that it was an active campus, that there were some political or activist activities going on.

DOHERTY: It was during the Ronald Reagan years. It was a time when the relationship with the Soviet Union was so fraught, there were thoughts of a nuclear Armageddon. Colgate is about 40 miles from a now closed air force base. During the 1990s, it was one of the top air force bases in the country with the next generation of bombers. We saw planes flying over campus quite a bit. There were times during the Reagan administration that it seemed like there was going to be some kind of conflict with the Soviet Union over Afghanistan. I wrote a paper about Reagan's "Star Wars" program, calling it the Maginot Line of the Future, and protested against nuclear weapons. This was when I became more aware of foreign affairs but it wasn't something that I was primarily interested in.

Q: Now, you also mentioned that you were interested in domestic affairs; did that bring you into political activity?

DOHERTY: I got involved in an anti-apartheid divestiture movement. People were trying to exercise influence over universities and where they invested their funds. I remember not leading the initiative but joining along and trying to pressure the administration to divest. I don't remember if it was successful, though.

Q: No interest in going abroad there, but you did mention, is the program in Washington one sponsored by Colgate?

DOHERTY: The program in Washington was run by Colgate. We would have classes in the morning and then afternoon meetings. After classes ended, as part of the program, I had an internship at the Department of Agriculture for the semester. The job was mind-numbingly dull. At least it gave me a sense of government work, only not the right sense

Q. During college, were you working?

DOHERTY: I was working as a resident advisor and in the cafeteria. I would make hundreds of pancakes for weekend brunch.

Q: Now, you said that you had trouble with Spanish.

DOHERTY: I was horrible at it.

Q: And you didn't pursue it, but were you beginning to develop an interest in any particular part of the world?

DOHERTY: I was interested in economics. I was thinking that I would want to do something in business.

Q: Now, you had also mentioned fraternities. Did you join a sorority?

DOHERTY: I joined a co-ed fraternity. There was a movement in the 1980s to make fraternities and sororities co-ed to create a different fraternity/sorority culture.

Q: Uh-huh. Now, so as you're going through Colgate, you mentioned you might be interested in business, but where did you see yourself from college, as a college student, where did you see yourself after college?

DOHERTY: I knew I was going to move to Washington, DC. I didn't want to stay in New York because DC seemed like a more fun and affordable town for a young person. I moved there right out of college and got a job waitressing in an Irish bar to make some money to live and to pay the bills.

Q: Now, how did you decide on graduate school?

DOHERTY: When I got my first professional job, I became a staff writer for a business magazine. I also worked as a stringer for financial newspapers. After about two years I realized that I was writing about things I didn't understand and that I'd better go to grad school to learn about the issues I was covering. In retrospect I must have been thinking about something international since I'd applied to SAIS (Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies), to the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, and to the London School of Economics. I don't recall why I specifically applied to the latter, but that's where I ended up going, mostly for financial reasons. In 1989, the dollar was strong and the pound was weak. Graduate programs in London are a twelve-month program versus two years. I calculated the cost of it and thought, okay, well why not live in London for a year and get a degree at the same time?

Six months prior to going to London, I took the Foreign Service test. I took the test on a dare. I don't really know if I knew what the Foreign Service was. I took the test once I found out it was free. State called me for a position to join the A-100 class in July of 1989. I turned them down because I had already committed to going to LSE (London School of Economics). I wanted to go to grad school and I didn't want to be a diplomat. State said "you know, if you turn us down there's no guarantee you'll be offered another

job and you know, you're only going to be active on the roster for eighteen months." I said, fine.

Q: You go to LSE in 1989. Was the experience there, because obviously the way they teach and the scholarly expectations and so on are somewhat different from the U.S., how was that for you?

DOHERTY: That year changed my life. I was the only American in my program. I was studying comparative political systems with some focus on economics. I was the only American living in the graduate dorm. At the time there was quite a bit of anti-American feeling, I had to deal with that.

I had the opportunity to choose two countries to study in particular. I chose East Germany and Hungary, which both changed radically by the end of the year. I went to Berlin soon after the wall opened up. I spent a month studying in Budapest as part of an exchange program and lived with a Hungarian family. We were led by a professor whose father had been a leader of the 1956 uprising and was slated to be executed but the Brits were able to get him out. His son was our professor and led us to Hungary. We had this amazing opportunity of being part of history.

In February a good friend of mine, an American in a different program, came to me and said, "Hey, I heard that you've been offered a job with the Foreign Service. They just offered me one. Why'd you turn it down?" And I said, "Oh, I'm almost sorry I turned it down now because I'd love to be in the Foreign Service." I was really envious. Two weeks later I got a call; State asked me to be in an A-100 class in the summertime. I immediately said yes. The experience of being in London, being part of history, seeing all of that transpire, having these incredible conversations with European students at the school, that's when I completely changed my entire outlook of what I wanted to do in life. That one year was extraordinary and set me a path that I never anticipated.

Q: And this is so—now, this is still the summer of '89 when you—?

DOHERTY: I joined A-100 in May of 1990. I was still in grad school but the course work was over in May. I had three months to write a dissertation. By September of 1990 I had my degree, finished A-100, and was studying Spanish to go to my first post.

Q: Do you remember much about your A-100 class?

DOHERTY: I do, though because I was in grad school, I wasn't the one that went to the happy hours or did a lot of the extracurricular stuff. And I do regret that since I didn't form that many close friendships with people from A-100. But those with whom I worked afterwards, we've become close, and even though many of us are retired, we still keep in touch through our A-100 Facebook page.

Q: Lovely. All right, so you are in A-100. Are there any major recollections you have from it about your preparation that you found particularly valuable?

DOHERTY: We had forty-eight or so in the class; there were about ten of us under the age of thirty and the rest of the class was older. I remember thinking that I was too young. Most people had many more years of work experience and I was thinking, “Why am I there?” I felt way out of my comfort zone. Several people in my A-100 class spoke other languages. During A-100, I did below average on the language aptitude test. I was convinced that I was never going to be able to learn anything.

Q: All right. But you do get your first assignment, and where were they going—and I imagine your first assignment was going to be a consular assignment.

DOHERTY: I knew I would do a consular tour. I was assigned to the Dominican Republic. I think most of my class, at least half my class, ended up going to a Spanish speaking country. And despite my previous bad experience in learning a language, once I ended up going to FSI (Foreign Service Institute) and learning Spanish, I ended up doing better than I had expected. I didn’t need the full six months to go to get to a 3/3 in Spanish. In the Dominican Republic, I worked in a very large visa section. I think there were eighteen of us. What an extraordinary experience it was — the camaraderie and esprit de corps and pure fun we had as a group of junior officers. The work was drudgery but also a real glimpse into humanity of very desperate people trying to get to the United States. I also did American Citizen Services, visiting people in jail.

Q: As you were doing the visa work, were you gaining skills in that particular job that were valuable for you later in your career?

DOHERTY: You have to learn how to make quick judgments. I was doing immigrant visas; on the whole, the level of fraud was less. But knowing when you said no to someone, especially for an immigrant visa, you were destroying their hopes for the future. If you felt that they didn’t qualify for whatever reason, you knew by their reaction that you were condemning them to a life of poverty and misery. And that was really hard. I think it’s very hard for any individual to do. On the other side, when you did see someone who qualified, you weren’t always sure they were going to have a better life in the States, but at least you thought they could have a better life in the States. You learn a lot about human behavior; you learn a lot about desperation and motivation and compassion.

Q: Were you able to do anything other than visa work while you were there?

DOHERTY: I played tennis at one of the better hotels in Santo Domingo, and on one occasion there was a young guy there talking about American basketball and about New York. I started chatting with him and found that he had grown up in New York. He was Dominican. Well, a long story short, he ended up becoming president of the Dominican Republic. He was a young political activist and was active in the opposition party that had not held office in thirty years. I was the first U.S. diplomat to meet this guy; I did my first bio reporting on him because he was young and charismatic. Five years later he became president of the country. I used this example when I would talk to junior officers.

“You never know who you’re going to meet. We bonded over basketball. I was the first person he met at the embassy. Then he ended up being president.” I certainly didn’t go around thinking I was going to write the very first bio on a potential presidential candidate, but that was an illustrative experience in getting to know people in the most unusual way.

Q: Before we leave Santo Domingo, are there any other events or recollections that stand out in your mind?

DOHERTY: It was the poverty. We didn’t have electricity twenty-four hours a day but we did have generators. The difference between the haves and have nots really struck me. I think the depth of poverty stuck most of us who went to a developing country for our first tour.

Q: From this vantage point, this is your first tour, have you begun to think about your career, about the trajectory or where you would like to go, geographic areas and so on?

DOHERTY: At the time, there was an experiment for about four years in the State Department when people came in un-coned. I don’t know if you’ve heard about that.

Q: Oh, yes.

DOHERTY: Because I had studied economics and I thought I was going to go into business, I wanted to be an economic coned officer. Since I felt the Foreign Service was not going to be a long-term career for me, I wanted to do an economic job next. That was my sole focus. There was a straight economic job in São Paulo, Brazil beginning in the summer. It ended up being an incredible opportunity, two years in São Paulo during a period of hyperinflation; they had 2,000 percent inflation when I was there.

There were two econ officers, but I was the sole one following macroeconomics and reporting on hyperinflation. There were so many stories of what it was like to live in a place where currency would lose two or three percent value overnight. You never wanted to have more than a day’s worth of money. My cleaning woman was completely illiterate; she would write her name with an *X*. On Friday, I would pay her the local currency equivalent of \$20. I’d do the exchange rate. She would spend all that money on the weekend because the money lost value every day. One Monday she told me that I had underpaid her; she was right because I hadn’t followed the exchange rate. Here was a person who signed her name with an *X* but understood exchange rate fluctuations and understood the value of money. That’s survival. Crime was really bad at the time. Living in a place that had very high crime made all of us feel vulnerable. However, when you’re young and you’re just enjoying the experience, as much as the crime was a consideration, it was fascinating to live in Brazil.

Q: From São Paulo you were doing economic work, but were there specific sectors you were following or was it just general? How did that work?

DOHERTY: I was following banking and telecommunications sectors primarily. Brazil was starting to privatize some of its industries. São Paulo was the economic powerhouse of the country. If you wanted to talk to anyone in business, they were in São Paulo. Anyone of any political importance was in São Paulo as well. Because I was one of two economic officers at the post and the economy was such a big issue, a lot of what I wrote was read by the embassy. I learned how to report, but also how to make yourself known. When you're in a consulate versus an embassy, the ambassador doesn't know who you are. At such a large mission there'd be no way the ambassador or DCM would ever know well someone at a consulate. So, to get yourself known as a junior officer was by reporting and getting out and meeting people.

Q: Did you also have some commercial advocacy work there?

DOHERTY: São Paulo was a Foreign Commercial Service flagship post. I did work with Commerce officers who were significantly senior to me in rank at the time. For me, learning how to do commercial advocacy and from senior people was incredibly important. Even the Consul General was a former ambassador.

Q: Well, speaking of which, where—did you get mentoring from them? Were they helpful about giving you advice about career?

DOHERTY: My boss in São Paulo ended up being my boss one other time later on in the department and served as a mentor to me for years. I was very lucky at the time that I had such a great boss and mentor to work with.

Q: And you had mentioned that you traveled. Was that principally for pleasure or around the São Paulo consular district?

DOHERTY: It was mostly for pleasure. We were really lucky at the time. VARIG, the Brazilian airline that no longer exists, had a 21-day pass that allowed a traveler to fly as much as you wanted to in Brazil within twenty-one days. A friend and I used it and we traveled just about every place you could imagine in Brazil, from the Amazon to the northeast to the southeast. It was an amazing experience. Brazil, being as diverse as it is both in terms of its own geology, people, and environment, is an extraordinary place to serve.

Q: Now, you were there through the U.S. national election of '92. Did the work you did change as a result of the change in administration?

DOHERTY: My most vivid memory of my time in Brazil was the World Cup in 1994. The United States was playing Brazil on the Fourth of July. We decided to have our Independence Day celebration before the game. For most of the game, the score was tied at zero-zero; the entire city of twenty-two million people was deadly silent. The U.S. was an upstart soccer nation; how could the game possibly be tied? When Brazil scored in the last quarter of the game, the whole city erupted. That's one of my memories of Brazil. Soccer is important for American diplomats to understand. If you serve anywhere Latin

America or Europe, and increasingly in Africa, and you understand soccer and appreciate it, it's a huge value added.

Q: Very interesting. And of course, since you're in Brazil I can't resist asking, was the carnival in São Paulo as good as it was in Rio?

DOHERTY: Rio was by far the most debauched and decadent. I went one year to the one in Rio, which is literally a party that starts at midnight and ends at 7:00 a.m. I also went to carnival in the northeast, which is much more traditional and very different than Rio.

Q: Now, this assignment is two years? So, already by the end of the first year, you're thinking about where you're going to go next, thinking about how you're going to bid. What is your thinking?

DOHERTY: My thinking was, okay, that was fun. Foreign Service - I'm ready to be done. I decided to come back to Washington. I only wanted a job in Washington so I could look for a job outside of the State Department. I bid on jobs in Washington and didn't get any of them because I didn't know how to lobby for a job. I ended up at the last minute signing up for the then-nine-month econ course at FSI. My thinking at that time was "okay, if I take the course I am now obligated to work in the State Department for another two years, but hey, if I have these studies underneath my belt plus my graduate degree plus everything I've done, I can leave the State Department in three years, go work in the private sector, make a lot of money and be happy." That was the plan.

Q: But, well, I just want to ask, by the end of your tour as an econ officer, had you been tenured?

DOHERTY: I had just gotten tenured. During this un-coned time they didn't tenure people right away, I think I was in for four years when I got tenured.

Q: So, you now have the choice of staying, but okay, but you've chosen to go back to Washington for the econ training. Was it a linked assignment? Did they already have an idea of where they wanted to send you?

DOHERTY: You bid as soon as you start the econ course. I thought I would eventually go to the private sector so I took a job in the economic bureau as a follow-on to the econ course, which was pretty standard. I ended up getting hired by my then-former boss from São Paulo who was then an office director in EB.

Q: Was the econ course satisfying for you? Did you get from it what you expected?

DOHERTY: It was grueling and there were things they taught in the econ course that probably were superfluous. But what it did was give me confidence to hold my own with people who were real economists. Most of my career I worked on econ issues. I often ended up representing Treasury's interests in a country. Because I had the econ course—along with everything else I had done previously — I had the confidence and

credibility to be able to speak with authority. The course did give me a lot. There were things that I never used past the day that I studied them, but it gave me an enormous intellectual foundation. For that reason it's something that should be preserved.

Q: Now, where in the econ bureau did you go?

DOHERTY: The first year I worked in the Office of Development and Finance, which was our liaison office with Treasury that worked on World Bank and IMF programs. I can't say it was the most fulfilling job, but serendipitously this was where my career got made. At the time, Haiti was in chaos and we—the international community, the IMF, World Bank - were trying to figure out how to stabilize Haiti. The then-deputy secretary of state, Strobe Talbott, had Haiti as part of his portfolio. Long story short, he tasked a paper: where was Haiti going? The tasker got passed down to the lowest level available – me. No one wanted to write this piece of paper and it ended up on my desk. Because I had a job that gave me time to talk to people in the World Bank and IMF, I was able to write a Haiti strategy paper. The paper was approved up the various levels. Talbott liked the paper. My five minutes of fame. That was that for the moment.

So, after I do one year in development and finance—

Q: Oh, wait, wait, and wait. So, what, at that time—so what do you recall recommending for Haiti?

DOHERTY: I don't remember, but it was in between Aristide's second and third regimes. I'm sure I copied the ideas of the bankers and the economists at World Bank and IMF. Whatever they said, I put it together and—but I do not remember any specifics.

After one year, I then moved to a different office in the same bureau, to the Office of Investment Affairs. I ended up working on negotiating a bilateral investment treaty with Bolivia and we started on one with South Korea. It was toward the end of that second year when one of the deputy secretary's special assistants, who had been working on Latin America and Haiti, went on maternity leave. Based on that one paper on Haiti, I was asked to come up and fill in for two months while she was on maternity leave. I was then asked to stay on after the two months were over. I worked for Strobe Talbott for over two years. My peers as Special Assistants were 01s and 02s, and I was a 03. I was completely over my head. But because of one well-written paper it ended up leading to a job on a deputy secretary's staff for two and a half years, which obviously led to a whole different type of career than I ever would have anticipated. Until that point, my career was going nowhere fast.

Q: So, today is July 10, 2010. We're resuming our interview with Kathleen Doherty.

And Kathleen, what year were you starting work in the deputy secretary's office?

DOHERTY: It was July of 1998 when I started my two-year assignment working as a special assistant for the Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott.

Q: Very good. Just one quick sort of general question when you arrive, what—do you recall—how large was the office, how was it divided in terms of responsibilities?

DOHERTY: If I remember correctly, there was an executive assistant who was a Senior Foreign Service officer and then there were four special assistants. I started on July 20, 1998, and two weeks later were the embassy bombings.

It was early August, and everyone was on vacation; the deputy secretary was in the Galápagos Islands, the secretary of state was on the way to a wedding in Rome. In the office of the deputy secretary of state, I was the only one in the office because I was the newbie. Everyone else had decided to take summer vacation since the deputy secretary was on leave. On August 7, I was woken up in the middle of the night by the Ops Center, who relayed what had happened. I remember them saying, “You need to get in touch with the deputy secretary of state, we don’t know how to get in touch with him.” This was before cell phones. I knew that he was in the Galápagos Islands, but I didn’t have the itinerary at home so I went into the office like everyone else was doing in the wee hours of the morning. I tried to get a call to him on the ship, but since this was before 9:00 in the morning, nothing was open. I finally reached the company that ran the boat. My Spanish was okay but at the time I was stumbling since I was so stressed. The office in Guayaquil didn’t want to patch me through to the ship. I tried to explain that I had an urgent call for a passenger; I wasn’t supposed to say what it was because the news hadn’t broken worldwide yet. I finally was able to convince them to put me through to the ship, using ship to shore radio. I then convinced the captain to go find Talbott. I had to introduce myself as he couldn’t remember who I was.

I told him that I needed to relay an urgent message — he needed to come back to Washington immediately. I wasn’t allowed to tell him why at the time because it wasn’t public knowledge yet. He was on a vacation with his family; he wasn’t sure of why I was asking this and because I was this brand-new staffer, he probably didn’t have complete trust in me. I persisted; “No, this is an urgent message that I’m relaying from the secretary of state; you need to come back.” And he said, “Well, I don’t know how I can. I’m on a ship with other people in the Galápagos Islands. Call me back in a few hours.” I then had to tell all the senior people who were making their way back to Washington that I didn’t know when the deputy secretary was going to come back. Hours later I called the ship to shore radio. By then they’d heard the news about what had happened. Talbott told me he was going to make his way back to DC but it was going to take a few days. While two other special assistants in D also were making their way back, I was the only one from D in high-level meetings. For me being in my job for only two weeks and a 03 officer at the time, it was overwhelming and sobering. What a time to be part of history and to see what was unfolding. I’d be sitting in these seventh-floor meetings with the top people, keeping notes for when the deputy secretary came back. When we talk about what are pivotal moments in someone’s career, this was a really transformational moment in my career.

Q: Yeah, that’s remarkable.

DOHERTY: I ended up working for him for two years and my major portfolio at the time was Haiti. Because I was an economic officer, I also ended up working on Russia and Russian economic issues. I remember doing briefing memos for the deputy secretary of state and representing him in meetings with the Treasury Department as we discussed about whether we were going to help bail out Russia or not. Being the eyes and ears of the deputy secretary for the whole building, getting to know, literally, everyone in the whole building because all papers came through me in the areas that I was covering. I learned so much from different individuals and about issues. It was really an extraordinary experience. My colleagues were great.

Q: So, you worked for him up to the—basically up to the end of the Clinton Administration?

DOHERTY: In the summer of 2000 I left and went to Embassy Rome as an economic officer. I had wanted a lifestyle tour. I went to Rome as kind of a reward for the work I did. It ended up being an incredible experience for a multitude of reasons that I'd like to talk about, but I was also just really lucky to serve in Rome, one of the great cities in the world.

Q: One last question before you leave the deputy secretary's office. Were your responsibilities principally—did you have an opportunity to do economic work while you were there?

DOHERTY: Each of us had regional bureau responsibilities; I had Latin America, Africa and the Near East portfolio. But I also had the functional bureaus — the Economic Bureau and the Bureau of Oceans, Environmental and Scientific Affairs. I worked a lot with EB especially on Russia economic issues. A lot of the issues that we were dealing with I ended up helping explain to the seventh-floor principals. Few people at the time were well-versed in economic issues. In fact, I was re-reading my EERs just to remember, and that's one of the things that Talbott wrote in the EER— that I was really good explaining complex economic terms in language that he understood.

Q: Okay, all right. Great. Great. Did that also—aside from the State Department, did it also give you networking abilities to other agencies, to the Hill and so on?

DOHERTY: With Treasury particularly, mostly upper mid-level officials; one of them, Tim Geithner, became the Secretary of the Treasury in the Obama Administration.

Q: With regard to the Middle East at this point, were—given that you were working on economic issues, did you have a piece of the Oslo Agreement pie?

DOHERTY: I had some role in the Oil for Food issue with Iraq.

Q: I was going to get to that next, but go ahead,

DOHERTY: I don't remember all the details, but I do know later it became controversial. But at the time it was, I think it was an earnest effort to do something practical.

Q: While you're looking, the one other sort of general area of economics I wonder if you worked on was handling the growing problem of money laundering and the whole illegal transverse thing.

DOHERTY: There was a big case that I ended up working on that involved a U.S. bank. I remember working along with The Treasury and NSC (National Security Council) colleagues. Many years later when I served in Russia, I also worked on money laundering issues – in some circles I became known as the dirty money tracker.

I developed an expertise on financial systems, regulations, money laundering and anti-money laundering rules. I think it was a significant factor why I was later selected to be ambassador to Cyprus. The knowledge I gained from the late 1990s working with the Treasury and the intelligence communities on how money flowed through international financial systems, through banks served me very well subsequently in my career.

Q: You know, it's interesting because of the kind of work you were doing for the deputy secretary in many ways, making things immediately understandable to him, were you being considered for the NSC?

DOHERTY: I was being considered, but I was tired. In my career I would work jobs that required sixty, seventy hour work weeks and then I would try to pick a more rational job afterwards when I could decompress. At that point I'd worked for Talbott for two years. And the stress of working on the seventh floor, I think, the knowledge of what went on in the world, when you were constantly confronted with the ugliness of the world you—it was hard to always feel cheerful about the state of the world. People saw the glamour of these jobs because you were working so closely to the pivotal people who were making policy. But they forgot about what you saw and what you heard. There was a lot of that going on, especially right after the bombings. It was the first time we'd really suffered significant terrorist attacks. We had barracks in Lebanon blown up years before, but of a scale like this we'd never confronted that as a country. It was quite a maturing process for any of us, a sobering process. I was ready to leave.

Q: Did you travel with the deputy secretary for anything?

DOHERTY: I did. He at the time was doing a lot of India-Pakistan related negotiations, of which I was not involved in. But I did travel with him when he went to Africa and to Haiti.

Q: That moment was when Pakistan had developed its nuclear capacity and there was a real worry—

DOHERTY: The two issues at the time that really absorbed his time were Kosovo and India-Pakistan, neither of which I did.

Q: A little bit of a foolish question, but I have to ask it, were you able to have any work-life balance at all during those two years?

DOHERTY: Not that I remember. I don't think we could work from home at the time. So, that was where you would have some work-life balance. But I loved the job. It really taught me so much: how policy was made or not made, how the State Department came together and coalesced around an issue or an action, what real leadership was, what real management was. It was worth the tradeoffs for sure those two years. Learning and seeing and being part of this, being a witness to it and contributing to it in whatever micro fashion that I did, was great.

Q: All right. So, we're now going to follow you to Rome. And just sort of a reminder is as you go along, if the new work that you're doing in subsequent posts reminds you of something you learned in the deputy secretary's office, please go ahead and add that in because often, you know, there are—you don't necessarily remember something when you're talking about the office, but then later something comes up and oh, yeah, there was something when I was in the deputy secretary's office that really helped me figure this out. Or, you know, any other posting as well.

DOHERTY: In the summer of 2001, the Italians were hosting the G7 Summit in Genoa. Genoa is a small coastal city and it's geographically very difficult terrain to monitor and protect. In the spring of 2001, there was the rise of the anti-globalization movements; they had held big demonstrations in Washington during the spring World Bank meetings. The Italians decided that because the no-globals were becoming more violent, they were going to lock down the city of Genoa. They erected barriers around the city of Genoa and the only people who would be allowed into the city of Genoa were residents or members of the G7 delegations. Because of my experience working on the seventh floor and having done big VIP visits, I was selected, even though I was relatively junior, to be the senior embassy lead person for all the whole G7. I was in Genoa for two weeks. The no-globals were really violent and ended up destroying a lot of buildings prior to the arrival of all the leaders. An Italian protestor was killed. The city was in lockdown. The only time I was ever tear gassed was in Genoa. I just happened to be walking down the street where police were throwing teargas to push back the rioters.

I and the Management Counselor were in charge of logistics, working with the White House on every aspect of the G7 Summit. At the time we didn't have an ambassador in place because one had not been nominated yet. Embassy staff was split between Genoa and Rome since President Bush was going to do a state visit in Rome after the G7. That was a really intense, insane period of time. This was two months before 9/11; in retrospect, it was clear that there was heightened security. Because the city of Genoa had no five-star hotels, the Italians decided to put all the leaders on cruise ships. We decided not to put President Bush on a cruise ship; we thought it was not safe. He stayed in the best hotel in Genoa – a four-star hotel, not five-star.

I had the chance to meet President Bush a couple different times. I also had the unusual experience of helping to arrange a meeting between Condoleezza Rice and Bono of U2; Bono wanted to speak to her about third world debt. I had the chance to escort Bono to the meeting. I was a huge U2 fan and thought my life could never be better than hanging out with Bono for a whole of what, two minutes?! At the moment it was as close as I had gotten to an icon for me. So, despite all the craziness of being the lead in the embassy for a G7 summit, I had one of my best moments in the Foreign Service, hanging out with Bono.

Q: Were there out—despite the violence and so on, were there outcomes from the Genoa G7 that stay in your mind?

DOHERTY: It was President Bush's first summit. His debut on a global scale, but two months later 9/11 changed—everything changed. I was in Rome on 9/11. A couple of high school classmates died in the Twin Towers. I will never forget that day. But my memories of 9/11 also include the outpouring of support by Italians. Our embassy must have been covered with hundreds and hundreds of candles, letters, and flowers; there were vigils by Italians in the street. The compassion, empathy were amazing. It was a very personal experience for Italians, and they needed a personal connection with us in the embassy. The memories I have are very mixed, the sadness and grief for people who lost their lives there counterbalanced by the reactions of Italians - so gracious, generous, and compassionate.

Q: Remarkable.

DOHERTY: My work did change because of 9/11. There were dodgy groups in Italy that were supporting either directly or indirectly terrorist groups. I used what I learned from working with the deputy secretary of state about how money flowed through financial systems, both formal and informal. The Italian government took money laundering very seriously because they had significant problems with the mafia. The Italians were experienced in combating money laundering, and working together, we tracked down quite a bit of bad money that was flowing through Italy. Their government's expertise in tracking bad money flows was probably the best or among the best in the world. Because I also had worked with Treasury when I was based in Washington, I had interagency credibility when working on this issue.

Q: Now, of course, this is a three-year tour—

DOHERTY: Ended up doing four years.

Q: Ah, okay, a four-year tour, all right.

DOHERTY: It was the one moment in time where one could extend for a fourth year, how could I not take advantage of that?

Q: And so that at some point some of your work begins to move into other areas?

DOHERTY: I managed a pretty big section at the time. I wasn't the econ counselor, but when there was a transition, I ended up heading the section for a while. That's when I started moving to management positions.

Q: Okay. The other aspect, of course, of management is other reporting officers are sending their work through you. And how did that go?

DOHERTY: I loved being in management, though I was never the manager I wanted to be. I was the manager I wanted to be at the end of my assignment, not at the beginning of assignments because I always had a lot to learn. I really enjoyed mentoring and encouraging people to be enthusiastic about this career and give them the skills that they needed to do well. I had a great relationship with the local staff in Italy and many years later, when I came back as the DCM, I already knew people in every section.

Q: During the time you were there, were we negotiating any financial accords with Italy or any bilateral activities of that nature?

DOHERTY: Not that I remember. Most of our work, at least most of the work that I did, was about money laundering and illicit finance. I did do a seminar where we looked at critical infrastructure since they could be potential terrorist targets. I organized, along with the prime minister's military aide, an interagency two-day workshop. We had fourteen people from Washington come over to share information about vulnerabilities and recommendations. This collaboration ended up becoming one of our defining parts of our relationship with Italy for several years.

Q: Okay. The only other general question I had was obviously you were also there as the whole Iraq thing began. And did that also have an effect on the kinds of work you did?

DOHERTY: In Italy, there were groups using hawalas, the informal money transfer system, to get money to legitimate groups in the Middle East, but also to non-legitimate or to the groups that were involved in illegal activity. My work was trying to shore up Italy's financial system and help identify the vulnerabilities they had.

Q: Now, work-life balance.

DOHERTY: Obviously, you are living in a wonderful place, working in a historic building that is one of the nicest buildings the U.S. government owns. The other side of the coin is that everyone comes to Italy; U.S. government officials in the thousands come to Italy. And they all want—all of them want to come to Italy during their normal breaks, which are always around the holidays. As a result, on almost any given holiday weekend, we would have congressional delegations or visiting cabinet officials. Embassy people have to work on almost every single holiday. The work-life balance obviously day-to-day was great, but the volume of work was a lot.

Q: Yeah, okay.

DOHERTY: (Laughs), no complaints, wonderful, wonderful tour, but it's certainly not a place where you don't work hard. People work really hard.

Q: As you're doing the job, are you beginning to think of where you want to go next and are you beginning to lobby?

DOHERTY: I was still thinking I'd still leave the Foreign Service, even though at this point, I already was in the service for 15 years. After Italy, I went to work in the Ops Center. I was a senior watch officer. I really did it with the intent to be in Washington for two or three years and then leave the Foreign Service even though my career was going well. I'm not sure if I mentioned previously that I was in the bottom third in my A-100 class to get promoted to a 03. I was going nowhere fast in my career, as I tell people, but after I worked for the deputy secretary, I ended up kind of right sizing my career. I was right in the middle of the pack in terms of promotions. I didn't have any delusions that I was going to be one of the senior leaders in the Foreign Service. Though as I look through my EERs, it seemed like my bosses started thinking at the time that I had the potential to be a senior Foreign Service officer. I can honestly say I didn't really see it at the time.

Q: Well, of all the jobs to decide to take when you go back to Washington, watch officer, I mean, you knew what you were getting into. It's twenty-four hour shifts and so on. What made you decide to take that?

DOHERTY: When working for Strobe Talbott, I liked the rhythm of being on the seventh floor, seeing everything and being a witness.

Q: So, you're back in Washington in the summer of 2004, I imagine.

DOHERTY: I also thought it would be interesting to be in Washington during a transition period if President Bush hadn't gotten re-elected. Most times people wouldn't have been chosen to be a senior watch officer if they hadn't previously worked in the Ops Center. Because I'd worked on the seventh floor for Strobe Talbott that gave me enough experience to be picked as a senior watch officer. I was very grateful for that.

I was working on December 26, 2004 when the earthquake hit in the Pacific, unleashing the massive tsunami. It was of a scale and gravity that were mind-boggling. What I remember of those immediate days was the extraordinary teamwork. Literally within hours the building was filled with hundreds and hundreds of people - people disrupting their holidays, coming back, driving twelve hours to get there. The amount of compassion, teamwork, leadership was extraordinary.

Q: Now, of course, the Ops Center, is it only one year? So, literally you arrive and within just a few months you have to bid again.

DOHERTY: It was November and I didn't have an onward assignment. I was getting desperate because I didn't have a job.

Q: Now, at this point you're a 02 – or 01?

DOHERTY: I was a brand new 01, just promoted. One evening, while I was on the midnight shift, I was going through the bid list and saw that Moscow was still available. I really had no interest in going to Russia or learning Russian. But I was desperate. I wrote to the DCM in Moscow, whom I knew from when I worked for Talbott. I wrote to him at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, saying hey, I might be interested. I didn't realize that it was 9:00 a.m. in Moscow time. The DCM almost immediately wrote back to me, "Are you serious? Are you really interested in this job?" And I wrote back to him, "I'm not so sure I'm really interested, but tell me about it." And then I get an email from him an hour later and he said, "I just told the ambassador that you're interested in this job."

Q: Oh, boy.

DOHERTY: The ambassador was Bill Burns. I knew Burns from when I was working for Talbott and he was the executive secretary. I then had an email from the ambassador saying, "Are you really interested? We would love to have you." I said yes, thinking, "Okay, I guess I'm going to Moscow, though I really did not want to go." (Laughs) It was only because I foolishly sent an email at 2:00 in the morning, not even giving myself a chance to think about it. By the end of that shift I knew I would be going to Moscow a year and a half later and that I would have to learn Russian. I'm not one of the great linguists of the Foreign Service. I'm a decent linguist. All during Ops, I knew I was going to be in for a year of hell learning Russian. This also made me realize I'm now committed to the Foreign Service, because you don't volunteer to learn Russian to leave the Foreign Service. I'd made that very quick, impetuous decision to say yes to an assignment in Moscow; I regretted it. I thought of different ways to try to get out of the assignment, but I was never going to break my word to Ambassador Burns. I decided to go through with an assignment that I did not want.

I will say now that going to Moscow was a tremendous and amazing experience, though while I was learning Russian and my first six months in Moscow, I thought it was the worst mistake I'd ever made in my career.

Q: I would just like to ask you, the experience of taking Russian, a difficult language, sure, but were you satisfied with the training? Did you feel that at least the way they taught Russian was useful for you?

DOHERTY: At the time, FSI was in the process of hiring new Russian teachers, there was a cohort of younger Russians. There were also many Russian teachers who grew up in the Soviet Union and who were old school. Depending who you got and when you got them, you either had a very favorable experience or a non-favorable experience. In the nine months that I had Russian language training, some of the teachers were great and some were not. The old style ones did not work well for me. I rebelled against that kind

of teaching. I did end up getting a three/three in Russian and learning it well enough to be able to use it relatively effectively when I got to Moscow.

So, today is July 22. We're resuming our interview with Kathleen Doherty as she begins her tour in Moscow.

Kathleen, what year was that?

DOHERTY: This would have been in 2006.

Q: All right.

DOHERTY: When I arrived in Moscow in the summer of 2006, we were at the point where we thought that our relationship with Moscow, with Russia could at some point be positive. There were things that we were working on collaboratively, some areas of cooperation. There also were confrontation and competition, but at the time it wasn't as fraught as it was years later, even several months later.

There were a lot of signs that things were going to be tough in Moscow, but at least the first year that I was there, it was an encouraging time to be working with Russia on economic issues. U.S. companies were doing a booming business in Russia and U.S. foreign investment was coming in. It was a particularly interesting time to be doing economic/commercial work. Reality, though, also was coming to a head. Boeing had a very large multibillion-dollar aircraft sale with Aeroflot, but Putin blocked the sale because of geopolitics. We did an interagency push to get this sale to go through because this meant a lot of U.S. jobs. The Ambassador, DCM, DOD (Department of Defense) colleagues, Foreign Commercial Service colleagues, the economic section, the law enforcement section, the public affairs section, we all went to our contacts and made our case that the sale should be separate from politics; that Aeroflot's aircraft fleet was in such precarious condition that for the safety of Russian passengers the sale should go through. It took much longer than it should have, but eventually the sale did go through. It was really a good example of how well an interagency process can work at post.

Q: Now, let me just ask you. The sale went through?

DOHERTY: Right.

Q: At any point did—later on while you were there, did it again to go through? I mean, there are all sorts of steps along the way.

DOHERTY: This was just the purchasing agreement. And I'm not sure what happened to the delivery. Boeing had a commercial relationship with a Russian aircraft company and was well-positioned.

One of the things that I worked very hard on was getting Russia to forgive Afghanistan's Soviet-era debt. The Afghans owed technically billions of dollars to the then Soviet

Union; Afghanistan would never be able to pay. Iraq also had a lot of Soviet-era debt. Our efforts eventually persuaded the Russians to agree to forgive the debt of both—for Iraq and Afghanistan. I worked on this on a day-to-day level. The secretary of treasury and secretary of state pushed it across the finish line.

I also worked on Russia's OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) accession. This was controversial in Washington: was it better to have Russia within an organization that had a set of rules or outside of it? Was it better to have it outside the tent or inside the tent? During the many initial and even the middle stages of deliberations in Washington, I made the case from the embassy's perspective that it made sense to have Russia inside the tent. The ultimate decision was made by the president. Our work was really kind of critical, laying out the pros and cons of both approaches.

Q: When you said that at least while you were there initially it was a boom time for the Russian economy, that principally was because of the high price of oil and their—

DOHERTY: The gas market was booming, there was a lot of money to be made. Russians were getting extremely wealthy. We dealt with oligarchs, many of whom - as I often have said, there were no Boy Scouts in Russia - had gotten their billions of dollars not from above board behavior. We dealt with them to get them on the better side of humanity and to get them to be less corrupt. We knew we couldn't change the complete culture of what was going on in Moscow, but we tried to have an impact.

Q: With regard to the OECD accession, I have two questions. The first is after you had studied it, were you sufficiently satisfied that whatever the economic tools of measurement are that Russia puts forward publicly were adequate? In other words, they were more or less true. And the second—well, go ahead.

DOHERTY: The embassy was in favor of allowing Russia to start the process of accession to the OECD. Starting the process would have required Russia to sign up to a number of OECD agreements. The OECD, for example, has an anti-bribery convention that must be signed before a state can become a member. Our argument was the accession process alone would sort of compel better market behavior, better behavior by the government of Russia if they really wanted to be part of OECD. We argued that by not even giving them the prospect of accession, they had very little incentive to do anything different.

Q: I see. And the other question relates to the OECD's anti-money laundering.

DOHERTY: Right.

Q: How were—how did you see that aspect of things?

DOHERTY: With all the corruption in Russia, the question always was: was it better to try to bind the country to a certain set of rules, regulations, whether it was WTO (World

Trade Organization) or OECD? We can certainly argue, looking back in history, that accession by certain countries to the WTO and OECD didn't change behavior; there's no enforcement mechanism that comes with OECD membership.

Q: While you were there, did you see changes, at least some positive changes that were required by OECD?

DOHERTY: In the two years I was in Russia, there was a vast expansion in the middle class. Russia was opening up its economy. Super-sized westernized shopping malls were being built. There were five Ikeas in the city of Moscow alone; a real consumer class was emerging. The middle class exploded in numbers. Many American companies were coming into the Russian consumer market and changing fundamentally Russian consumer behavior. Our efforts as an embassy were to encourage market reforms. There were problems, for example, with copyright and fake products. Intellectual property right issues were a huge problem with Russia; the Russian authorities didn't seem to care about it. On one hand, for example, Microsoft had huge legitimate software sales and also had real losses because of pirated software. A lot of our work was to try to get the customs officials, the police officials to care. I can't say we were very successful.

Q: I didn't mean to dominate the conversation with all my questions because during your two years there, obviously there were some very big and important things, but also I'm sure you were following other economic indicators and other aspects of the Russian economy.

DOHERTY: This was during the time when Putin was prime minister and Medvedev was president but Putin was really president. It was a subterfuge that at least there was going to be some change in government and that there was going to be a reformer as president, even though it was not really true. My second year I got involved in oil and gas issues. ExxonMobil had a big plant up in Sakhalin Islands, the islands near Japan. They were having a lot of problems with the Russian government. British Petroleum also had real problems with a joint venture they had with a Russian company; there were a lot of false accusations against British Petroleum. And while British Petroleum is British, the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) was an American, and so we also got involved, not in the direct conflict of British Petroleum with its Russian joint venture problem, but with the protection and interests of the American CEO of British Petroleum. A Department of Energy officer was stationed in our embassy in Moscow. This was the only place I've served where we had a DOE official assigned to an embassy. He really knew his issues inside and out.

Q: Russia under Putin certainly was also trying to create a kind of an old—well, renew, in a sense, the Soviet Union at least economically using economics as part of their foreign policy with the “near abroad.” From where you sat in the embassy, what were you seeing in terms of that policy?

DOHERTY: We were often surprised that the European Union did not take a harder line with Russia on energy issues. They were very dependent on Russian gas. Russia was

much more in the driver's seat than the Europeans should have let them be on these issues. While Russia was booming economically, there started to be a backlash against reformers. Some of them were arrested.

Q: Given that it was relatively thriving, was it also attracting workers from kind of the fringes of Russia to the center? Were there some demographic changes going on?

DOHERTY: There were so many multibillionaires; a wealth I've never seen. Across the street from Lubyanka, which is the FSB's (formerly KGB) headquarters, there was this glitzy shopping center that had a car dealership that sold Maseratis, Jaguars, and Maybach cars; it had Ralph Lauren, Gucci, and Ferragamo stores. This literally is a quarter of a mile from Lubyanka. You had this stark contrast of this glitzy ultra-capitalist society; the people going clubbing and having shopping festivals with diamond-encrusted cars. Then you'd see pensioners selling off their personal items because life had gotten so expensive in Moscow; the poor class became every poorer. It would be heartbreaking to see people in their sixties, seventies and eighties selling a few potatoes, anything. As much as I had seen a gap between rich and poor in other countries it became much more disturbing to me in Moscow because of the grotesqueness of the wealth and the brutality of the poverty.

Q: I can imagine. You commented on the economic relationship with Europe, were there any significant developments with China?

DOHERTY: Not that I recall that well except that I know there was fear in Russia about the growing Chinese presence in the Russian Far East. I had sent one of my great young officers out to the Russian Far East. She reported that many towns in that region were predominantly Chinese. Some of them were day laborers, but a lot of them lived there. It was becoming a Chinese subsection of Russia. There was a lot of concern about that.

As I mentioned, I worked on Soviet-era debt, OECD accession issues, energy issues, and worked with reformers of whom, sadly, all either were pushed out of government, or became co-opted. One of the people I worked with relatively closely was a prominent Central Bank official; he was jailed later in the decade because he did something that crossed Putin.

I would meet really dynamic, forward-thinking younger Russians who saw potential for the country to be more market driven, more democratic in its nature. When I first got there, they had a prominent voice. At the end of the two years I was there, their voices had become much diminished. After the poisoning of the former FSB official, Litvinenko, in London, the deterioration in relations between Russia and the United Kingdom was quite stark. I remember the British ambassador was often tailed by ultra-nationalists. They would heckle him. They would throw things at his car. They would block his car. There was a rise of an ultra-nationalist identity. They were young people obviously stoked and supported by others.

I consider myself lucky to have been in Moscow at a time when we had an agenda where we could work on things together; that it wasn't always confrontational and adversarial; that there were some areas that seemed encouraging at the time. I was invited to a university to give a talk and there was a much more give and take than I think would be probably allowed years later. And having Bill Burns as the ambassador at the time I was there. I had the chance to work for a person who I think is the finest diplomat we've had in generations. Working for Bill Burns was an extraordinary opportunity and gift. For all those reasons, despite my trepidation, reservation and dismay at being assigned to Russia, it ended up, in my mind, probably the most important two years of my diplomatic career.

Q: You had mentioned that it was still a moment where you could have some give and take, some honest give and take about economic issues, was the press, at least the economic and financial press still relatively free? Could you rely on particular Russian magazines or newspapers for honest economic reporting?

DOHERTY: Not honest completely but there were outlets that covered some of the tough issues. English language newspapers had a little bit more liberty. There was a station, I think it was called Radio Echo Moscow, which interviewed people with dissenting voices. I was on a call-in show about, I can't remember what the particular issue was, but it had to do something with an economic issue. An American voice from the embassy on a private radio station that was widely broadcast in it of itself was notable. I think Radio Echo Moscow has been significantly constrained on what it could broadcast in recent years.

Q: Just a whimsical question to conclude. Did the Russian—did any of the Russian television stations play any American television and if so, which programs did they choose?

DOHERTY: Cable television with American shows was available to the wealthy class or the wealthy middle-class. One long, long day in Moscow in the winter when I was so desperate to the sun, I watched on cable a golf tournament that was taking place in Palm Springs just to see what sunlight looked like. The Internet had been a state monopoly service; private sector companies were just coming in. The state-owned company's prices were astronomical, and most Russians couldn't afford it. When private companies started coming in, the Internet started being more affordable but again, still way overpriced for most Russians.

Q: All right. So, a two-year tour. You're already by the end of the first year you're thinking about where you're going to go next. What were your criteria? What were you thinking about?

DOHERTY: I wanted to stay overseas. I'm a city person and never thought I'd be happy to be in a small post. I served in São Paulo, Rome, and now I was in Moscow. London was on the bid list and I thought, Well, I hoped I would end in London at some point. The 01 econ counselor job was open; I bid on it and I got it. So, that's how I ended up in London. I transferred directly from Moscow to London in the summer of 2008.

Q: And no language training?

DOHERTY: No language training, (Both laugh) though there are so many words where you can yourself embarrass yourself if you use the wrong term at the wrong time.

Q: All right. Now, the economic section in London must be very large. How did they divide it?

DOHERTY: There was an economic minister counselor and econ counselor who supervised three different units. There were an internal, external and ESTH (Environmental, Science & Technology, and Health) units. When I arrived, I was the supervisor of those three units and reported directly to the minister counselor. I ended up becoming acting minister counselor for a long time. After the election in November 2008, after the non-career ambassador left post, the DCM became acting ambassador, and the economic minister counselor became acting DCM. I was the acting minister counselor for economic affairs for nearly ten months, December until the following summer when they assigned a senior Foreign Service officer to be the minister counselor. I was the acting minister counselor at the time when the worst financial crisis in decades hit the world.

This was autumn of 2008. The worst financial crisis in decades. I remember shortly after the election, the then Secretary of Treasury, still from the Bush administration, came to London. I was the note taker in a meeting that he had with the CEOs of the major British banks and U.S. financial institutions in London and talked about how close we were to the precipice of an economic catastrophe. I was an eyewitness to all of this. A lot of my financial work and work with banks and financial institutions throughout my career put me in the right place to be at the right time. I had the knowledge of financial markets, understood how money flowed in global markets.

Q: Let me just ask one quick question here as sort of—to sort of set the scene. There are going to be plenty of people who read your oral history and won't have known or experienced this crisis. Back when it happened, I read many efforts at explaining what these unsecured Mortgage backed securities were. Would you take a stab at explaining that?

DOHERTY: At the time, people could buy a house with no money down. You could qualify for a mortgage even if you had bad debt. Lenders, mostly in the United States but also in Britain, would bundle all these subprime mortgages together. The assumption was, even if you had a small number of people default, if you sold that subprime mortgage to investment houses, some value would still remain – high enough to be attractive to investment houses. These helped finance a housing price boom, a bubble, which made these mortgage backed securities worth more – on paper. Pension funds, financial institutions bet heavily that values would continue to rise; that the sum would be greater than its parts, and that there would always be a market for purchasing these. I do not recall how it all fell apart, but the house of cards fell apart quickly. There was a quick realization that people were defaulting at a higher rate than they should have, that people

didn't even make their basic payments. There had been such predatory lending that people should never have qualified for a mortgage; many of these subprime mortgages were worthless. And Lehman Brothers and others had invested heavily in them or sold many of them, they were way overextended with a valueless category of assets. And when this house of cards was literally falling apart, the question became should governments bail out these financial institutions? In Washington, there were discussions whether the U.S. government should purchase Lehman Brothers or whether it could compel a consortium of other financial institutions to purchase Lehman Brothers. I remember when Treasury Secretary Paulson came to London explaining that the U.S. government had no legal basis to buy Lehman nor could it compel any other group of banks or financial institutions to buy Lehman Brothers. When Lehman brothers collapsed, it sent shockwaves through the financial systems; other institutions realized they also were holders of these subprime mortgages and had valueless assets.

Banks were overextended. Modest banks became global players during this time and had a lot of bad debt on their books and didn't know how to offload it. No one was purchasing debt. Europeans considered the U.S. the primary culprit or the primary driver of this crisis; that it was all our fault because we allowed these subprime mortgages to happen. And probably that's a relatively accurate description, except the other side of the coin was that other countries also did it, the UK particularly. The banking system in Europe versus the banking system in the U.S. was on much shakier ground from the very beginning. They didn't have the reserves that U.S. banks did. When they got hit, they got hit extremely hard because they had no cushion. Banking authorities in Europe had become complacent. I might have gotten some of the details wrong, but that was more or less what was happening that created this global economic collapse.

Q: So, there you are in London and the new administration trying to deal with it all, what did you focus on first? What was your most important duty?

DOHERTY: I reported on what the people in the city of London, the financial center, were thinking and how they were reacting. The UK government, like many governments, took short-term measures that acted more like a Band-Aid on a big wound. The embassy would share the latest USG thinking and caution the UK from getting out too far ahead of the U.S. We needed to keep our measures in sync. After the inauguration of President Obama, our work was to report to the new people in Washington where the Brits were. In April 2009, the UK hosted the G20 Summit. It was President Obama's first trip outside of North America and it was the first time that he was going to be meeting any of the G20 leaders. My role was to be the lead embassy person, working very closely with the White House, including helping to schedule all the president's bilateral meetings, with leaders from the G7 to the King of Saudi Arabia. I had done presidential visits before, but it was a brand-new president's first international trip; the stakes were very high for the embassy. I remember that the amount of pressure to get it right was huge. Unlike a lot of summits when it's mostly formality over substance, this was substance as well as formality.

Q: This was a three-year tour?

DOHERTY: It was a three-year tour but I just did two years. After my first year in London and while I'd been acting minister counselor, I got promoted to the Senior Foreign Service. Washington asked if I would be interested in coming back to DC to be an office director in EUR. In my first two years, I had been in the middle of an economic crisis, handled the president's very first trip overseas, been acting minister counselor; I had seen it all in two years. And to be honest, I realize I didn't join the Foreign Service to live in London again. Embassies are not as important in London since there are direct lines between American officials and British officials. The embassy becomes somewhat of a lesser player than it might be in other countries. I was ready to move on. I curtailed by a year and came back to Washington.

Q: You're right, it is very interesting that you could with a clear mind just say yeah, London's a lovely place, but I'm not really getting the kind of challenging work that I'm really ready to do.

DOHERTY: Under normal circumstances I might have felt that way the entire time of the tour, but because I arrived in London during the worst economic crisis in decades, our work was very meaningful. And because there was a transition in Washington and the only people with institutional knowledge were people in our embassy in London, we had a significant role. The embassy's importance comes and goes. People who are in our embassy in London now probably understand BREXIT best and are invaluable.

Q: Yeah. All right. So, you go back to Washington—in 2010?

DOHERTY: When Washington gauged my interest in coming back, I told EUR I was interested in being the director of the Office of Western European Affairs. They came back to me and said no (both laugh), and then said how about the EU office, the Office of European Union and Regional Affairs. I was not enthusiastic about this. I thought working with the EU would be death by detail; the issues were complex and bureaucratic. I was wrong, like I've been wrong before. It was the beginning of the Arab Spring. ERA worked with the Near East Bureau to get Europeans engaged on Arab Spring issues. We did some really great work with the European Union. It was also still the tail end of the economic crisis; my team and I would go to countries and talk about macroeconomic reforms, what the U.S. was doing, and sharing a lot of information. We also were negotiating agreements with the European Union, including on the exchange of passenger name records. ERA had a seat at the table, a place on the interagency negotiating team.

We also made the case to senior Department leaders that President Obama should do a summit with the European Union. These summits had fallen by the wayside; one hadn't happened in a while. We convinced the president's office that it was worthwhile to do it. It was also the very beginning of the discussions of whether we would negotiate a trade agreement with the European Union. Later on there was a full-fledged effort to negotiate what they called a Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement, TTIP, with the EU. The first stages of this discussion happened the first year I was an office director in EUR-ERA.

Q: You had mentioned that you traveled a lot and you were talking to the European countries about the kind of macroeconomic changes, these are macroeconomic changes in the Arab Spring countries, like Tunisia, Egypt and so on?

DOHERTY: The EU was still struggling with its economic growth, not dissimilar to some of the discussions we are having today. Our discussions with the Europeans was focused on them doing no harm to global markets by passing onerous regulations.

With the Arab Spring, the question was: how do you help the Middle East? What was our role as supportive partners; what should we do in terms of economic aid? It was a pretty heady time as we were excited about the Arab Spring and about what the landscape might look like in a few years. We wanted to be on the same page with the Europeans; we wanted to work together on how to support these efforts.

Q: Now, you mentioned the summit. Were there important conclusions that came out of it that you then followed up on?

DOHERTY: Hmm. Summits often are just scripted discussions. (Both laugh) There are always deliverables that come out, but I'm trying to think if there's anything that's specific. I'm looking through my evaluations right now just to see if there was anything specific. The one thing that came out of the summit was agreement to discuss whether we should negotiate a trade agreement.

For at least a decade, there had been discussions why we had NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) with our two large trading partners, but not one with the European Union. There was a lot of discussion within the U.S. government whether we would be able to negotiate something with the European Union given our different approaches to regulation and standards. The conclusion, driven a lot by State, Commerce and NSC mid-level and upper-level officials, was that we had to try. We wrote a lot of position papers. The recognition was that there was more in common than not and that we had a foundation on which to negotiate an agreement, though we knew there'd be areas that would be very problematic too.

Q: They didn't—it didn't end up that we could conclude an agreement, but if you were to choose a few sectors, were we close on any particular sectors?

DOHERTY: Negotiations ended with the end of the Obama Administration, but I think there was progress made in areas that never got formalized. For example, we made a lot of progress toward a mutual recognition of standards. For global companies, for example, there would be a set of U.S. standards and a different set for Europe. U.S. car companies for example, would have to create cars with two different standards. And the costs were significant. We were near the point where if the U.S. certified something as safe then the Europeans would recognize it or vice versa.

Q: Did you find that the EU could speak with a single voice or was part of the problem that there were one or two dissenters and it always slowed things—that always slowed things down?

DOHERTY: Many in Washington believed and probably still believe that having an agreement with the EU would be near impossible to reach because of the inability to get the twenty-eight at the time, now twenty-seven, to have a consensus position. They would point to the Canada-EU free trade agreement that had been concluded, but for some time, a province in Belgium blocked it because it was unsatisfied with some of the requirements. Many in Washington believed that it was not worth our efforts to negotiate an agreement and then at some point a small constituency or even a large state might decide that it was not in their best interests to support it. As much work that was done a decade ago, I think it would be very hard to negotiate an agreement. Recently, the European Court of Justice overturned an agreement on data privacy sharing that had we had concluded with the EU ten years ago. I think it's going to be very hard to convince Americans to get into an agreement with the European if the courts could overturn it and probably the Europeans would say the same with the U.S. if they think the next administration would abrogate any agreement or not uphold it. I do think negotiating an agreement has become exponentially harder given the politics of both regions.

When I think back to my job, it was great to be able to use the knowledge that I'd built up in all my other previous assignments. During that period of time, when I was the office director and then a DAS, I did the most intensive interagency work that I had done. It wasn't always easy.

Q: The other thing that happened to you as you moved from post to post is your intention to leave the Foreign Service and how did that—did that—was that still at the back of your mind now?

DOHERTY: It wasn't as prominent in the back of my mind as it had been in previous posts, but I have to say, I was thinking to myself "you have experience in the EU; you understand the EU; very few Americans understand the EU." And I thought, "Well, that would position me well if I want to go work for a U.S. company that has to deal with the EU and its regulations." It did fit my normal criteria: would I learn something in this job that would be useful for the Foreign Service but also useful after the Foreign Service? But at that point I realized that I was a lifer with the State Department and that I was going to ride it out and see where the ride took me until I was ready to retire.

Q: Right.

DOHERTY: I think at that point I was now twenty years in, and I was ready to make a commitment to the career. (Both laugh)

Q: All right. Now, the other thing about moving up to the deputy assistant secretary position is you have a lot more responsibility for personnel. How did that feel? I mean,

did you feel ready? You know, there are so many issues related to personnel, evaluations, resolving conflicts, building teams, all these sorts of things.

DOHERTY: I don't think you're ever really ready for positions of such a magnitude. When I went to ERA, there were many maybe 12-to-15 Foreign Service and Civil Service staff in the office. Then I became a DAS and had two of the largest offices in EUR; now I had forty or people working for me. I also had the largest portfolio of any of the EUR DASes at the time. I was responsible for the day-to-day management of relations with thirteen countries in Western Europe. I had all U.S. embassies in Western Europe under my responsibility — and thirteen non-career ambassadors. While I would like to think that I was a good manager, I'm sure I wasn't the manager I wanted to be because of time constraints and the stress of the job. At the time, the two offices, Western European Affairs and ERA, were probably responsible for about 60 percent of the paper that came out of EUR. The volume of paper that would come to me as a DAS to review before sending it forward was staggering.

Q: Would you personally become involved or were there ways you could devolve some of the decision making or the—?

DOHERTY: You try to devolve as much as you can. I had two extremely talented office directors, both for Western Europe and in ERA, both of whom could have easily been DASes themselves. I devolved as much as I could to them; they also had strong deputies. The bureau had such extremely talented people.

Q: As DAS did you have to do any congressional testimony?

DOHERTY: I did background briefings since Congress preferred assistant secretaries or above to testify. I would sometimes meet with members of Congress or more often their senior committee staffs prior to assistant secretary testimony or undersecretary testimony to do background briefings on certain issues.

Q: Yeah. Wow. You know, it is a remarkable step up given the—just the amount of work. Were there any particular lessons learned that served you well that you can—that you look back on now that helped you do that job?

DOHERTY: I have an incredible ability to get through information quickly. I could go through the hundreds of emails I'd get in a day and knew pretty well from just a half a second glance whether it was something that I needed to immediately respond to or wait for later in the day or pass it on to someone. All of that started when I was working on the seventh floor, working for Talbott, but then also working as a SWO (Senior Watch Officer). You have to become skilled at email management and knowing what's important and whittling down what's not important and how to use your time wisely. I don't think I could have done the DAS job without having had those other jobs, even more than the section chief jobs I had done in Moscow and London. I think my seventh-floor experience earlier in my career helped me become a more efficient information manager than I probably would have been otherwise.

Q: Do you think that this is teachable, that this skill is teachable? That in other words, maybe the Foreign Service Institute or something could literally develop a class for people to do this kind of thing better?

DOHERTY: Yes and no. I often would try to teach people to make the subject line as compelling, short, and informative. Or with cable, that very first line would make me determine whether I would read it or not. It could be the most important piece of information but if you haven't packaged it well, you're never going to get the recipient to read it. The owner of the information has a greater responsibility to help people who are busy. If you're trying to get the attention of sixth floor or seventh floor people or the ambassador or the DCM in a big embassy you as the owner of the information have to do your job first. Short is never succinct enough.

Q: And action items...

DOHERTY: Make your message clear. I think people are afraid to take ownership of language. Passive voice, unclear analysis. I wondered why people weren't clear; was it because they couldn't write well or were they not confident in their knowledge? Or not confident in sharing? I came to the conclusion it was a combination of all of the above. Once you state it, it becomes yours. And I think people sometimes even are afraid of that. But that's something I think can be taught.

Q: Okay. No, that's—that's one of the things that sort of separates people who do rise to higher levels of authority, you know, the ability to determine what is urgent, what's important and what, you know, you can handle if you have the time.

DOHERTY: I was ruthless in email management.

Q: If you'll forgive me, did you have a work-life balance at all?

DOHERTY: Oh, no. This is the curse of smartphones. When you are a DAS and especially for a DAS in a geographic bureau where every country's important, and not that I'm saying in other geographic divisions countries are not important, but when you have France, Germany, Britain and Italy as main components of your portfolio, something every hour is happening in the relationship with those countries. The information inundation was extraordinary.

Every waking moment even when I was doing other things I still had the phone literally attached to my body and I would not go more than thirty minutes without checking. The expectation was that I would know something when it was happening. There are certain jobs in the State Department that have that burden with it. At the time it was fine. Like everything in the State Department, you make a determination how long you can do it, and how long you want to do it.

Q: You had also mentioned that it—this period, with a variety of the economic issues, was also the most active period for you in interagency work. I'm curious if—how you saw the State Department as an interagency player changed either to become more important in some areas, less important in some areas, how you saw it within the interagency.

DOHERTY: On economic issues in general, State is not the lead agency. On some issues, like sanctions, State Department is the lead. With macroeconomic issues, it's Treasury; if it's trade issues, it is USTR (United States Trade Representative). Security issues like data privacy could be Department of Homeland Security or FBI or Department of Justice. State has amplified its position by being able to contribute to the discussion and bring a lot of things to the table that other agencies may not think of – especially an understanding of the country. Our subject matter agencies, for example, might think having a one size fit all for all of the European Union would work. State understands that twenty-eight countries have different positions and you can't take consensus for granted, even if the EU says they'll get a consensus, they may not be able to do so. That's when State becomes a huge value added to the interagency process, even though we may not be at the head of the table, by being at the table we have a U.S. government position more grounded in reality.

Q: Also during this period were you pulled in to having to make weighted judgements about sanctions against Russia or—I mean economic sanctions against Russia or other countries that were, you know, that took up a lot of your time and attention?

DOHERTY: We started discussions with the European Union about how we should respond jointly to Russia. The fact that I had served in Russia for two years and had worked on it much earlier in my career under Deputy Secretary Talbott gave me some credibility with Europeans. I wasn't just having a knee jerk reaction to Russia, that I had some understanding of Russia and some appreciation for Russia too. My experience in Russia was not wholly negative; in fact, it was largely positive, so I had some credibility when I would engage with Europeans on Russia. I was there to have a complicated, thorough discussion with Europe on where Russia was going.

Q: So, all right. Now, given that you're a DAS, this does now put you in position for consideration as an ambassador. Did people begin coming to you with hints at least that you were under consideration?

DOHERTY: The whole process for becoming an ambassador is opaque. (Both laugh). I decided to throw my name in at that time for an ambassadorship because someone had recommended that I should go through the experience and see how it was done. I had seen one of the countries on the list as—it was in the EU, it was for career people. I decided to throw my name forward. Because I was working in the front office, I did have some support. In fact, I was on EUR's list that ended up going up to the seventh floor for consideration. But because I had not served as a DCM, I felt I wasn't ready, though I had the policy chops, I believed, to become an ambassador. Even though I had managed a large number of people in Washington, I had not managed a large number of people overseas. I did not get picked by the seventh floor to be an ambassador at the time, and

that was the right decision. I think there are maybe a few exceptions of people who can jump from jobs in Washington to being an ambassador without going through the DCM route. But I think, in most cases, if you are a DCM first and then ambassador you are probably a better ambassador in most cases. I learned so much being a DCM that when I became ambassador, I had the whole toolkit, you might say, not to be cliché. Working as a DCM in a large embassy with all the interagency issues that come up makes you a much better senior leader, I think, than just going directly from Washington to an ambassadorship. I was relieved that I didn't get picked to be an ambassador that first time around. When the opportunity to bid the DCM job in Rome — I thought: serving in Rome a second time, does one say no? No. (Both laugh) No disappointment because my consolation ended up being the DCM position in Rome.

Q: All right. So, I'm going to pause the recording.

So, today is August 12, 2020, and we're resuming our interview with Kathleen Doherty.

Kathleen, what year did you go out to Italy as our DCM?

DOHERTY: It was August of 2013. I went to Rome about six weeks before the new political appointee ambassador arrived; I was chargé for a short period of time. Since I'd previously served in Rome nine years earlier – I was going back to a familiar place. Embassy Rome is one of the largest in EUR. It has about 700 people; over twenty-two U.S. government agencies are represented at the embassy. It's a tri-mission; there are also the embassy to the Vatican and the embassy to the UN agencies in Rome; three non-career ambassadors on the same compound. I was the senior DCM of the three missions.

There were some big issues that arose while I was the DCM in Rome. One involved U.S. military bases. We have five U.S. military installations on Italian bases. Everything we do from these bases must have the permission of Italian authorities. In 2013 and 2014, we conducted military activity from these installations on Italian bases; getting permissions from Italians to allow these activities took my time and effort. The ambassador and I worked very closely together with our military attaché to get Italian permission. I built relationships with very high-level Italian officials to ensure they understood why we were asking and also for me to understand their national sovereignty concerns and public opinion. I think in every case, we eventually got Italian consent but it wasn't always easy.

Another area that became an enormous lift was the Milan Expo. It's the World's Fair, now called the World Expositions. Italy was the host of the Expo. Historically we've had problems in our participation in World's Expositions. Congress cut off public funding for these expos about twenty years ago. The U.S. exposition is wholly dependent on private sector funding and fundraising; the U.S. government is not allowed to provide any public funds for it. However, since it's considered a U.S. pavilion, even though it's a privately owned and run pavilion, it needs to have the U.S. government imprimatur. There's no differentiation in the public's mind that a U.S. pavilion is not a U.S. government pavilion.

The private sector consortium that was awarded the license to put together fundraising efforts was a very dedicated, enthusiastic group of individuals, but probably not the right mix of people to raise money. Their goals for fund-raising fell short. The U.S. pavilion had over six million visitors. The first lady came to visit; members of Congress came to visit. But the fundraising never reached the goal. I found out after I left that the Pavilion was in arrears to many companies. I do not know what eventually happened.

Though I and the ambassador were not designated fundraisers, we tried to encourage, cajole, and persuade private sector companies, U.S. companies, Italian companies, high-level U.S. government officials, Congress to support this effort as much as we could. Although initially there was a thought of not participating, we realized at the end of the day we would have to participate because we would be the only country not to do so.

In recent expos, we decided to participate but late in the game. We're always in the catchup process and then we're dependent on private sector. And we're in a position where we can't raise money. On one hand, we all should have been proud of the U.S. pavilion. It highlighted U.S. innovation and ingenuity. We had a vertical wall growing crops. The design was beautiful. But the fact that we collectively were unable to reach the fundraising goals and had arrears to many entities I think is a shame. It highlights the problem caused by the Congressionally-imposed restrictions on public financing. If we didn't participate it would be a public embarrassment, a national embarrassment, but we're really hamstrung by this legislation.

But we did do a lot of work as a mission, trying to make it successful. We worked on messaging, supporting high-level visitors and maintaining relations with Italian officials who understood what we were going through and not letting the negative stories overshadow the positive story of what was accomplished.

Q: Although we could not provide any funding, did we provide any in-kind support or were there people from the embassy, the foreign commercial service or something, who staffed it at some time?

DOHERTY: We increased our staff to help on public diplomacy aspects; we also had designated expo liaison officers who worked with the private sector group. We got some additional funding to have TDY (Temporary Duty assignment) help. All post-expo analyses have concluded the absence of public funding limits what we can do. We need seed money or matching money for private sector that would give the private sector incentives to raise funds or contribute to the fund-raising. The private sector doesn't have complete control over the pavilion because it is seen as a U.S. national pavilion. Our participation becomes this very weird hybrid project with no owners or too many owners or ill-defined owners. I know after the Milan experience, even on the Hill, there was some concern about what had happened. We have to solve the issue of public funding or some kind of public support for it.

Q: Yeah, yeah. It really does, having talked to other people who were involved with the expos, it is a constant theme.

DOHERTY: Expos are a matter of national pride for every country that participates. We always want to be the biggest pavilion because of our stature as a nation, and yet we put these restrictions on ourselves that make it impossible to meet our aspirational goals with the reality of what we can do.

The third basket of issues that I worked on had to do with security issues. While I was in Rome, ISIS (The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) put on its website that Rome was one of its planned targets because of its hedonism and Western orientation. This was an enormous concern for the tri-mission. While this had nothing to do with ISIS, on the first day the non-career ambassador came to work, we had a security threat. I was in his office welcoming him, when the alarms went off in the embassy and marines, within seconds, came storming into his office all dressed in battle gear. The new ambassador was “What the hell’s going on? Is this normal?” I pulled him into the back of his office, into the bathroom with no windows. During the early morning patrol, security officials found a package, with wires poking out of it, thrown over the huge perimeter fence that surrounded the complex. The bomb squad came and disposed of it. It was not a bomb but made to look like one. Given all the concern about security, a lot of my work with the senior tri-mission DCM was to ensure we were taking the precautions to keep everyone as safe as possible.

The embassy to the Vatican has historically had its own independent building. In the 2000s, the U.S. government purchased a building on the same square block and complex where the U.S. Mission to Italy was. The State Department decided that Embassy Vatican would be brought onto the compound and co-located in a building that had some operations belonging to the bilateral mission to Italy. This decision was made for security reasons. But it became political. Even though the embassy to the Vatican was not located in the Vatican territory, but located in Italy, it still had a degree of independence from the embassy to Italy. Putting all three missions onto one compound was seen by some as downgrading the mission to the Vatican. We had to make sure Vatican officials understood that it was an independent mission, and that our mission to the Vatican also felt that it had its independence. Some members of Congress felt very strongly that the Embassy Vatican should never have moved. At one point a member of Congress had recommended that no one from the embassy to Italy could walk in front of the building of the embassy to the Vatican because that would have been perceived as encroaching on the independence of the embassy of the Vatican. As the senior DCM in the tri-mission, working with three non-career ambassadors - who all were terrific individuals, I have to say - I had to resolve issues that were important to missions – like parking spaces and who got access to what and to whom. Being a DCM in a tri-mission, you have a whole set of other issues that you wouldn’t have in a bilateral mission.

Q: I’m curious about one thing. Certainly, the administrative aspects of running three missions will challenge you. Were there policy coordinations as well or were they completely separate in that sense?

DOHERTY: Policy coordination was very limited; the three missions are independent. Though regarding Milan Expo, our ambassador and the mission to the UN agencies in Rome —World Food Programme and the Food and Agricultural Organization — provided support in terms of content and context for our work and helped us identify experts to be brought over to give lectures and discussions. With the embassy to the Vatican, there are very strict lines of independence. It gets complicated when the president or secretary of state comes and the call has to be made who has jurisdiction over that visit. If you have a VIP who's meeting with anyone at the Vatican, when you go into the Vatican territory, the Italian police drop out and the Vatican police come in for the motorcade, even though the Vatican police are Italian. They're a special police detail that's just for the Vatican. The orchestration of visits are incredibly delicate, even to the point of which ambassador meets the VIP as the person is descending down the steps; is it the ambassador to Italy or is the ambassador to the Vatican? There's a highly delicate negotiation between various missions. Even resource issues are complex. The budget for our mission to the UN agencies comes from the Bureau of International Organizations, whereas the Vatican and Italy receive funding from the European Bureau. By far the most demanding job I had in the Foreign Service was the DCM job in Rome. And probably in many ways the most fulfilling because every day there were a thousand different tasks - everything from really sticky personnel issues to these major policy issues that involved the U.S. military to dealing with parking spaces for the various missions.

Q: Was there an episode with the military that a delay really caused a major mission difficulty?

DOHERTY: There was one case when the U.S. military said something was super urgent and they wanted an immediate response from the Italians. When we didn't get it, we got calls from frustrated and angry senior Pentagon officials. After several conversations, I realized it wasn't an immediate operation they were doing. They just didn't want to have to wait for Italian consent. The cultivation of relationships with long-term allies and partners is a multi-year process. It is a person to person process: you can't just automatically assume certain decision making by our partners without having built a level of trust and confidence and respect. I had credibility with the Italians in that they understood that I understood them. And my Italian was very good; they recognized that I had invested time to learn Italian well.

We had many entry level and mid-level officers at post. Many people from the 22 U.S. government agencies at post had never served overseas before. Helping other government agency representatives understand what country teams were, what was expected of each U.S. government agency in terms of reporting to the deputy chief of mission and ambassador. I adopted the best practice of a friend of mine who was a DCM and set up a biweekly coffee hour. My OMS put out an announcement that said the DCM was open from 10:00 to 12:00 every other Thursday for anyone who wanted to talk. I had local employees to family members to officers come just to chat about their concerns or sometimes their plans or their ideas. It was a great opportunity to meet people in the

embassy. I really thought it was one of the best things I'd done. I kept it up for the two years I was there.

Q: So, a different kind of question. By this point, the embassy is using social media. Were you personally using it? Did you have, say, a Twitter account or did you personally put content or material up?

DOHERTY: No, I did not. That's a good question. I'm trying to think about why we did not do it. 2013 was only seven years ago, but I think only the most innovative embassies were doing a lot on social media. We were slightly more traditional. I do remember this one particular case involving an Italian minister who was born in an African country. She received racially-oriented hate emails and tweets. At my direction we tweeted in support of her. That also got us in trouble too with the trolls, but we felt it was worth the risk. I really felt very strongly that she get the support that she needed from us.

Q: I was curious because some posts, probably smaller than Rome, are able to get into conversations with people in the society who have just kind of general curiosity about an embassy or the U.S. or something and sometimes social media can be useful that way.

DOHERTY: I was probably a little bit risk averse and wish I had pushed the team to do something more creatively.

Q: And then, the only other question that I have is you've mentioned all of the administrative difficulties, were there any political or economic issues that were irritants while you were there that you sort of had to manage the way you did in other embassies?

DOHERTY: Russian influence was growing in Italy. One of the differences between when I was there in early 2000s and the time when I was there in 2013-2015 was the increase in Russian tourists. But there were also a lot of Russians with "unexplained wealth" living in Italy. We cautioned the Italians to be wary of what Russia was trying to achieve in Italy. The message was delivered repeatedly but how much was it heard? They didn't necessarily want to hear what we were trying to say.

Q: Now, you also said it was two years for you. Which is a little less than usual.

DOHERTY: During my second year, EUR reached out to me to see if I would be interested in being on its list to be ambassador to Cyprus. I did not seek it out. I was very happy in Rome and in fact, I did not want to leave Rome early. DCM Rome is one of the best jobs in the Foreign Service. I wasn't necessarily wanting to cut it short. But no one should ever think twice if asked to be considered for a chief of mission job, especially for a place as interesting as Cyprus. I immediately said yes. The process moved pretty quickly. The time from when I received the D committee's approval to getting to post was about 16 months. I didn't really anticipate that it would happen so quickly, to be honest.

Q. Now when do you leave Rome? Because I guess you do have to go back for consultations and so on.

DOHERTY: I literally left Rome for two weeks of consultations and to get sworn and then headed to Cyprus. It wasn't ideal, but that's how it transpired. Cyprus had not had an ambassador for a few months because my predecessor decided to retire toward the end of his three years. I got voted out of committee with a bunch of other ambassadors on the last day, in the last hours of the summer session. Getting voted out was easier for some ambassadorial nominees than it was for me. Senator Menendez from New Jersey has a very active interest in Cyprus and has disagreed with U.S. policy in Cyprus for a very long time. So, both during my hearing and subsequent to my hearing when he sent questions for the record, he was not satisfied with my/department answers. He was holding me up. But in the last hours of that last day of the summer session he agreed to lift his objection.

Q: Well, could you, assuming it's not classified—could you—

DOHERTY: It was quite an exchange. Long and short, Senator Menendez felt that the U.S. government had taken too much of a conciliatory position with Turkey, and has never been willing to criticize Turkey enough for its activities vis-à-vis Cyprus. During the question period, Senator Menendez was trying to push me to say things that would be critical of Turkey. It was a testy exchange though I respect Senator Menendez and I enjoyed working with his staff. Subsequently when I was ambassador to Cyprus, we had occasions to interact when he came to Cyprus.

When I had my hearing, my fellow co-panelists were ambassador nominees to Poland, Estonia, Norway, and to one of the UN agencies. I got the lion's share of questions. My colleagues on the panel said, "We didn't expect that", and I said, "I didn't expect it either." (Laughs) At the very end of the exchange with Senator Menendez, it was getting a little testy and he asked for more time from the chairman to continue questioning me, which the chairman gave him. Senator Menendez said, "Oh, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate it, though I'm not sure that Miss Doherty appreciates the extra time." I replied to Senator Menendez, "That's okay, Senator Menendez. I'm from New York, I can take it." And he said, "Ah, New York, a great suburb of New Jersey." At which point we all started laughing. I said, "That's a great response, Senator Menendez". It dissipated the tension. That happened in July and six weeks later I was in Cyprus.

Q: When you arrive in Nicosia, of course you have what is called one of the frozen conflicts, could you describe where we were in that issue between the Greek part of the island and the Turkish part of the island?

DOHERTY: I was very fortunate to arrive at a time of renewed hope and negotiations. Six months prior, in the spring of 2015, a pro-unification Turkish Cypriot leader had been elected. Since we don't recognize the north as independent, we do not use the name president to refer to the leader of the Turkish Cypriots. He had been a mayor of north Nicosia and had worked very closely with his Greek Cypriot counterpart. He was born in

the Greek Cypriot part of Cyprus, in the same city where the Greek Cypriot president was born, in Limassol. They were of the same age; they knew each other.

The Greek Cypriot president had been elected the year earlier on a pro-unification platform. The constellation was very much aligned for having successful negotiations that could lead to unification. Talks were under UN facilitation. The U.S. was not a formal party to the negotiations. The main players were the two Cypriot leaders, and the UN Special Envoy, the former Norwegian Foreign Minister and Defense minister, Espen Barth Eide, and his impressive team. The Cypriot leaders would meet, or their teams would meet on UN premises and negotiate. The UN has a peacekeeping mission as well as civilian mission in Cyprus; UN troops still patrol the UN buffer zone. While the U.S. did have an informal role in the negotiations, any settlement would need the UN Security Council member approval. All UNSC members had an informal role in encouraging unification. In the most optimistic view, the unification of Cyprus was one of the issues that UNSC members more or less agreed upon. We would meet fairly regularly as the UNSC ambassadors to talk about the status of the negotiations and the obstacles, and how we could help bring the two parties together.

I had a close relationship with President Anastasiades, who was the Greek Cypriot leader/president of Republic of Cyprus. I also had a close relationship with the Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci. I met with both of them regularly, usually just the two of us and a note taker on both sides. They would share with me, to some extent, their positions, concerns, and fears. They would also share their complaints about the other, and rightfulness of their positions and try to convince me the other party was wrong. I did my own version of shuttle diplomacy between the two sides. I also worked very closely with the UN. I had a confidential relationship with the UN envoy. He would also share, within reason, certain obstacles they were facing to see where we could help. And the mission itself did a lot of work with NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) groups, civil society groups on both sides of the island and got their take on what was expected and hoped for. One of the ideas on the table was to create a federal republic of Cyprus. The Legal Affairs Bureau at State seconded one of their lawyers to the island for a couple months to help do a comparative study of constitutional federal systems. We offered experts on how to create a federal national police, given that the two sides had different policing practices and spoke different languages. The very first year I was there was a really heady time. We had Secretary of State Kerry come. Vice President Biden was very involved in this discussion. Even in January of 2017, in one of his very last acts as vice president, he called the two Cypriot leaders to encourage them to overcome a major impasse.

Q: Can you say what this particular issue was?

DOHERTY: There are several thousand Turkish troops still in the north and the Greek Cypriots want them gone—wanted them gone on day one of a unified country. The Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, I should say, felt that until it was proven that the island would stay stable and secure, this security force needed to stay in one form or manner. Under discussion was a multi-year timetable for a staged withdrawal. There were many

disagreements in other areas – the governing structure, the role of the president – but the main issue was and is: what do you do with the Turkish military presence on the island? Greek Cypriots want them gone on day one and the Turkish Cypriots do not.

In January of 2017, as our administration was changing, one of the last acts of the Obama Administration was the call by the vice president. The UN, all of us were doing our part to keep talks going. But after January 2017 things started taking a much more negative turn in the negotiations but many were still hopeful. In July 2017, for the first time ever, there were formal five party-talks: the two Cypriot leaders and the foreign ministers from Turkey and Greece and high level officials from the United Kingdom. When Cyprus received its independence from Britain in 1960, written into Cyprus's founding documents, the United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey were given the right to ensure the safety and security of the island. Because any final agreement would have to be accepted by the United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey as well as the two leaders, the five parties were represented at the table, negotiating; the EU was there as an observer state. The UN was there—

Q: I have a question about the EU. Since the Greek side of the island is now part of the EU — how would that be resolved once the island becomes a federated nation?

DOHERTY: That was part of the negotiations. The EU was giving expert advice to Turkish Cypriots so that they would be able to meet EU obligations once the island was unified - agricultural products, for example, would meet EU standards, the banking system would meet EU standards. The EU was providing both financial assistance and expert advice to Turkish Cypriots in these areas, though at times the Greek Cypriots were hesitant to allow the EU to do so. As the atmosphere on the island started to deteriorate, and more problems arose, obstacles, sometimes deliberately and sometimes inadvertently, were placed in the way.

Other questions included what the governance structure would be: would there always be a Greek Cypriot president of the island or could a Turkish Cypriot be president? Would there be a rotating presidency? Who would get the ministerial jobs, how would these be divided, would it be divided by ethnic lines? Sometimes there seemed to have been a consensus and then one or the other party would subsequently object to it and things would break down.

My role was to be a sounding board for both sides and to challenge their assumptions about the other. We brought expertise when we could to support the UN. All parties knew that if an agreement was reached, the U.S. would play a pivotal role at the end of the day as a UN Security Council member. I personally had a key role helping all sides understand each other and calming things down when things got heated. I was privileged to be part of a very intense negotiation. I'm not going to share my views of why it broke down. I think that's something for historians to decide. There were many owners of the failure.

Q: Now, speaking of many owners, you've talked about the people who were doing the negotiation, sort of the inner circle. Were Greece and Turkey also involved or were there—was their influence felt?

DOHERTY: Greece said it should be a Cypriot-led process and that they would support whatever the Cypriots came up with. They obviously have a lot more affinity to the Greek Cypriot side and the Greek Cypriots feel very close to Greece. Greece has its own relations with Turkey independent of Cyprus. I think many Cypriots would prefer that Greece define its relationship with Turkey solely on the Cyprus issue. Turkey - many people will say was too much involved in the negotiations, that they were controlling the Turkish Cypriot position. In my own view, that wasn't wholly true. I'd say that the Turkish Cypriots had some independence from Ankara, maybe not to the degree that would have been beneficial for a resolution, but also not as directed by Ankara as many people think. That's about all I can really say in this format. As Erdoğan became more extreme in his own political positioning, I think it became much more difficult to reach an agreement. I don't think it was the only reason the talks failed, but Erdogan made it much more complicated.

Many Cypriots had told me when I arrived in 2015 that an agreement needed to be reached by early 2016 because the global landscape would change that year, including in the U.S. Not predicted was the attempted coup in Turkey during this period of time and the worsening of U.S.-Russia relations. Russia's interest in Cyprus is complex, and—

Q: I was going to ask you about that, but—

DOHERTY: Whether Russia really was in favor of a unification is up to interpretation. Many factors increased the likelihood of failure, even if everything lined up perfectly on the island.

Q: Given your experience with Russia and particularly Russian money and its influence, how did that play in Cyprus? Not necessarily only for the talks, but also for the Cypriot economy and so on.

DOHERTY: Russia has a disproportionate influence in Cyprus. Cyprus is one of the top foreign direct investors in Russia. How can a country of 800,000 be in the top three of foreign direct investors in Russia? It's Russian pass-through money: Russian money leaving Russia, going to the Cypriot financial system, coming out of the Cypriot financial system and being reinvested in Russia. Some of the money is clean and legitimate and a lot of it is not. I was quite outspoken about the corrupting influence of Russian money in Cyprus. Russians were the second largest tourism group to Cyprus. There were about a million from the UK who would come to Cyprus, but about 800,000 Russians would come to Cyprus. Cyprus also granted citizenship to several prominent Russian oligarchs, which meant they then had EU citizenship. Some of these oligarchs were on our sanctions list. Russia has very long historical ties with Cyprus. Before Cyprus became a member of the EU, it was a member of the non-aligned movement. One of the major political parties in the Republic of Cyprus is the communist party, when you go into their

office, you see the hammer and sickle and a statue of Lenin. The Russian Orthodox Church and the Greek Orthodox Church have ties. Russians living in Cyprus created their own political party in Cyprus.

The Russians had a radio station in Cyprus. Limassol was nicknamed Leningrad because Russian was spoken predominantly in the city rather than Greek or English. Cyprus is the playground for the Russian money class. Many Greek Cypriots never had a favorable impression of the U.S. Greek Cypriots would repeat to me their interpretation of what happened in 1974, which was that the U.S. could have prevented Turkey from sending in the tens of thousands of soldiers to the island, which eventually led to the division of the island. They would often tell me that the U.S. bears responsibility for the legacy. So there was lingering anti-Americanism and not a lot of contemporary positive American presence. There are not many Americans who go to Cyprus, unless you happen to be of Cypriot ancestry. There were few U.S. companies in Cyprus, which we can talk about in a minute because ExxonMobil ended up being a major player in Cyprus when I was there.

Historically Cypriots never put the U.S. high on its list of favored partners. In fact, there was polling done asking Greek Cypriots if they had to choose one country to be responsible for their safety in a unified island, what would you want? They picked Russia as number one. They saw Russia as their best ally—at least in terms of money. Russians were investing a huge amount of money in hotels and luxury apartments. The skyline of Cyprus changed significantly as these multi-million dollar apartments were being built mostly for Russian money, both legitimate and illegitimate. There was no way the U.S. could compete against that.

One of the things I can say maybe with pride is that partly because of what I did and what our mission did in terms of the soft diplomacy, attitudes toward the U.S. started to change. As I was leaving Cyprus, Greek Cypriots, in a poll, put the U.S. as their preferred strategic partner rather than Russia. This was a start.

While the negotiations were ongoing, the Greek Cypriots were auctioning off gas licenses for exploration. There had been some minor gas discoveries off the coast of Cyprus, one of which was by an American company, Noble Energy. A behemoth gas field in Egypt had recently been discovered; studies were done that showed Cyprus could have similar topography. This was big stakes competition. The Italian gas company ENI, the French company Total, competed. And at the end of the day ExxonMobil decided to compete. It was the first time ExxonMobil had bid on anything in the eastern Mediterranean. I worked very closely with ExxonMobil officials in helping them understand the risks and the benefits. I also played a key role with Cypriot officials extolling the benefits of an American company investment in the island and what the long-term effects could be. It became a real exercise in influence. The Italians and French brought in very high-level government officials to persuade the Cypriots to favor their companies in the decision-making process. We didn't send anyone except for me because Cyprus was not high on the radar of the Trump Administration; especially in its early days no one really paid attention to it. I wasn't representing ExxonMobil because ExxonMobil didn't need

that; eventually the decision on the gas license was going to be decided on commercial grounds. At the end of the day the Greek Cypriots did award the contract to ExxonMobil, which was a very big deal.

Turkey believes that the Republic of Cyprus has no right to auction gas licenses. Turkey hasn't signed the Law of the Seas treaty, it doesn't abide by that. And it also believes that any decision about gas licenses should include Turkish Cypriots. The U.S. government maintains that the Republic of Cyprus has the right to issue gas licenses, it has the right to explore and develop its economic zone. Turkey stopped some Italian oil rigs from doing exploration. Everything that goes on in the Eastern Med has some nexus with Cyprus, and the lack of resolution about Cyprus' political state, the lack of a unified island, complicates things enormously. A divided island makes things like gas development, refugee issues, NATO membership, and EU membership, more complicated.

Q: Wow. Fascinating. Good luck. (Laughs) It's, yeah, that's a difficult one.

DOHERTY: It was really tough. As I was leaving Cyprus, I and my team decided that as much as unification has been a number one priority for the U.S. government for forty years, after this last failure, we asked whether our entire policy towards Cyprus should be defined by this single issue. Or should we look at Cyprus in a more multidimensional issue. It's an EU country, it's the easternmost part of Europe, 100 miles from Syria, 100 miles from Israel, Lebanon too. I made the recommendation that while we still want unification, we needed to think differently. My team wrote the draft of new strategic arrangement with the Republic of Cyprus. The situation in the north is also becoming more complicated as its population, demographics change significantly. Turks are moving to the north, it's becoming more Turkish in terms of its culture. Turkish Cypriots are Cypriot first and foremost, but Turkish Cypriots are becoming a minority in the north.

Q: Are our military relations growing in any significant way? Because obviously for staging or just for ship visits, that sort of thing, even that can be sort of a significant thing in increasing relations.

DOHERTY: We did have a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff come to Cyprus for the first time. We invited Greek Cypriots officials to visit one of our aircraft carriers. Those are things that we had never done. What's also strange about Cyprus is when Cyprus got its independence from Britain, Britain maintained sovereign territory in Cyprus. There were two significant British military bases on sovereign UK territory in Cyprus. It's about 100 square kilometers of land. When I would visit the British sovereign areas, my Greek Cypriot police escort could not come onto British territory. I'd be picked up by British police. And it's UK territory, UK rule. The status of the British bases under BREXIT is very complicated. We didn't get involved in the BREXIT discussions because it was not appropriate for the U.S., but we were an interested party in having the British be able to maintain their bases in their post-BREXIT world. The British conduct military activity from its bases in Cyprus, on UK territory. Now with BREXIT, how do they get goods and services into British territory in Cyprus? Do they have to put up customs borders again? This was being all negotiated when I was leaving.

Q: So, these are—what you've just outlined are the sort of major issues that as ambassador you had to deal with. What about some of the more local things? Was security in general okay for you and the embassy? That kind of thing.

DOHERTY: I had a twenty-four-hour police detail when I was out in public. The residence is on the embassy compound and is literally attached to the embassy. There is no privacy; there is no separation of work-life. In and of itself Cyprus is perceived as safe, but in 1974 the U.S. ambassador was killed in the internal conflict, and even the house of which I lived in was named after the ambassador who was killed in '74. Cyprus is close to regional hotspots. But I never really felt unsafe.

Q: What about the money laundering issues? Did we engage with them in any significant way?

DOHERTY: When you have a lot of money coming through a country whether it's legitimate or not legitimate it ends up being corrupting. There's just too much money coming in and too much money to be made.

Q: So, in essence when Russia as a nation has a major economic downturn it's going to be felt in Cyprus?

DOHERTY: The Russians would go elsewhere; Russian money would be pulled out. Going back to the narrative of how and why I was in Cyprus, I think in part was my knowledge of Russia, Russian money, and how Russia engages with other countries. There was a pattern developing in my assignments, in my knowledge base and my expertise that I developed that led to my last assignment. I was able to bring a lot to the table as an ambassador. If you'd asked me back twelve years earlier when I was starting to go down this path, I never would have expected this.

Q: Fascinating...Were there others—well, I'm always curious, was there a—were there any American archaeologists or anyone from that sector active Cyprus? Were there connections there?

DOHERTY: There has been a long-term relationship between Cypriot and American archaeologists in Cyprus. There's an organization called the Cypriot-American Archaeological Research Institute. I did some of the digs. I've now joined the board of trustees of that Institute. After I left the State Department, they asked me if I would be interested in serving on the board. One sad element to note: all the archaeological sites in the north are deteriorating and not being explored. Neither Americans nor Europeans have permission to go explore those sites. I think one of the many tragedies of Cyprus' history will be the likely destruction, just by time and neglect, of these archaeological sites in the north. Turkish Cypriots try but they don't have money to protect these sites and things are being bulldozed over and looted. It's a very sad story. It also happened in the south, but it's happening less now and there's a much greater awareness of the rich archaeological history of the island.

Q: And the eternal question of social media. Did you become a somewhat more active social media presence?

DOHERTY: No. (Both laugh) My predecessor was relatively active on Twitter. The Cypriots overreact to things – this was often a political calculation by them. When I arrived, the social media environment was so fraught that I made a conscious decision to be quiet for a while. Given the sensitivities on the island, messages have been done in three languages. I made the decision that it was too fraught of an environment, especially during the negotiations, where we could have made a misstep by using the wrong word in one of the three languages.

Q: Were there any other aspects of ambassadorship sort of aside from the very, wow, articulated policy issues that you look back on and think, Yeah, these were important as well?

DOHERTY: I made a real emphasis to engage with Cypriot youth. We did a lot of great things with young Cypriots, funded start-up and entrepreneurship programs. We brought young Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots together as entrepreneurs, and sent them to the U.S. for training. We had great Fourth of July parties that were always held in May or June because of the summer heat. The day after the formal Fourth of July reception, we would have a special outreach event, with the band that came for the formal event, for young Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. I loved spending time with young people.

Being the first U.S. ambassador who happened to be a woman, I made it a point to engage with Cypriot women on both sides.

I'm a very active person. I'm a serious but not fast runner. I would run races, and by doing that, a lot of people on the island got to know me. By the time I left, I was a very well recognized public figure. I traveled everywhere on the island. As I was departing Cyprus, on the day I left the embassy, my security detail had taken a map of the whole island and covered in orange marker all the places that I had gone. When I showed it to the embassy staff, they all gasped because none of them had ever seen that much of the island. Greek Cypriots don't go to the north very much, Turkish Cypriots don't go to the south very much; I had seen more of the island than just about anyone has ever seen of the island.

I was extremely curious about the island – its history, its archaeology. Because I'm a very active hiker and runner I just got out among people. It was not with any intent to be a public figure; I just did what I liked to do. I think because of that - whether I was successful on policy will be determined by historians - I was successful by being authentically me.

Q: Now, are there any other topics, because I've now exhausted the question that I have for you, but are there topics that I have not asked you about?

DOHERTY: No, I think that covers Cyprus.

Q: Now then, as you're approaching the end of the Cyprus tour, what are you thinking about for your next step, your next place?

DOHERTY: I ended up being the longest serving ambassador in Cyprus just because of the long delay in confirmation of my successor. I had lined up almost a year and a half prior to my departure from Cyprus to become a dean at FSI. It was time to pay it forward. I feel very strongly in paying it forward; I'd benefitted immensely from having great mentors. I'm eternally grateful that the director of FSI held the job for me for six months because I got there about six months later than I anticipated. They had someone fill in temporarily. I ended up doing the dean job for just about a year since I decided to retire from State. Two aspects of the time at FSI stand out to me. I had the chance to interact with all the A-100 classes that year, and to be a formal mentor to the 200th A-100 class. What an incredibly fulfilling experience it was to meet the next generation of diplomats; they are a diverse group in terms of ethnic, racial, gender background, but also just in terms of experience. The vast majority of incoming people have lived overseas already, even if they're twenty-three or twenty-four years old. Far different than the class I had joined thirty years earlier. It was really exciting to be part of their mentorship. I did small group meetings and brown bag lunches on issues that they chose. Some of them wanted to know what it was like to be a woman in the Foreign Service, economic officers wanted to talk to me about economic work.

When I was a dean in FSI, we decided that area studies needed to be reformed and to be much meaningful in terms of its focus and substance. I was working with the team at FSI to do that. We set in motion a total revamp of the area studies program that was initially launched in January, the month that I was retiring. We put into place the structure of a reinvigorated area studies; we hired faculty of superb people with great experience and depth, different ways of teaching, more modern ways of teaching. It was really exciting, to be able to see a rebirth of something that I felt was really important. My last year in the Foreign Service was incredibly fulfilling and enjoyable.

People ask why I left. I felt it was time, not because of any other reason. I was offered a great position with the Annenberg Foundation Trust and decided to accept. I had done just about what one can do in the Foreign Service – an ambassador, a DCM in a big embassy, a deputy assistant secretary, and a dean. I was grateful for all the opportunities I had been given and all that I had seen and done and the people I had met. I thought it was time to leave on a really high note, rather than leaving feeling frustrated or disappointed or angered.

Q: I just want to ask you one question about the change in the area studies program. Certainly, I took many area studies in the time I was in the Foreign Service. Did it become more attentive to the actual conditions on the ground in the countries currently? Because the area studies when I took it generally focused on general themes, general history, and general culture and so on.

DOHERTY: Our intent was twofold. In the last five years, area studies got delinked from language. Those in language training could either take area studies or not, before or after areas studies. We thought long and hard about how we would restructure the program. We were starting the process of relinking it with language. Instead of being a half day, we would make it a full day of area studies to give people a mental break from language learning, and to tie in what they were learning in language to what they were going to be discussing in area studies. We also were looking to how do you capture people who already have the language? If you have Spanish and you've served in Guatemala but now you are going to Argentina, you're not going to have area studies through language. We did a lot of surveys to find out what was needed. We asked people in the field what they thought would be necessary. We made a real effort to update the curriculum. It is a work in progress. We thought it was going to take about three to five years to really revamp the program the way we wanted it to be. I had an extraordinarily gifted team of Foreign Service and Civil Service people who were working on this program. I am very eager to hear how it evolves.

Q: All right. So, now you retired in 2017?

DOHERTY: January of 2020

Q: And you did join the foundation that you were—

DOHERTY: Immediately after.

Q: All right. Well, would you like to say something about what the foundation does and your role there?

DOHERTY: I work for the Annenberg Foundation Trust; its purpose is to bring high-level people together to solve the world's problems. They do it at the estate in California that was bequeathed by the Annenberg Foundation; President Obama met Chinese President Xi there. My first retreat I participated in brought in representatives from the Indo-Pacific area, from Indonesia, China, Japan, Australia, South Korea, plus American organizations like CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies) to discuss the future of democracy in the Indo-Pacific. I'm using all the experience I gained in the Foreign Service.

Q: Now, does the foundation also put out documents, study materials?

DOHERTY: We don't put out documents, but our partners do. After the Indo-Pacific gathering, the Center for Security and Strategic Studies, developed a set of principles, the Sunnylands Principles on Democracy. CSIS launched it a couple of weeks ago.

Q: Think not just about who but about what topics or what directions the work should go?

DOHERTY: We do a lot of work on food systems. The question of supply chains, food deserts, famine, all these issues are related and have been aggravated by the pandemic. We're bringing people together virtually to figure out lessons learned, and what we can do in the future.

Q: So, we usually end our interviews by asking you blue sky, if you were advising someone today about what they need to do, what kind of background or studies or experience to enter the Foreign Service, how would you advise them?

DOHERTY: When I spoke to the A-100 class, I gave them the list of my guiding principles, which to be clever, I had them all start with the letter "C" - which included curiosity, courage, commitment, compassion, and collegiality. I believe at the end of the day curiosity is probably the most important characteristic to have to not only be happy in the Foreign Service but to be successful. If you're curious about other people, other cultures, your own country and you're curious about why we do things, you want to continuously learn.

We all have to be committed to what we're doing even when it's really hard, and intellectually, personally, emotionally, and physically. But you have to have commitment. You have to have courage to do this business. It's not an easy career. And you have to have compassion because if you lose compassion for your colleagues, for others, then you lose your humanity. I don't know if I had all that when I first started, as we've talked about. My commitment was ambiguous. My courage was ambiguous. My compassion was maturing. I was always curious. This was my guiding star.

Q: Once again, blue sky on process and management if you were to make changes that would improve process and management in which department.

DOHERTY: We talk about encouraging people to be good managers, but we reward people differently. We reward people for being great policy people. Not everyone can be great on substance, a great communicator, a great manager, a great leader. It's very hard to do all those things and it's very hard to do them all the time in the right way. We don't emphasize what it's like to be a manager and we don't help people learn enough about how to be good managers of people and of policy and of processes. Management is a skill that everyone knows we need to do better at, but we don't really know how to do it well institutionally.

Q: Because you're talking about these different skills, you were around just about the time that the department changed the evaluation form, which also means it changed the evaluation process somewhat. What do you think of it and in general, do you have any other suggestions or thoughts about the evaluation process?

DOHERTY: I served on the O1 to OC promotion board and on the senior performance pay board. Having been on both those panels, I can say it becomes clear who the really good officers are and who are in the bottom third. Unfortunately, those in the middle tier can get lost in the crowd. These forms, because of their limitations, may make it hard for

these officers to stand out among their peers. Individuals may be in that middle tier because they are not great writers on their own evaluations, their supervisors may not be great writers, or they may be in a quiet embassy or mission. There was near universal consensus about the top one-third.

Q: And then, finally, the most difficult question, any advice on policy?

DOHERTY: Oh, boy. (Both laugh)

Q: You're not required to answer that, but I always ask people at the end of their oral history.

DOHERTY: The way policy is made is messy, frustrating, aggravating, disheartening, and bureaucratic. But I can't think of a different way of making it to be honest. In a country as large as we are with so many different interests, with each government agency having its own institutional interests. Strong leadership is extremely important in any institution, and if you have one of the foreign affairs agencies with weak leadership, the interagency process falls apart. If you have one or two dominant players, it falls apart.

Q: All right. Are there any parting thoughts you'd like to share now that I didn't ask you?

DOHERTY: The Foreign Service is one of the greatest opportunities that any American could have to serve the country. I'm glad that I stayed with it. I'm glad that I didn't leave. To be in service to your country is an amazing opportunity and a real privilege.

End of interview