

HARRIMAN INSTITUTE
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of
Kimberly Marten

Columbia Center for Oral History

Columbia University

2016

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Kimberly Marten conducted by Caitlin Bertin-Mahieux on July 26, 2016. This interview is part of the Harriman Institute Oral History Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

ATC

Session #1 (audio)

Interviewee: Kimberly Marten

Location: New York, NY

Interviewer: Caitlin Bertin-Mahieux

Date: July 26, 2016

Q: Today is Tuesday, July 26th, 2016, and this is Caitlin Bertin-Mahieux. I'm here with Professor Kimberly Marten, the Ann Whitney Olin Professor of Political Science at Barnard College at Columbia University. And we are here for the Harriman Institute Oral History Project. So Professor Marten, thank you for your time today.

Marten: Oh, my pleasure. Thank you.

Q: Great to talk to you. As I mentioned, you know, I'd like to start with a little bit of background about you. So I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about your growing-up years and how you became interested in what was then the Soviet Union.

Marten: Sure. Well, I think the reason I got interested was because of my father. He spent his career as a research scientist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and then he was also an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota, which explains the academic interest. But he had what was called the International Grassland Congress every four years in a different location that he would go to and present a scientific paper at. And so when I was in fifth grade, in 1974, they had the conference in Moscow. And after the conference, he took a bus trip that went to various agricultural research stations throughout the Caucasus. And so he went through what we

now know as Ingushetia—at the time he didn't associate anything with that. [laughter] And then also Georgia and Armenia.

Q: Oh wow.

Marten: And he just came back—I mean, those were the days when people took slides of their trips, and so he came back with these beautiful slides and gave slide shows to the neighbors and the relatives, and just these wonderful stories about what it was like. And I think that's what particularly got me interested in it.

But, you know, I was a Cold War baby. And so if you were going to study foreign policy and international relations at the time that I was growing up and in college and had started graduate school, the Soviet Union was what you would focus on. And so that's how it started.

Q: You know, that's interesting you say that because I've heard you talk elsewhere about how there's two Russias, and it seems like you actually saw that in childhood, or you saw this great power and all of these cultural sides that your dad maybe showed you in those slides, and then also I'm sure you had the bomb drills in school and all the Cold War—

Marten: I was too young to have the bomb drills.

Q: Okay, okay.

Marten: So we didn't have that. I grew up in Minnesota, and we had tornado drills. [laughter]

Q: Equally important to prepare for.

Marten: Yes. But—so I didn't—you know, most of my childhood, I did not grow up feeling under threat. And I would say the only time that that really happened was at the point that I was graduating from high school and starting college, in the early 1980s, because that was at a time when there was really an uptick of the Cold War. And you may—you're too young to have heard it the first time around, but you may know the Prince song, "1999"?

Q: I do.

Marten: So all of us who were graduating from high school in 1981 believed that we'd never see the year 2000 because the world would end before then. And so we just assumed that there would be a nuclear war that would blow up the world.

Q: Wow.

Marten: So it's a little bit different from saying that there was a Soviet threat because we really just saw it as being inevitable.

Q: Wow.

Marten: And that was around that time in the early 1980s that the movie *The Day After* came out. And if you watch the current show that's out on—what is the one about the Americans—"The Americans"!

Q: "The Americans"!

Marten: Yes.

Q: I was wondering if you watched the show. [laughs]

Marten: Yes. So a few episodes ago, they all watched *The Day After* together on television. And that was—that was a thing.

Q: That was a thing. [laughter] Oh my goodness. And so how did this inevitability of an apocalypse kind of affect maybe your choices or—

Marten: Well, it made me very interested in military affairs. And then when I was in college I started Russian language. I didn't do as much as most of my colleagues have. So I only had two and a half years of Russian language. And the last half year was actually reading for social scientists, so my reading of Russian is quite a bit better than my speaking. But the combination of military and this interest in Russia sort of naturally led me on this path. And so I went to graduate school believing that I was going to study Soviet intervention in the Third World. And by the time I was halfway through graduate school, nobody was interested in that anymore. And

by the time I finished graduate school the Soviet Union was collapsing. But my dissertation project that turned into my first book was on Soviet military policy and the Soviet interaction with NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] in Europe. So it's kind of interesting that I'm getting back to that today [laughter] with this project for the Council on Foreign Relations [CFR]. But also when I did my honors thesis as an undergraduate at Harvard [University], the theme was the Soviet reaction to the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

Q: So you mentioned graduating from Harvard in 1985, and so by that time the Soviet Union was already changing. [Mikhail] Gorbachev was—

Marten: Not much.

Q: On the—

Marten: By '85 it had not—

Q: Not much?

Marten: —changed. No.

Q: It was just about to—

Marten: Nobody knew it in 1985.

Q: Okay, okay.

Marten: All they knew when Gorbachev came in is that he was much younger, and that he was probably a reformer. But if you think about Soviet history, you know, Khrushchev had been a reformer and that didn't mean anything like what happened under Gorbachev.

Q: Right. Interesting. And so what was studying at Harvard like at that time? So were you at all linked with the Davis Center [for Russian and Eurasian Studies] back then?

Marten: I wasn't linked—I don't know if the Davis Center per se existed. There was certainly a Slavic studies center. I'm not sure it had the Davis title at that point. And I used those library resources when I was writing my thesis. But those were the days when undergraduates were not really integrated all that well into the research community. And so my primary research affiliation was actually with what was called the CFIA, the Center for International Affairs. And I had some kind of an undergraduate—I don't remember what the title was, but an undergraduate—they didn't call it a fellowship—an undergraduate associateship with the CFIA, and then I also was the associate editor for military affairs of an undergraduate journal called the *Harvard International Review*.

Q: Okay, wow. And so you said this interest was planted in your childhood. It sounds like you must have always been a pretty good student—

Marten: Oh yes. [laughs]

Q: —and interested in school.

Marten: I was a nerd. [laughter]

Q: You said it. And so had you always planned to go on to graduate school?

Marten: I almost became a lawyer instead.

Q: Oh!

Marten: And what made me decide not to—I mean, I was very young, so I didn't really know what I was doing. We had a family friend who was arguing a case before the Minnesota Supreme Court, and I went to hear the case. And I had gotten all the materials ahead of time, and I thought the guy that was our family friend had the better case. And then I went to the Supreme Court hearing, and the other side did a much better job in the oral argument. And I came away with that thinking, Okay, it's not the better case, necessarily, that wins. It's the person who's the better arguer. I know I'm a pretty good arguer. I was on the debate team and I went to the national debate tournaments, so I knew that I would be the one who won the cases. And then I thought to myself, You know, when I'm older, do I want to look back at my career and say I won a lot of cases, or do I want to say that I had more control over what I was doing and that I was making this more significant contribution?

Well, now I know, and soon after I learned—I was married to a lawyer for a while—that the adversarial process is in itself a good. And so having people that are good arguers is what allows the United States framework of law to work the way it is. And so being a lawyer I also would have had the chance to make a great contribution to humanity—

Q: Yes.

Marten: —but I didn't know it at the time. And because my father was an academic associated with the University of Minnesota, and he was really sort of encouraging me in the direction of becoming an academic, that's really what happened.

Q: Okay. Did you grow up with siblings?

Marten: No, I'm an only child.

Q: Oh, me too!

Marten: Oh, really? [laughter]

Q: Hi! There aren't many of us. [laughter] And your mom, did she—was she—

Marten: My mom has a master's degree in foods and nutrition.

Q: Oh!

Marten: She quit work in—she was teaching at the University of Minnesota, teaching what was then called home economics. And she quit when I was a small child. And then she went back, first as a secretary and then she became an assistant administrator for the agricultural extension program at the University of Minnesota.

Q: Wow.

Marten: Yes.

Q: So yes, academia is in your background.

Marten: Yes, it very much is.

Q: It very much is.

Marten: And my parents are still very much involved with the University of Minnesota. So I grew up in that U of M community. I took summer school classes. When I was on the debate team I used the library at the University of Minnesota, the social sciences library. So—

Q: What a great environment.

Marten: Yes, it really was. It was really nice.

Q: Okay. So no law school.

Marten: No law school.

Q: So you say no law school.

Marten: Although I almost went to law school again. I came very close. [laughter]

Q: It just keeps bringing you back.

Marten: I was not very happy when I was an assistant professor at Ohio State [University]. And one of the things that I considered was going to law school at that point. And I actually got admitted to both Columbia and NYU [New York University] Law Schools, and I would have gotten a free ride at NYU. And the day that I came out for the admitted students day at NYU was the day of my interview at Barnard. And the Barnard students wowed me because they were so engaged, and they asked great questions. And I said, You know, if I came here, I could really make a difference! [laughs] And so that's—I mean, I guess that's the theme that keeps on coming up, that somehow in my head—and probably it's because of my upbringing—I think of academia as being a place where it's really possible to make a difference. And so twice I picked academia over law school. [laughs]

Q: Okay. Put the nail in that coffin. [laughter] So you did your PhD at Stanford [University]—

Marten: Yes.

Q: —right? And so what was Palo Alto [California] like in the mid-'80s there?

Marten: Well, this was before the dot-com boom.

Q: Right, right, right.

Marten: So Palo Alto was all about Stanford at that time rather than about—I mean, Silicon Valley had started, but it didn't have the kind of reputation that it has now.

Q: Still guys in their garages, mostly. [laughs]

Marten: Yes, I mean, it had started—probably more defense-related than it was personal computer-related. But again, it was starting, but we weren't really all that much affected by it. The one thing that was really wonderful about Stanford was what was at that time called the Center for International Security and Arms Control—it's now become the Center for International Security and Cooperation [CISAC]—but during the time that I was there, Bill [William J.] Perry was one of the two co-directors of that center, and what was fantastic about it is that we got that scientific and engineering part of Palo Alto integrated with the policy and

politics and history part of it. And one of the fantastic opportunities that I had there through my—well, several opportunities, but let me talk about a couple—through my advisor, David Holloway, who's one of the world's experts on the Soviet military and Russian security policy. He's just—he's absolutely terrific. He was a wonderful mentor.

So one opportunity that I had was to be the graduate student rapporteur for a conference that was held in 1989 on what was called dangerous military activities and preventing dangerous military activities. And what it was was the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Soviet general staff coming together at Stanford in what was sort of a Track One and a Half, because it was done below the political level. But they negotiated this agreement. And Bill Perry and David Holloway—but especially Bill Perry because of his links both to the academic community and then Silicon Valley, was the one who was really making it happen on the American side. And then on the Soviet side it was Andrei [A.] Kokoshin, who was leading the U.S.A. and Canada Institute [Soviet Academy of Sciences, Institute for the U.S. and Canadian Studies]. He was the deputy director at that time and then he'd become the deputy minister of defense when Russia became independent a few years later. So they brought together the generals.

And what was really unique and special about the [Prevention of] Dangerous Military Activities Agreement of 1989—and I was sort of present at the creation—was that it was completely negotiated by military officers to try to prevent the kinds of things that we're seeing now in the Baltics and in Turkey, when we have these interactions between airplanes and ships and so forth, where people don't really intend to spark a crisis, and yet they're armed, and they're coming in very close proximity with each other, and so something could go wrong. And it's really kind of

sad that people—I would say that the Russian side, in particular, is not paying attention to what was achieved, both in the Dangerous Military Activities Act of that time, and then there was an earlier—in 1972 it was called the Incidents at Sea Agreement [Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents at Sea], that was also reached as part of the SALT [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks] Negotiations in 1972, that really were military officers of various kinds, naval officers and then other military officers, coming together and saying, It's in our mutual interest that this doesn't spiral out of control. And that Soviet Air Force officer's hat that I have sitting right there—

Q: Oh yes!

Marten: —was given to me at that conference. [laughter] What happened at the conference is that all of the Soviet military officers at the dinner following the conference took their own hats out of their bags and put them on the heads of the American sitting next to them. Yes. I did not buy that on the street in Moscow.

Q: Wow!

Marten: Yes. So that was really—

Q: What a moment.

Marten: —pretty cool. And I was taking the notes for that conference meeting, and so that was really neat. So that was one opportunity that was fantastic. The second opportunity came from

David Holloway. He was a very close colleague with Andrei Kokoshin, who as I mentioned was at the U.S.A. and Canada Institute at that time. And they set up a sort of unofficial exchange program, and I got to go spend some time in the U.S.A. and Canada Institute. Actually, more than once—interviewing people. Andrei Kokoshin helped me interview retired Soviet general staff officers for my dissertation, so that I got the Soviet military perspective on what I was talking about in terms of the Soviet reaction to what the U.S. and NATO had done in terms of military doctrine in Europe. And then there was also a graduate student from the U.S.A. and Canada Institute who came and shared my office at Stanford for—I think he was there for a semester. And so there was just this wonderful interchange program. And again, that's something that's now gone. It's very difficult.

You know, the Russian side has been closing down all kinds of the exchange programs that have been happening, and we keep on hoping—and I'm trying through the program that I'm now directing here, the Program on U.S.-Russia Relations [PURR]—the Harriman Institute as a whole is trying to find various ways to continue exchanges of scholars and students coming from Russia here so that there's that interchange of viewpoints and interchange of information. And so even though we know that we're not going to have any direct effect on what happens in U.S.-Russia relations, that we can sort of set those network connections for the future when things might be better, and when we can sort of get each other's perspectives to recognize that there's two sides to at least some of these questions. There are not two sides to all of them.

Q: Right, right. That's really interesting. Is there anything else that sticks out in your mind about your time at Stanford or your studies there?

Marten: I loved graduate school, and that was really odd because most people who go through PhD programs—

Q: Find it very—

Marten: —almost this very tense, very—

Q: —isolating, right?

Marten: Yes. I loved it. And the reason I loved it, I think, was because I had very good mentors and because of CISAC. That really made the difference. Every week, they would have both a policy/political science/history-oriented seminar and a technology-oriented seminar, and everybody was expected to go to both. And so we got to be this really close-knit community. And one of the things that I feel sad about at the Harriman Institute and that I tried to fix the year that I was acting director, and I couldn't fix it, is that I wish that we could get sort of a core group of faculty who would agree to go to seminars and meetings that were not in their fields just so that we could build this set of—a sense of community among the graduate students and the faculty that was cross-disciplinary. And I don't know how you do it, and I think it's harder in New York [City]. The one real benefit of being in Palo Alto is that, at least at that time, there was nothing else to do, right? Academically, those were the seminars. Because most people didn't just happen to go through California on their way going to somewhere else. And so the people who came and spoke from outside were the people who were invited to speak at Stanford.

Oh, I did want to mention something else about Stanford before I forget. I was also a member of the Berkeley-Stanford Program in Soviet International Behavior, and it was astonishing. It was sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation [of New York]. It was designed for PhD students in political science at both [University of California,] Berkeley and Stanford to get together every two weeks to hear an outside speaker, usually, who'd be coming in, or sometimes it was a local faculty member. And then we were encouraged to take courses at each other's institutions. So I got to take a course with George [W.] Breslauer at Berkeley.

Q: Wow.

Marten: And all of the Stanford students would go over. We'd cross the Oakland Bridge—

Q: [laughs] Yes.

Marten: —once a week for this seminar, in a car, and again, it was building a community, this time between Berkeley and Stanford students. And that community has been so long-lasting. So for example, Steve Hanson, the former director of the Association for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies, who is my good friend, who is now at the College of William & Mary, who was my college friend at Mather House at Harvard [laughter], and who I knew through the Berkeley-Stanford Program, was one of those community members that I've kept in such close touch with.

Q: What an opportunity. First the community at Stanford—you know, usually people are so siloed into their own discipline—but then to have that cross-university exchange as well—

Marten: And what was really wonderful is that it was sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation, who also was sponsoring similar programs at UCLA [University of California Los Angeles] and RAND [Corporation] in Los Angeles [California] and at Harvard and Columbia. And so there were two different conferences that involved graduate students from all of these places getting together and presenting their dissertation research to each other. And again, I don't know how we would create something like that today, but it was really a once in a lifetime opportunity. And I got to be good friends with Celeste [A.] Wallander through that program. And Celeste Wallander is now the lead advisor on the National Security Council who works on Russia questions. And it was those network connections from way back when that really did it.

Q: So tell me about your dissertation. I know you graduated in 1991.

Marten: Yes.

Q: So before the fall—

Marten: I actually finished it in 1990, and then I did my post-doc year in '90-'91. But because I missed being able to defend by two weeks because of last-minute corrections that my advisors demanded of me, officially I graduated in '91. But I finished it in the fall of 1990. And so it was looking at three different historical cases of how the Soviet military had reacted to NATO

military doctrinal changes in Europe. And what made it possible was partly being able to talk to these retired general staff officers, but partly also that Raymond [L.] Garthoff, who was at that time at the Brookings [Institution], had been able to get access to a declassified Soviet military journal called *Военная Мысль*, *Military Thought*, and made it available at the Library of Congress. And I got to interview him about this process, but it also meant that I got to find out what the Soviet military had been talking about in their own journal—obviously not at a highly classified level, or they never would have allowed it to be declassified.

So again, I was helped in my dissertation because of this opening up—nobody knew the Soviet Union was going to collapse—but because of the opening up in the late Gorbachev period between the Soviet Union and the United States and this desire to do things like prevent dangerous military activities, there was just this wonderful opportunity because people were so hopeful.

Q: Wow.

Marten: And it was sad, actually. When I was leaving my office at Ohio State, which was in 1997, and sort of cleaning out my files to come to Barnard, I just started crying when I went through all the—because, you know, this was before the Internet existed. I was collecting all these press sources at the time, because there's no other way to get easy access to them. And so when you saw an article you wanted, you stuck it in a file folder.

And I was going through all these file folders, and I realized how hopeful people were in the late '80s and the early '90s that the Cold War was over and that Russia was now going to become part of the world community of nations. I mean, [Y.] Francis Fukuyama probably went a little too far when he was talking about the end of history, but that we'd be on the same side, and we'd be joining our resources together to solve problems. And I literally—in 1997, already, it was already going sour—I literally sat on the floor of my office at Ohio State and cried as I was going through this stuff that I was tossing out, because by that time the Internet existed, so I didn't need it anymore. [laughs]

Q: And then the bubble had burst. The dream had gone.

Marten: Yes, yes.

Q: Yes. That's so sad. And you talk about this opening up and how it helped your studies. Were you able during any of that time to actually travel to the Soviet Union or to get any access to—

Marten: Yes, the first time I went was 1989—

Q: Okay.

Marten: —and that was for a graduate student language program. And I'll be honest, at that time the language program itself was so-so. Because in 1989, the Soviet economy was already starting to fall apart, and so the teachers had a tendency to not show up and to go shopping instead,

because you basically had to stand in line forever and ever to get even basic goods. And so the quality of our instruction wasn't all that great—although it helped my Russian pronunciation a lot, which I give great credit for. One of the teachers at that institute had us listen to popular music, and that really helped with my pronunciation. But what was really great about it was, again, network building with other students who were on that program—again, people that I'm still friends with to this day. But also, that was my first meeting with Andrei Kokoshin.

Q: Oh!

Marten: And so it was really kind of amazing. I was sitting in class one day. And this was before you had lots of telephone connections, and so we had to plan way in advance to have our once-every-two-week phone call home. We had to go to the telegraph office to arrange it. And I was sitting in class one day, and the administrator for the university there came to me and said, "You have a phone call." And I thought, Oh my God, who's died?

Q: Yes!

Marten: But it was actually Andrei Kokoshin who was calling me, who, because of David Holloway's connection, wanted me to come and visit him. [laughs] I was, like, Wow!

Q: Oh Wow!

Marten: Yes. So that was a really good trip. And then—

Q: And was that in Moscow, or was that in—

Marten: It was in Moscow. Yes. We had a very brief visit to St. Petersburg, just for a few days. And then I went back for shorter visits in '90, '91, '92 and then—those were each a couple of weeks each—and then in 1994 I lived there for just under three months, when I was doing my second book project on Russian defense industry. And if you're ready to talk about that, that was really exciting too.

Q: Yes, let's talk about that!

Marten: I got to go to the arms fair in Nizhny Novgorod. Because again, in 19—

Q: You went to an arms fair.

Marten: Yes. Things were still open, right? And so they welcomed Westerners going to their arms fair, where they were showing off all the Russian weapons. And I got to go around at this arms fair and talk to people who were representatives of Russian defense industry, who at that time were really interested in what was called defense industry conversion and trying to figure out how to use the technology they had to make it in the marketplace.

And again, Bill Perry plays a big role here, because my second project, after this first project, was—it started out being defense industrial conversion, and I was working with the Stanford

team as a post-doc and as a young assistant professor in this project that he was spearheading to try to get Silicon Valley folks to talk to their Russian defense industry counterparts to figure out ways of building commercial bridges to help the conversion process. Because Bill Perry was always really interested in trying to get rid of the weapons as much as possible. And so the way to do it, he thought, was to give them something else to do that would earn money so they didn't go off and sell them on the black market instead.

So anyway, that was just incredibly exciting. But already by 1994 things were just starting to go bad. And so the last couple of weeks that I was there, I was going to the newspaper library in Khimki, just outside of Moscow, where I managed to get access through David Holloway's recommendation to me of what to look for—internal newspapers that came out of Russian defense enterprises. And so this was the basis of my second book. And one of the ones that I was looking at in great depth was from one of the closed nuclear cities, called Arzamas-16. And so for weeks I just sat there—they didn't have a photocopy machine that worked, so I had to write it—we didn't have cameras or anything—so I had to write it all off by hand and just take notes on lined notebook paper by hand. So it was a slow process. But I was taking all these notes on internal Russian defense enterprise newspapers.

And the place that I was staying was rented out through an advertisement that I'd seen when I was a visiting scholar at Harvard, and it turns out I learned, after I was there for a few weeks, the guy was the son of somebody who was a high-ranking engineer at a defense industrial plant. And so they actually brought me copies of their newspaper from that plant, and so I got to do that too. I mean it was just—that was a different time. But the last couple weeks I was there, all of a

sudden one day I went to the Khimki—it was called the Lenin Newspaper Library—and she said, “The newspaper’s not available.” And I put in another request, and she said, “The newspaper’s not available.” And I said, “Why are these newspapers not available?” And she said, “There’s no explanation.” And so at that point I decided, Okay, I probably don’t want to waste my time going to the newspapers anymore. So the last couple weeks I was there I didn’t really do much.

The week after I left, there was an article that appeared in one of the Russian state newspapers that said that scholars who were supposedly sponsored by organizations—and they named a bunch of them, and one of them was the one that had given me funding—are using Russian sources to try to collect intelligence information about Russian defense industry.

Q: Wow.

Marten: And so after that point, I did not go back to Russia for a very long time because I just decided, partly, I wasn’t going to get anything if that was the sense of people, that it sort of had dried up. But also, I’ve never been a very risk-acceptant person. I wouldn’t make a very good spy because I don’t like that kind of thing.

Q: That’s what they all say. [laughter]

Marten: So I just decided not to go for a while. And that’s why my third project was not related to Russia. So the first book that I did was on the Soviet military; the second book was on Russian defense industry. The third book was on U.N. [United Nations] peace enforcement operations,

which Russia didn't play a part in at all. And so during that time, I occasionally went to conferences that were sponsored by another wonderful group that I had the opportunity to be involved with, which Celeste Wallander founded, called PONARS, the Program on New Approaches to Russian Security. And they had several conferences in Moscow, and one in Nizhny Novgorod. And so I was able to go to those conferences. And so that was the only thing that I was doing in Russia for many, many years.

Q: And just how had, kind of, life on the ground changed through your observations over those times?

Marten: Well, the next time I went back for a conference wasn't until several years later. And in 1994, that was sort of Wild East capitalism. So, I—in 1994, another reason I didn't go back is I saw three dead bodies in 1994. And I was just there for two and a half, three months. You know, you don't expect to see three dead bodies on the street. Now, they weren't people who were murdered. One of them was somebody who had a heart attack on the top of the subway. But they didn't have ambulances. One of them, the subway arrived, and the car door opened, and there was a body rolling around the floor of the subway car. So again, I mean, there was just no public services caring about getting rid of bodies. And the third one I saw a babushka, an old woman, who'd obviously been killed and hit by a car. She was a big old fat lady, lying spread-eagled on the pavement, with her groceries all around.

Q: Just left there?

Marten: And she had a policeman standing over her. But again, it was just—there were no rules. It was just—

Q: Whoa.

Marten: I just can't imagine being in a country for that short amount of time and seeing three dead bodies. All that resulted from this lack of rules and this lack of a functioning state.

And I also saw something really terrible getting off the subway one day in 1994, which was that there was this guy, who was obviously a military veteran of some kind. People at that time were walking around with machine guns just on the street. It was acceptable to walk around with machine guns on the street. It was kind of like Texas today from what I understand. But at that time it was not normal to see that in the United States. And this guy was walking around, obviously a veteran, and he had this big, thick chain, and he was walking around like this, swinging the chain. And you could tell that he was drugged out, looking for trouble. And I saw him sexually assault another woman who'd gotten off the subway. And I felt so helpless to do anything because I wanted to reassure her, but I knew that as soon as I opened my mouth, she would know I was a foreigner and that would maybe scare her more. So I didn't say anything, but I felt so bad that I didn't say anything. And it was just out in the public. And that was life in 1994. So that was another part of the reason I didn't go back. It was just—

Q: Yes, that paints a picture.

Marten: —it felt very, very uncomfortable and violent and mean and awful. And I just didn't like it. And so I turned away for a while.

So the next time that I went back for one of these conferences, things had really changed. And what had changed was that European-style capitalism had really taken hold in Moscow, at least. And it had already started also in Nizhny Novgorod by that time, which was a real change, because Nizhny Novgorod was a backwater when I went there in 1994. And by the next time that I went there—I think it would have been, I don't know, maybe '99, 2000, for that conference, Nizhny Novgorod had also started looking European. And the biggest change that happened also in that timeframe was that people started smiling on the street. And you could just tell that there was a change in attitude about what public expectations were.

Q: Okay. Wow. What a transformation over time.

Marten: Yes. And then one of the times that I went—in fact, more than one of the times I went—and you no longer see this—in Moscow, every single street corner had big advertising banners across it. It was just hideous. It was like taking what you can imagine as billboards in the United States and multiplying it by a gazillion. Just everything had advertising on it. And now that's gone, because Putin has recently cleaned everything up. [laughter]

Q: Right. Okay. Well, that's really interesting. So let's go back to the U.S. and back to academia. So you do a post-doc at Stanford—

Marten: Yes.

Q: —you're a visiting fellow at Harvard, right?

Marten: Yes.

Q: And then you go to teach at Ohio.

Marten: Actually, the Harvard thing was kind of in the middle of teaching at Ohio State.

Q: Okay. Right, right.

Marten: Yes. So I was at Ohio State. I was physically on the ground for four years, and then two of those years I had a grant from the SSRC MacArthur—Social Science Research Council—MacArthur Foundation to do retraining, and I retrained myself in political economy, and that's how I transitioned to the defense industry project that I did.

Q: Gotcha.

Marten: So the year that I was at Harvard as a visiting scholar I was trying to learn as much as I could about political economy as it applied to the Russian transition.

Q: Okay. And while you were on the ground in Ohio, you were teaching in the political science department.

Marten: Yes.

Q: And you mentioned before that you were not very happy there.

Marten: I didn't fit in Columbus. There are people who love Columbus. I didn't fit very well.

So— [laughs]

Q: Okay. So you were happy to move on.

Marten: Yes.

Q: Maybe you were weighing the opportunities of law school and teaching at Barnard. So it looks like you were New York focused anyway?

Marten: The reason that I was New York focused actually had nothing to do with the academic part. It was that at that time I was married to somebody who was an attorney who had a job in New York, and so that's—

Q: That's a good reason. [laughs]

Marten: —that's what explains the New York focus.

Q: And you said you were wowed by the students at Barnard.

Marten: I was—

Q: Tell me about that.

Marten: —wowed. I went for my job interview. And you know in the job interview you give a talk. And then the way that Barnard always arranges it is that they have a few of the really engaged students from the department come and talk to the faculty member individually. And they were just so full of life. And they had paid so much attention to what I said in the talk, and they asked such good questions, and it was clear that they really cared. And it was just fantastic. So that was what decided me.

Q: And did you find that that was typical of your students once you started to—

Marten: Yes. Barnard students are incredibly engaged. They want very much to impress the faculty [laughter], and that's a very nice environment to be teaching in! [laughs]

Q: And you've talked about your research, and do you like the teaching side of it as well?

Marten: I love it.

Q: Do you like being—yes.

Marten: I love it. Part of it is that I'm a natural ham, and so I love going to the front of the classroom and lecturing. But part of it is I really enjoy meeting the students in office hours and getting to know them. And what is really nice about Barnard—and, you know, I've gotten to know a lot of Columbia students too—

Q: Sure.

Marten: —and most of my classes have Columbia students in them. But what's really special about the Barnard students is they stay in touch. And so I'm Facebook friends with students that I had in my classes when I first arrived here.

Q: Wow.

Marten: Yes.

Q: Talk about community.

Marten: Yes, it really is. It's a very good community. And the Barnard alumnae in particular have a very good network. They really like to help each other.

Q: Okay. That's great. And so you officially start teaching at Barnard, but quickly become—I mean, Barnard/Columbia—

Marten: Yes.

Q: And then—

Marten: They have a relationship that nobody understands.

Q: Exactly.

Marten: But it's very nice. [laughs]

Q: Somehow it works. And then when did you first become—when and how did you first become involved with the Harriman Institute?

Marten: From the beginning because my understanding was that for at least the first couple of years of my employment at Barnard, Harriman was paying some small amount, and I was never told what it was. But it was like a little bit of extra on top of the salary, as an enticement to get me to come from Ohio State because—it wasn't quite a salary cut, but it was not—I accepted the Barnard job for actually less money than I would've probably gotten as a raise if I'd stayed at Ohio State for another year.

And so Harriman sweetened the pot a little bit by probably about a thousand dollars or two. And in return the deal was that I would teach a class on Russia and the West. And so right from the beginning and also anybody who has a significant teaching and/or research interest in the former Soviet space is welcomed as a Harriman faculty member. And so right from the beginning I was going to faculty meetings at Harriman. At that time, my good friend who's now in Arizona—
Mark—

Q: Mark. Mark von Hagen.

Marten: Mark von Hagen [laughter] was the director.

Q: Okay. Oh, Okay. He was the director when you came in.

Marten: Yes.

Q: All right. Great. I didn't know if it was him or if it was Catherine [Theimer Nepomnyashchy]—

Marten: No, she was—he was there for a couple of years before Cathy started as the director.

Q: Okay. Interesting. So before you came to Columbia, were you aware of Harriman's existence? Did you know about the Harriman Institute?

Marten: Yes. I had met Bob [Robert] Legvold, and the way I had met Bob Legvold was through the Berkeley-Stanford Program because he was one of the people that we had out to lecture at that program.

Q: Wow.

Marten: Yes.

Q: It all comes back to that.

Marten: It really does. It really does.

Q: All right. So their reputation preceded them.

Marten: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Yes

Q: Okay, great. And what was—so this was, I guess, '97 you started at Barnard?

Marten: Yes.

Q: All right. So we're post-collapse, and it's also—I guess at this point Harriman has kind of gotten over the initial fallout of that and trying to figure out their identity and how they fit, and—

Marten: And Mark von Hagen was the top fundraiser for Ukrainian studies here. And so as director he was somebody who had really, really worked to expand significantly the programming we were able to do beyond just a Russia focus.

Q: Right. So was there a sense at the time that area studies were kind of under threat and underfunded and that—

Marten: Well, I—

Q: —departments were being—

Marten: —already by the time I was in graduate school, people were no longer talking about area studies. And one of the people that moved us in that direction was actually Jack [L.] Snyder, who wrote a very influential article, that was called “Richness, Rigor, and Relevance [in the Study of Soviet Foreign Policy],” in *International Security*. And it was about essentially moving us away from a pure area-studies focus to thinking about Russia and the Soviet Union in comparative perspective, and therefore coming up with theoretical insights that could be applied elsewhere and that had policy relevance, but not just focusing on an area studies focus. And so that preceded my arrival at the Harriman Institute. And I would say that one of the reasons that I didn’t fit very well at Ohio State is that they, at that time, I think has changed since, had sort of taken that to the extreme in that they were very interested in quantitative work to the exclusion of qualitative case studies, which is what I did. And so I was not really a very good fit for the Ohio State department at that time.

Q: Hmm. Interesting. Okay, so—

Marten: So Columbia wasn't against learning a lot about a particular country so that you could do qualitative analysis. Because—I mean, Columbia's really unique in that it didn't seem to have the same methodological fights over political science approaches that most other universities in the United States faced over this time period. There's been this continuing sense of respect at Columbia, that everybody's doing high-quality work, and as long as it's high-quality work that gets published in good places, nobody really cares if it's of one sort or another. And so that really made Columbia a sort of a protected space, and that was one of the things that made it so attractive at that time.

Q: And do you think that continues to be true?

Marten: You know, I don't know what is true in the political science department because the Barnard political science department is separate from the Columbia political science department. I think in the field as a whole right now you can no longer get away very easily as a graduate student coming on the market with purely qualitative research. But I think what Columbia in the political science department has stressed is multi-methods research. And [Virginia] Page Fortna, certainly when she was department chair for a while and then also in her research and in the way that she has mentored graduate students, she's very good herself at combining large and sophisticated statistical analysis with qualitative case studies that might illustrate a particular statistical finding or test a particular statistical finding. And also, some of the people who've

done some other work that was involved with African studies—for example, Macartan [N.] Humphreys comes to mind. Even though he does extraordinarily sophisticated statistical work in his survey research, he and his students spend a great deal of time in the field and really know the field and the background politics of what it is that they are assessing.

Q: So there's more of a balance.

Marten: Yes. So it's merging.

Q: So you've talked about David Holloway and all these great mentors and people along the way. Did you find Columbia and Harriman to be a nurturing place when you started?

Marten: Yes, very much so. And I would particularly credit Bob [Robert] Jervis, who went out of his way to be encouraging to me, and I know he's been encouraging to other people also, in the international relations field. And then one thing that was extraordinarily helpful is that early on when I was here, Jack Snyder sat down with a bunch of the assistant professors and said, "Here are the expectations," very clearly laid out, "of what the tenure process is." And so that made things very nice, because—and again, this is in contrast to the way a lot of other universities worked at that time—we understood what we had to do to get tenure. That doesn't mean it was easy.

Q: But it was transparent.

Marten: But it was transparent. And so I give Jack Snyder and Bob Jervis both a great deal of credit for the work that they have done to be helpful to assistant professors as well as to their own graduate students.

Q: Wow, that's huge. And so during this time, you said you were kind of insulated at Barnard political science, but as a part of Harriman, did you feel like there was ever any kind of competition over the years from SIPA [the School of International and Public Affairs] or from global institutes or this whole kind of—

Marten: Well, when I started—

Q: —overlapping/not—

Marten: Yes. When I started, Harriman was still part of SIPA.

Q: Right.

Marten: And so it's relatively recently, like maybe eight years ago or so, that they separated. And it was not well known, even inside Harriman, that we had been moved out of SIPA into Arts and Sciences. I'm sure the people at the top knew; the people who were involved in the administrative stuff knew. But it was not something that was presented to the faculty, even, as being all that big a deal that we were moved from SIPA into arts and sciences. And we still have

a great deal of cooperation with SIPA. So, for example, a lot of the instructors that Harriman funds are teaching SIPA classes.

Q: Right.

Marten: I think it's wonderful that we are co-located with SIPA. I dread—

Q: I was just going to say, we are in the International Affairs Building right now.

Marten: Yes. And I really dread the day that I know will come sooner or later when SIPA moves to the new part of the campus, because a lot of our interaction with graduate students is with SIPA graduate students. A lot of the people who attend our programs at Harriman are SIPA people. A lot of things are jointly sponsored with the [Arnold A.] Saltzman Institute [of War and Peace Studies], which is—

Q: SIPA.

Marten: —a SIPA institute. And so that is—it's really important that SIPA is here, and that SIPA connection is vital. And no, I've never felt any competition against SIPA at all. I mean, I don't think—I don't see a lot of inter-school competition or inter-departmental competition here. What I see is a lot of attempts that probably could be stronger, but a lot of attempts to cooperate at a cross-departmental and cross-school level.

Q: Great. So from 2002 to 2004, you were the associate director of Harriman. So can you tell me about that role and how—

Marten: Sure! A lot of what it was was just sort of being a helpmate to Cathy.

Q: Okay. So yes, that was Cathy.

Marten: And a lot of it was very—it was very fun. It was doing ceremonial things, like if Cathy couldn't go to an event, I would go instead. The thing that I'm proudest of from that time is spearheading the effort to get undergraduates more included in what the Harriman Institute was doing. And so it was at that time that we created the Harriman undergraduate fellowship, which allowed undergraduates who were working on senior thesis research or another very major project to get a little bit of funding to go to the field and do field research. And up until that time, that hadn't really existed. I mean, we had language funding for undergraduates to do language study but not to do—

Q: Research.

Marten: —research. And I give Bob Legvold a lot of credit for being the one who put the idea in my head that this would be a good idea. So again, it wasn't something that I did on my own; it was something that we did as a group.

Q: During that time, yes.

Marten: But I was the one who really sort of spearheaded the group in making it happen. So that was great. And I'm—

Q: That is great.

Marten: Yes. I'm really proud of it.

Q: I mean, they're so research focused on graduate students, obviously, that undergrads often get overlooked.

Marten: Yes. Exactly.

Q: And then I think maybe during that time as well there was kind of an expanding focus here at Harriman on human rights and focusing more on other issue areas. Was that ever discussed as an active choice in different faculty meetings?

Marten: Oh sure! And one of the people who was most involved with that was a Barnard professor who has since passed away and who, at that time, was on the verge of retirement, and I think he probably retired but kept on teaching these classes as an emeritus faculty member, and that's Peter [H.] Juviler, who played a huge role at Harriman and was really another connection between Barnard and Harriman during the time that I started there. And human rights was his be-all and end-all. He saw his contribution—all of his research was on Soviet legal questions as they

related to dissident and human rights kinds of questions. And so he was really the spearhead of that.

Q: Wow. You know, Harriman, I think, has long been and seen itself as a source of policy advice and of influence. And I was just wondering if you could talk about any experience you've had with that or you've seen any stories or examples of how you've seen Harriman either directly or indirectly influence policy. I mean, indirectly, I guess, is—

Marten: Well—

Q: —you train the next generation of policymakers, right?

Marten: And we write opinion pieces, and PONARS does these policy memos, and both Alex [Alexander A.] Cooley and I are—and Tim [Timothy M.] Frye also, and Elise Giuliano—are all members of PONARS, and so we do those kinds of policy memo things. Steve [Stephen] Sestanovich is a Harriman Institute member. He had a policy role. We interviewed him for the Program on U.S.-Russia Relations. He was our first interviewee as Conversations with Diplomats for the role that he had as the special diplomat during the Clinton administration, reaching out to the post-Soviet space on various questions. And so, those were the kinds of things that I've seen directly. You know, I would guess that during the time that Marshall [D.] Shulman was in charge, I think that there was more of the use of Harriman as a place where Track II negotiations took place, but that was because Marshall himself had served in government. And since that time, I don't think we've had anybody who has served at that high

level in government who has been in a leadership role at the Harriman Institute, so we don't have that kind of active Track II role—which I think is unfortunate. It would have been fun. I think it's interesting.

The one thing that I did participate in is that Bob Legvold and Cathy Nepomnyashchy arranged something that involved some Georgians coming together. And that would have been—oh, I don't remember. I think it was before the [Russo-] Georgia War. Maybe it was just after the Georgia war. Anyway—

Q: Around 2008-ish.

Marten: Around 2008, where they tried to bring people from Abkhazia and Georgia together to talk about things. And then of course Alex Cooley, in cooperation with Lincoln Mitchell, wrote a report that they circulated in the policy community with their suggestions for how Georgia and Abkhazia could reach a different kind of solution for border issues. And I think that was maybe growing out of this kind of an arrangement. In terms of policy influence, I don't think it actually probably had any, but it was an attempt at policy influence.

Q: Before we turned on the recorder, you were telling me about what you're working on right now, which—would you mind talking about that a little bit?

Marten: Sure. I'm very much involved in the Council on Foreign Relations. I have been for many years. I started out being a term member there my second year at Barnard, which was for

people—it's still a program for people who are younger but who they think have promise as being—taking on leadership roles in international relations. And then since 2003 I've been, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. I had a Hitachi [Ltd.] International Affairs Fellowship in 2000, and I spent three months in Japan doing research on Japanese peacekeeping policy back when I was doing the peace operations book. That's not Russia-related, but it's Council-related.

I've served on various committees over time. I just came off a period of five years of being on the International Affairs selection committee for the fellowship for people who go to Washington [D.C.] or people from Washington who step out for a while to go into academia that the Council funds.

Then earlier this year I was part of a panel that—we spoke about what to do about Putin. And then I moderated a panel that involved some visiting Russian journalists and sort of intellectual community members talking about their work under Putin. And now what I'm doing is I have been asked to write a special report¹—on advice for the new administration on interacting with Russia in the European theater.

But what's really fun—and it's continuing a pattern, so I guess I can talk about this too. I've always interviewed policy people. And it's been a real benefit of the kind of research that I do. I've gone all over the world and interviewed people in defense ministries and foreign ministries and policy advisors. I added it up one time, and I think I've done that in something like twenty-

¹ The report was published in March 2017.

eight countries. Yes. When you start getting into it, there's—depending on the topic that you choose, there's all kinds of ways to do that. And so just in the past couple of days, I've been interviewing some people who are still off the record in the U.S. and NATO policy community. And it's a connection. And who knows if what I do has any influence, but at least I know that the work that I'm doing is not being done in some ivory tower that's separate from the way that people in the policy community think about things.

Q: When you talk to people in the policy community, what do you think influences them the most? Like what—how do—

Marten: It's a combination of things, and it varies by country, and it varies by role. And so there's always—even if they're speaking—

Q: What gets through to them?

Marten: —even if they're speaking off the record, and even if they're speaking on deep background, they're not going to say anything that undercuts their agency, the current administration or the political views of their party. And so all of those things are obviously—because they know that there's no such thing as being off the record, right? So they're never going to be caught saying something that is completely at odds. But when you speak with people on deep background, what they often do is give you details about how things actually work. And most of what I've done throughout my career is not focusing on current events per se, it's been

focusing on trying to build a case study of what happened in a particular case, including recent cases, but still it's something that's already happened.

Q: Like the decision-making process we have.

Marten: Yes. And what I've often used those interviews for when they're on deep background is to point me to articles in the press that say the same thing. And so I can cite the article in the press without saying, "I talked to somebody, and they told me to look for this item that was actually—I found in a newspaper." So it let me know what to look for that was out there that I would not have known was important or would not have been able to give the analytical weight to without hearing it from somebody who was involved in it.

Q: Oh wow.

Marten: Yes.

Q: Is there anything you think—I mean, you said people are very loyal to the official position and that—but is there anything that is especially persuasive to policymakers or—I mean, I know you're not—you're interviewing them for information; you're not trying to necessarily influence them, but—

Marten: Yes. I have never tried—the only time that I’ve tried to influence policymakers is through my opinion pieces and then through the policy memos that I’ve written for PONARS. So when I’m talking to people my goal is not to influence; my goal is to learn.

Q: Learn, yes.

Marten: And so I think the truth is that what influences people when you have an opinion piece or a policy memo is if it says something that they already believe and it gives them added heft that they can bring to the table in their internal discussions. So it’s not that you’re going to change their mind through what you say in writing; it’s that you are going to be able to provide additional support to somebody in the policy community who already thinks that.

Q: Yes. Are there any times where you wish you could have persuaded someone to—pointed them towards a certain policy or to avoid a—

Marten: I’m sure there are.

Q: —particularly bad one?

Marten: I’m sure there are.

Q: I’m sure there are too.

Marten: Okay. I'll give you one example. I wish that we had not cut off our military to military conversations as part of the early sanctions policy after Ukraine.

Q: Oh. Okay.

Marten: I learned that there were very senior military officers in the United States who were very unhappy that the Obama administration, and I think it was especially the Defense department, had decided that they were going to punish Russia by not allowing Russia to take part in military to military conversations. And it was not so much that the conversations could necessarily accomplish a lot, because I don't think they could have, as we're seeing right now with what's happening in Syria. There are a whole heck of a lot of challenges in trying to work with Russia and get anything done. But the value comes in getting to know people, in building those networks, in hearing how they think, and that gives you added information when you're trying to figure out how to approach a crisis decision or how to approach a particular difficult problem. It just gives you more information. And I think cutting that off, cutting off the ability of high-level military officers to speak with each other, was a mistake.

And my understanding is that that has now changed, that for the past several months they have started at, at least somewhat of a level, to speak to each other again. They've started it in Syria, for example. But it's too bad that that was cut off as part of the sanctions process. And I did try to tell them that.

Q: Yes.

Marten: Something else that I think I may have had some impact on, but again, only because it bolstered people who already believed that, was keeping us from selling lethal weapons to Ukraine. And I dearly hope that the new administration does not sell lethal weapons to Ukraine. I think that that would be a very, very bad idea.

Q: Ukraine is already awash in weapons, isn't it?

Marten: It's awash in weapons, and it doesn't have a very well-controlled or a good—a reliable command structure over its relationship between the military and the militias. And so anything that we give to the military has a very good chance of making its way to the militias. And once it gets to the militias, we have no control over how they use it—or what they do with it, whether they sell it on the black market.

Q: Right. So you just mentioned Ukraine, which I want to come back to, but let's do one more kind of policy influence question. People we've talked to have said there's—as you said too, that it has changed since Shulman until today, and at Harriman that there's this perceived decline of academic influence on policy. And do you have any thoughts as to why that might be or why—

Marten: I'm not sure that there's a decline in academic influence on policy, because programs like the Council on Foreign Relations program that I talked about regularly send very talented academics to serve a year in government. Some of them decide to stay. So some of the people who have been very much responsible for foreign policy in the current administration have come

out of academia. And one example we've already talked about is Celeste Wallander, who spent years and years in academia before she went into policy work. So I don't buy it that there is a declined influence of academia in the policy world. What I do believe is that academics have chosen in many ways to make their work less friendly to a policy community, because there has been this tendency to—I mean, political scientists in general do not write well, and they use a lot of jargon. They spend a lot of time doing things like defining terms. When they do things that are quantitatively oriented, they tend to jump right into the high-level quantitative stuff without always doing a good explanation.

Now, there are programs recently that have been trying to change this, I think with some success. One of the programs is currently run out of American University. It is run by Jim [James M.] Goldgeier, who is one of these contacts that I had back from the Berkeley-Stanford Program. It's called Bridging the Gap, and it is explicitly designed to bring academics in for a weeklong program where they learn how to write op-eds and how to be interviewed by the media and how to present themselves so that they get more attention for their work. Another example is The Monkey Cage blog that is attached to the *Washington Post*. And at NYU, Joshua Tucker, who is also a PONARS member he is the guy who currently runs the Russia studies program at NYU, and is also the person who does the Russia-related things for Monkey Cage blog. And he has been very helpful in getting my work published there multiple times.

Q: Yes. That's a great blog.

So you mentioned Ukraine, and as—so obviously the U.S.'s relationship with Russia continues to be fraught, and these crises over the past decade—I mean, there was Georgia, there was the Ukraine, and now we have the Olympics and, of course, the WikiLeaks DNC. And so are these—in some ways they're opportunities to talk about our relationship with Russia and to try and better understand them and present that in the world. So do they help Harriman in that way, and are you able to kind of use them to teach, you know?

Marten: Yes, very much. And that's what we are trying to do with this new Program on U.S.-Russia Relations. And the program is a temporary program. It only has a mandate through the end of academic year 2017-2018. If it does not get external funding, it will not be continued. And so one of my challenges at the moment is trying to figure out a way to continue the fundraising I've done for Harriman in general and see if we can do fundraising for that program. But yes, what we are trying to do with that program is provide essentially a talk shop for Russian experts and American experts—and European experts and others from around the world, but primarily U.S.- and Russia-based—to get together and give varying perspectives on things and to talk with each other. And just without question, this has benefits for the students, because they're getting a variety of perspectives on these things when they come to our meetings. It certainly is having an impact on my teaching, because now I can include what I'm hearing as the Russian perspective in my teaching materials.

But I'm hoping that also, in addition to—and certainly impact on my research, as I'm thinking—my current big, huge project is on: Is there anything we can learn from the Cold War that's relevant for today? And so having events that look at recent history versus today helps me with

that as well. But in addition to those personal things that help the individuals who are here at the moment, I really think that that network building is crucial. And it's crucial both for the individuals involved, but also for the future of the Harriman Institute, because it is keeping us relevant in Russia. It is getting our name out in Russia. It is allowing people at the leading institutions in Russia to know that we are thinking about them, we care about them, we respect them, even at a time of declining relations. And hopefully—I mean, all of these things go in cycles. Everything always—at some point they will get better. And when it gets better—

Q: At some point Putin will be gone.

Marten: Well, I'm not sure things are going to change when Putin goes. But at some point in the long-term future, things will likely be better, because they always have gotten better. And at that point we'll be very glad for these connections that Harriman was responsible for establishing in Russia.

Q: When you think about building Harriman's credibility and reach into Russia, who do you see as kind of your primary audience there? Is it academics?

Marten: Well, in Russia, there's often not the kind of strict delineation that we find between people in academic roles and people in think-tank roles. And so it's people who are in that academic institute. So some of them are at universities—

Q: Moving between—yes.

Marten: —and some of them are at institutes. So it's sort of that community of people who at the moment does not have, from everything we know, a lot of influence over the decisions that are being made by the Putin administration. Many of the people that we are reaching out to did have influential roles under the Yeltsin administration. And so it's the hope that even if—those people are now aging, and so most likely they as individuals would not have roles far into the future, but they are teaching. They are working with the younger people who will have those roles. And so it's that community that could have influence at some point in the future.

So from my perspective, it's not just pure academics. There are people at the Harriman Institute who do purely academic relationships with Russia. But for me it is people who are essentially like the SIPA people, people who are on that—interstices? Is that a word? —between academia and the policy world.

Q: Okay. And so you think there are willing partners there. We just need to let them know that we're here and to find them?

Marten: It's getting more difficult. And when you say “willing partners,” it depends. Willing partners for what? I would say there are willing partners to talk. The Russian side in many cases is running out of money, and so we are very grateful—for example, the Carnegie Corporation has been funding this university consortium that we have—I don't know if you've already heard about this—that allows us to bring students and bring faculty to talk to students at—in U.S. universities, European universities, and then at MGIMO, the International Institute for—Moscow

State Institute for International Relations, and at the [National Research University] Higher School of Economics [HSE]. So having that kind of foundation funding in the United States is still crucial for still keeping those relationships going, because the Russian side doesn't have a lot of money for that.

In addition, through the consortium project, I'm going to Moscow in late September to do one of these student-orienting conferences, which will be a lot of fun. But in late November, I've been invited to a conference that is being co-sponsored by IMEMO [Institute of World Economy and International Relations] and by Yuri [V.] Ushakov, who is President Putin's, officially, advisor on policy questions, that's called the Primakov Papers Conference. I'm sure I'll learn things there. But I think it's important to go and to go with an open mind and to listen to what people are saying and to indicate that we want to hear what people are saying. Even if it doesn't end up having a direct impact on my work, I think keeping those connections and showing interest in what the Russian side has to say, I think that's one of the purposes of academia.

And even at a time when sanctions mean that the official relationship is not as strong or as close as it used to be, and when negotiations on important things like arms control are certainly not at the level they used to be, it's a way of—I mean, it's not quite Track II diplomacy, but it's a way of keeping connections and keeping networks and keeping the ideas and the speech flowing back and forth, and I think that that is a good in and of itself.

Q: Yes, I agree. And this connection, do you—you talked about generational change, and so it seems that maybe the next generation in Russia is a little bit more nationalistic and—

Marten: The younger people—

Q: —is there some worry about, once these Yeltsin—

Marten: And I think this has something to do with what we've seen in many ways as the increasing reluctance on the Russian side to have exchanges. I mean, there's been some. They're participating in the consortium project—

Q: Sure.

Marten: —but there have been limits on their willingness to send students to the United States. And my own assessment, and I think this is probably shared by others, is that one of the reasons behind that is that if they sent students to the United States, the students would see what the United States is really like, and it would undercut the propaganda that they hear about what is happening in the United States. And so I think that right now there is a reluctance to have multiple points of view being publicly expressed in Russia. And I'm sure after I give a presentation in Moscow these days, there is a follow-up with students to say, Well, this is what she said, but this is what was really going on. Who knows what's really going on once we're not in the room? I'm doing the best I can. I don't know if it's having any impact.

But I think that there is a very strong desire to control the message. I think that that doesn't have much effect on, in one sense, the generation that's going to take over when the current generation

is gone, which is the generation that came of age in the 1990s, because they came of age in a free press, right? So they know the truth. And they also were in school in Soviet times, and so they know—

Q: What it was really like.

Marten: —what it was really like. The people that I'm most worried about is people who are currently in their 20s, who didn't experience Soviet times, who think of the 1990s not in terms of the good parts that were part of it, like the freedom of expression, but only about the violence and the chaos that Putin has solved. I worry that that generation is in the process of being brainwashed. And what's disturbing is not that they don't have access to other perspectives, because they all have free access to the web. You know, unlike China, Russia has not yet done much to shut down the web. And there are Russian-language sources that they could use that give them multiple perspectives. What is disturbing is that just like students in their 20s in the United States, they don't look. And they're interested in the web primarily as entertainment rather than as news, and the Russian state news sources do a fantastic job of entertaining people.

And one thing that's become very clear is that the Russian state media has explicitly copied the model of Fox News. They even talk about it, where they have people yelling, This is a particular point of view and our view is right, and let's yell at each other and call them names and blah, blah, blah. And then there'll be a human interest story, and it'll go on and on about a kidnapping or a murder, and there'll be this human interest story, a human interest story to keep people

watching, and then yelling and screaming, and Let's get all worked up about this. And then a human interest story.

Q: Out of all the things we could have exported.

Marten: Yes. Their production values for Russian state television are superb. Their sets are gorgeous. The people who are doing the speaking know exactly how to reach the audience. They do these movies that are—I mean, not correct in what they say, but they seem plausible—that are sort of these conspiracy-theory kind of movies. They know their audience, and they know how to get the audience. And it's the youngest people that I'm most concerned about.

Q: What about our young people? What about the students here? Do you think there's an interest, still a good interest, in students here about going to Russia and having—and experiencing an exchange as well?

Marten: It varies. And I think one of the things that is too bad is that the lack of business opportunities in Russia has turned many of the students who are interested in business and finance away from a focus on Russia. So for this Program on U.S.-Russia Relations, the initial intention had been to have a regular series on business and finance, and we got a very small audience to come to our first meeting, and I just said, I can't justify spending Harriman resources on this. And so if at some point when the sanctions are lifted in the future, there is a resurgence in business interest, that'll be great. But my understanding is that that's not going to happen because a lot of international businesses have turned away from Russia to other markets, and a

lot of banks are no longer interested in Russia because they are too afraid that they will do something to get on the wrong side of sanctions or that sanctions will start again. And so that part of the market has been permanently lost—just like it's been permanently lost in Iran in many ways.

And so that group of students, who I think is a significant part of the Columbia undergraduate community in particular, is not going to be interested in Russia. The other thing to keep in mind is that people who are interested in the NGO [non-governmental organization] world and in humanitarian things, there's no opportunity in Russia. One of the things I'm proud of during the time that I was acting director of the Harriman Institute was doing some really successful fundraising for the Civil Society [Fellowship] program that sends master's degree students to take the summer to work with an NGO in the region that is doing something related to civil society. But "in the region" no longer means Russia. They're going elsewhere. They're going to Ukraine. They're going to other places where civil society is still welcome, including even Kazakhstan, they have some opportunities, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, but not Russia.

So that's one of the things that has happened with students. So the students that are interested in Russia are primarily students who are just taking it because they have an interest in the news that's happening and they want to learn something or students who are interested in the defense part of it or the foreign policy. They want to go into the Foreign Service. They want to go into government service. And those are the kind that are doing it. So they're still there.

But I would say that it's also true that there are many more people who are interested in China and the Arab world than are interested in Russia, in part because the truth is, even though we have this tendency to focus on all these new threats that are coming out of Russia, the Russia threats are pretty minor in comparison to the potential China threats and the potential Islamic State threats. And Putin likes getting the attention for the things that he threatens. And he could do a lot of damage. But it's doing damage around the edges. It's not probably civilizational damage to the same extent that some other actors out there can do.

Q: What a comforting thought. [laughter]

Marten: Yes. I hope you are speaking with people who are in the Slavic department. My understanding is that enrollment in Russian language courses has not gone up in recent years, and it's lower significantly than it was, say, in the 1990s, when there was so much opportunity to go into Russian business.

Q: Yes. And there was also the whole cultural side of the Soviet Union/Russia and everything that brings to it as well.

Marten: Yes. And so a lot of the people that we have taking our classes are people who have a family/ethnic heritage relationship to Russia. In my Russia and the West class, I usually get some Russians, including some Russians who are coming from some pretty high-level places. It's really interesting.

Q: It must be really interesting for them to see how it's taught here, right?

Marten: Yes, and it makes our conversations a lot more interesting. Because they debate me.

They are quite happy to debate me and say, Oh, well, you give this perspective on Putin, and I'm going to give you this alternative perspective. And so that makes it much better—

Q: Bring it on!

Marten: —for the students. Yes.

Q: And so you talked about your time as acting director, so I wonder if we could talk about that a little bit more.

Marten: Sure.

Q: And specifically kind of the administrative stuff—

Marten: Sure.

Q: —that came with that, like fundraising.

Marten: Yes, fundraising was really what I made my centerpiece, and I continued it in taking on a fundraising role for a couple of years after that. And so it was sort of a group of things that I

really wanted to have as my legacy. Part of it was working with the staff. And it started during the time that Tim was still director, but I sort of came on that last year to start in some of the fundraising roles. And the idea came from—Ron [Ronald] Meyer and Masha Udensiva-Brenner to create this full-color magazine that would become the *Harriman Magazine*. And what we really worked to do was make it appeal to alums, by featuring alums in the stories, which is not something that Harriman had been publicizing a great deal before then. Previously the publications had really stressed what the faculty was doing, and we tried to make it broader and make it focused on visiting scholars and post-docs and alums to build the sense of community, to build our reputation, but also indirectly to build our ability to do development in the future. And so the magazine was part of it. Part of it was actively—I spent some time getting advice from people about how to do fundraising, because I'd never done that before, and how to do outreach questions.

I reached out to the Columbia development office quite successfully. One of the things that they were willing to do was to share with us a list that we had not had previously to that point of Harriman alums. And “Harriman alums” is defined quite specifically as people who have a Harriman certificate or had a Harriman specialization during the time that Harriman was part of SIPA. And so it's a limited list. It's not everybody who's interested in Russia. But this was very helpful in trying to figure out how to target our development efforts, because we didn't have anything—there hadn't been much fundraising here for years and years. Really the last person who had concentrated on it in any kind of a structured way was Mark von Hagen. And so that was really what I wanted to do.

And I was successful. I got one of our donors to start out promising forty thousand and actually gave fifty thousand to establishing this new Civil Society Fellowship for our master's degree students. And then working with Colette Shulman, Marshall's widow—

Q: Widow, yes.

Marten: —she was just so very helpful. And then some other members of the National Advisory [Council] committee. We got a number of smaller donations. And I don't know what the exact total was that we came up with, but I think it was in the range of getting maybe another fifteen or twenty thousand to add to that. And that's not a lot. I've been hoping that we could find somebody to come in to endow the thing, because with an endowment you only spend 5% per year, and then that really continues. And we didn't get an endowment. But we've had enough to keep that program going at a relatively small level. I guess I'm very hopeful that now with Alex Cooley as the director that we can once again prioritize our development and fundraising efforts and try to develop both the Civil Society program and the Program on U.S.-Russia Relations because, in both cases, they will run out eventually. PURR, the Program on U.S.-Russia Relations, will run out at the end of academic year 2017-2018 if we do not get outside funding. The Civil Society Fellowship can probably continue for a few years beyond that because it's been so generously funded. But it's temporary, unless we get an endowment.

Q: So what did you learn about fundraising?

Marten: Oh, all kinds of sort of strategic things. It's a slow process. What you want to do is build long-term connections with people, which is why—

Q: The alumni connection is so important.

Marten: —the alumni are important, the magazine is so important. You know, one of the things I've tried to do with the Program on U.S.-Russia Relations is to reach out to the broader community in New York that might be interested in Russia to invite them to our events. Now, it's hard, quite frankly, to get people to come to Columbia for events if they're not already based in the Columbia community, because people see it as way uptown—

Q: So far.

Marten: —and it's so far. But, you know, we've had some success. But the biggest piece of advice is to think about it as a long-term relationship-building process rather than anything that can happen immediately, which is kind of tough when you've got funding running out in two years for a program.

Q: Right. Yes, yes.

Marten: And another thing that's very difficult right now is because the businesses have turned away from Russia, the business interest there might otherwise have been in saying, Oh yes, we need expertise in Russia, has also evaporated. And so why do you get money to do something

that's related to Russian research and teaching when instead you could fund a scholarship for a disadvantaged student to go to college? How do you compete against that? It's very difficult. So we're just trying the best we can, and if it works it works, and if it doesn't, it hasn't been all that costly, and it's been kind of fun and I've learned something. [laughs]

Q: It sounds like the Harriman Institute has a really extensive and impressive alumni network—

Marten: We do.

Q: —which it sounds like you just began tapping into.

Marten: Unfortunately, many of our alumni have gone into government service and academia, which means that they don't make a lot of money. And so—

Q: But they're making a difference.

Marten: Yes. We have a lot of alums who give a small amount of money every year on a regular basis. And it's wonderful that they're connected. But they're not going to endow—I mean, to endow the Program on U.S.-Russia Relations would take at least \$2 million. So it's either going to take—

Q: Let me get my checkbook out.

Marten: Yes. It's going to take one individual or one corporation or something or somebody who wants to try it—I mean, what we are spending right now is approximately fifty thousand a year. So somebody could try it temporarily. They could try funding it at a level of fifty thousand a year and see if they're happy with it before they decide to commit to an endowment. But that's going to take a very wealthy person or it's going to take a corporation that really, really cares about Russia. And I'm not sure where those people are right now.

Q: So what were some of the other challenges and successes you've had as the interim director and kind of—

Marten: Well, the biggest challenge that I already mentioned was trying to get more faculty engagement with things that are not in their immediate area of research interest.

Q: Yes. So talk to me about that.

Marten: And I tried to solve that by telling people far in advance what the dates of things were, by sending out reminder emails, by encouraging people personally to come, and it just didn't work. And I think part of that is just that there's too much else to do in New York. I think part of it is that the Harriman Institute does so much that people figure, Oh, if I miss this one event, there'll be another event next week that I can go to instead. And partly it's just that people are so busy doing so many different things that they don't want to take time out of their own work to do this.

Q: Do you think that that community building and that seminar idea that you talked about is still something that could be achieved in the future?

Marten: Well, one of the things that I did through this Program on U.S.-Russia Relations that I'm very proud of is to start a separate student group. And faculty are welcome to come to these student events—not many of them do, besides me—but they are events where the students work together at all levels, from undergraduate to PhD. The average student who does this is at the master's level, both through SIPA and then through our MARS [-REERS, Master of Arts in Regional Studies—Russia, Eurasia and Eastern Europe] program, the master's degree in Russian studies. They get a little bit of money. They can invite anybody they want to, usually somebody from the New York area already—but they get an honorarium for doing it, and they get dinner afterwards—to come and speak to the student audience about something.

And so it both is making the students feel like they're valued and that they get to pick the speakers, but it also, I'm hoping, is building that student network that replicates, to some extent, what I had in the Berkeley-Stanford Program. If you keep on seeing the same people over and over again, you get to know them. And hopefully those connections will be maintained into the future, and hopefully that will also help the Harriman Institute in our development efforts, by making people think, Oh yes, it was the Harriman Institute that got me interested in this.

Q: Speaking of the future, what do you see as Harriman's greatest challenge going forward and what are your hopes for Harriman in the future?

Marten: I haven't actually thought about greatest challenges. One of the things that is just an incredible benefit of being at Harriman is the Harriman endowment. And the [W.] Averell Harriman family was so extraordinarily generous in giving that money. And they continue to be our largest annual donor, through what I think is called the Mary Harriman Fund [Mary W. Harriman Foundation], but you have to check on the exact name of that. And what that has meant is that when other area studies institutes have really floundered—for example, because of the drying up of federal money—we've been able to keep an enormous amount going. We've been somewhat constrained. We're constrained because we don't have infinite resources, and I can't keep the PURR program going forever. But there will always be—because of the generosity of the Harriman family, there will always be money to hold events that are relevant to current events, events that are relevant to whatever the interests are of the scholars at the moment who are on campus, and that is in perpetuity. And that's really what their extraordinarily generous endowment has allowed.

And it's been bolstered—after Russia, our second biggest endowment has been the group of people that have come together in Ukrainian studies that have made sure that no matter what happens, we're going to keep on having some kind of a Ukrainian focus here. So that is the biggest benefit of being at Harriman. It almost spoils us because we don't have to work very hard for the money. Basically anybody who has a good idea as a faculty member can get money to go to the region for a short period of time to conduct interview research. Anybody who has a good idea can have a speaker series on something that is either interesting to them for their academic research or that is policy relevant. And that is so, so wonderful. And it's unique. So that's the benefit.

I think the biggest challenge is getting people engaged, in part because there is so much money they don't have to work very hard for it. And maybe that's part of it too, that because we're spoiled, we don't have to work very hard.

Q: And you talked about opportunities in Ukraine and other former Soviet states. You've talked about some of the challenges of working with Russia. Has this kind of regional expansion in scope helped Harriman survive, do you think, over the years, and helped—

Marten: Well, it would have survived anyway because of the funding.

Q: Right. Thrive, maybe?

Marten: Yes.

Q: Be relevant?

Marten: I'm trying to think. We have some faculty members now who are not in some way or other Russia focused. I mean, Alex Cooley is Central Asia focused—and by the way, I was the chair of the search committee that hired Alex Cooley at Barnard. I was the department chair at the time that he was tenured.

Q: No way!

Marten: And then I chaired the political science department committee that promoted him to full professor.

Q: Wow!

Marten: So I'm proud of him. He's one of ours. And he's just making a huge difference. So his primary focus is Central Asia, and so Central Asia doesn't have independent funding here for the most part. It's got a very, very tiny pot of money, not enough to do much with. But the fact that he's here has made a difference in Central Asian studies. And there are also some people, who are more at the adjunct level, not the permanent faculty level, but for example, through the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, you have a Central Asian focus as well.

Then we have the relatively new professor who specializes in Poland, Małgorzata Mazurek. We have Tarik [Cyril Amar], who specializes in Ukraine. And so we have those faculty who do other things that are certainly keeping us vibrant in areas outside of Russia. What was your original question? I'm sorry. [laughter]

Q: About how expanding beyond Russia has helped build the Harriman brand and community and made it kind of thrive—

Marten: Yes—

Q: —more.

Marten: —I think it has. And I think it's probably made us unique. Because the Davis institute at Harvard is still Russia focused. I haven't paid a lot of attention to what's happening at the other, more or less, area studies institutes, but I think that they are less current events/policy focused than we are, and so it's probably made us more relevant than we otherwise would have been.

Q: Mm-hmm. Yes. That's interesting. As we said at the beginning, this is Harriman's seventieth—

Marten: Yes.

Q: —anniversary year. Quite a lot has been accomplished in those seventy years. What do you think or hope Harriman's legacy will be in the future? Or maybe it already is.

Marten: I mean, I think it already has a legacy. I hope we continue to build that legacy. Our core mission is to do research and student education and training, and so the legacy comes on the research level, not only from policy relevance but also from the academic contributions that are made. And my particular focus is in the policy realm, but there are an awful lot of people who've made tremendous contributions to academic research and history in language and culture and literature—in music, at various times—coming out of the Harriman Institute, and I hope that that would continue to be the legacy, is that sort of academic furthering of very high-quality academic research that comes about because of Harriman support and Harriman funding and the

Harriman community. And then the other real thing is student teaching and training. And it's language instruction; it is giving students, no matter what field they go into, a better understanding of a region that continues to be important.

And it's also, even if they don't go into the policy world, of opening people's minds, just in general, to a different way of thinking about things and a different set of cultures that I think makes people better citizens and better humans, even if they are not interested in policy in their own work. So it's part of the liberal arts mandates of both Barnard and Columbia that we just get people to think about things that are outside of their comfort zone and that encourage them to think about things in new ways.

Q: Interesting.

Marten: So it's not something that you can—you know, it's not like we're a think tank, where we can say, We have this policy impact and that policy impact. And thank goodness we're not expected to do that.

Q: Yes. It's got to be in many ways, yes. I was also wondering about your background and, kind of, coming through political science and area studies during a time when there probably actually weren't that many women in academia?

Marten: When I first started going to conferences, I would be one of only two or three women in a room of a hundred.

Q: Yes. And so what—

Marten: It still—

Q: —was that like, and has it changed?

Marten: It's changed a little bit. It's changed a lot when you're looking at the security studies field because we have so many very high-ranking women. Celeste Wallander's an example. You can just sort of go down the list and name them: the ambassadors and the secretaries of state. So at that level, it's a completely different world than it used to be. And I have many good friends who are women who are in the field, and we've sort of gone through this together and come up together through it. It still is the case that women are underrepresented at an academic level in some of these fields: in foreign policy and security studies. Even though we see them at the policy level, we don't see so much of them at the academic level.

I would say the biggest thing that has changed is that it is now quite comfortable to be a woman, even if you are among a very small number of women in the room, because the academic culture has changed, and people have been trained to be—what is the correct word?—gender inclusive and gender welcoming, and so it's nice not to be an oddity. There were times in the past when sometimes it wasn't always so comfortable, and I no longer feel discomfort in being a woman in the field. And I also see as being part of my role, being a role model for other women. And where it's especially come across sometimes is actually in foreign countries, because we forget

that the United States has had this influx of women into security studies, but in other countries, including China, including Russia, there has not been that influx of women to the top. And so it is not uncommon where I will have given a talk somewhere—Japan also—and a young graduate student or an assistant professor who is a woman will come up to me and say, Thank you, because we need you as a role model.

Q: Wow.

Marten: So that's nice being at Barnard, that I—

Q: Yes, continues that. And your early mentors were so important, and now you're in that role, so—

Marten: Yes. I've got to say that many of my early mentors were men. And so I don't—

Q: Yes. Well, there weren't—

Marten: Yes. I don't believe that only women can be mentors to women. Although I had a very important female mentor too, and that's Lynn Eden, who has had a research administrative role at CISAC. She just retired this past year. And she was one of the people—she gave fantastic comments on my dissertation, and she was always very supportive. And so having somebody who was a powerful woman there in the environment was also very good.

And I worked with Condi [Condoleezza] Rice. She and I have not always seen eye to eye on policy questions, and I didn't get to take any classes with her because she was on leave so much during the time that she was at Stanford, but I took a directed reading with her, and she gave me really good feedback on one of the chapters of my dissertation. Something that was called the Nuclear History Project, that David Holloway was involved with, invited a bunch of scholars from other places—I mean, I just keep on remembering all these wonderful opportunities I had—brought in scholars from all over the place to discuss the chapter that I had on Soviet reactions to the Schlesinger Doctrine. And Condi Rice was one of the people who gave me really good feedback on that. And so she was a role model and a mentor also.

Q: Well, I'm so glad you didn't go to law school.

Marten: Me too! Although I bet I would have had other good stories to tell if I had.

Q: It's true, it's true.

Marten: I think you make your own success, and a lot of it is being in the right place at the right time and making something of it when you have that opportunity. And so just putting yourself out there and being engaged and being involved makes the success happen.

Q: So what's next for you research-wise and interest-wise, how you're going to continue making a difference in the future?

Marten: Yes. Well, I am not working on a book at the moment, but next year I will have a leave from Barnard, which I'm very much looking forward to. One of the things I'm working on is trying to get up to speed on cyber conflict issues. And so I am trying to work my way through an online Harvard course that is called CS50, I think. I'm not sure that's the right name of it. It's incredibly hard. But every time I'm—

Q: It's a computer science course, like a—

Marten: Yes. They move at just this clip that you would not believe. It's all about learning to code in C, but because it's Harvard, it's also sort of the analytic properties behind this. And then I get distracted with other things. So I've only done the first three weeks of the class, and I still haven't finished the third week problem set. But every time I manage to get one of those problems, it's like, Yes! I can do this.

Q: Victory.

Marten: Because I don't have a quantitative way of thinking about the world. I haven't had to use my quantitative brain for quite some time. It's really cool to say, Yes, I can do this. And I don't think I need to know how to code to be able to say things that have value in thinking about strategy as it relates to cyber conflict in the future, but being able to know something about coding gives me that extra little bit of credibility, so I think it's worth doing.

So that's one of the things I'm working on. And it sort of relates to this whole question of, Is what happened during the Cold War relevant? One of the things I want to understand is, did Cold War conflict have anything to tell us about the possibility of conflict that uses cyber weapons, or have cyber weapons changed the game so much that what we learned during the Cold War is no longer relevant? So that's one thing.

Q: Oh, that's interesting.

Marten: I'm continuing to have an interest in current events, in terms of Russian foreign and security policy. I'm reluctant right now to write a book on Russian current events because I'm afraid that there is a good possibility that things might change drastically in one way or another in Russia unexpectedly, and that would leave the book completely out of date. And so many people have written books about Putin, I'm not sure what I would say that they haven't said already. So I don't think I want to write a book on current events in Russia. But I am starting to think about a book on the lessons of the Cold War for current conflict scenarios. And if things get better with Russia, it might also be what the Cold War has to teach us about other conflict scenarios, like with China.

Q: Very interesting and inspiring. Just out of curiosity, how do you see things changing—potentially changing quickly throughout Russia soon?

Marten: I think that Putin as an individual is not really in control of an awful lot of what is happening. I think we have been seeing increasing evidence over the last year in particular, but it

extends beyond that, of various members of his oligarch community coming into conflict with each other. So we've seen people being removed from their positions at the top of various state enterprises. Most are not jailed. They're still given nice little positions in the Federation Council or whatever. But there's changes happening at that level. There are changes happening among the security services. And so I think it was disturbing to see that he felt it necessary to form this new [Federal] National Guard [Troops Service of the Russian Federation] under his direct control, because that's an indication to me that he thinks there's violence coming and that he didn't trust the existing agencies to be able to control that violence. What we just saw last week was the Federal Security Service [of the Russian Federation], the FSB [Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti], the follow-on force to the KGB [Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti]—

Q: KGB.

Marten: —taking on the Investigative Committee, and accusing them of corruption. And so things are sort of bubbling in a way that makes me think that there is instability below the surface. And I highly doubt that if things change suddenly it will be in a liberal, democratic direction. I don't think we're going back to the Yeltsin era. I would not be surprised if we see something that looks like an attempted coup, if we see something that looks like—somebody that's even more hardline and nationalist than Putin coming to the forefront. I see Putin's actions becoming more and more risk-acceptant in a way that I find very disturbing. I think the first sign of that was Georgia. The second sign of it was what happened in Crimea. The third sign was what happened in Eastern Ukraine, which was a very foolish decision on Putin's part in many ways. I think it got worse with Syria. I think it got much worse with what got revealed more

recently about the Democratic National Committee. I think he is taking risks that indicate desperation, and I worry about what that means.

And the other thing to keep in mind, of course, is that Putin is mortal. And yes, he's very healthy, but anybody can get cancer, anybody can have a heart attack or a stroke, and there is no person who has been named as the successor. And that stands in stark contrast to the Yeltsin era, where Yeltsin went through a whole series of prime ministers that he was obviously trying out for that role before settling on Putin. And I don't think anybody believes that Putin would appoint or that [Dmitry A.] Medvedev would become Putin's successor, and there is no obvious successor. And so that means that what we know about how all of these various groups that have economic connections are attached to each other is that there's a very strong likelihood that if Putin were to suddenly drop dead or become incapacitated, there'd be a mafia-style war to see—

Q: Chaos, yes.

Marten: —who takes over.

So all of those things are scary. And on the other hand, maybe Putin will last for another 20 years, and we'll see more of the same thing and have relative stability. It's just that the signs are all starting to point in a direction that is kind of scary.

Q: Well, hopefully Harriman will help us understand whatever comes next.

Marten: We'll see! Yes. [laughter] And that's why I think it'll come suddenly, if it comes, and so we might not understand it. Since the time of, I think, Winston [Leonard Spencer-] Churchill, people have talked about Russian politics and Soviet politics as dogs fighting under a carpet. That's still true. We're just seeing through a glass darkly what is actually happening in Russia. We're just guessing about what's happening. And so it's also possible that something is going to come out of the clear blue sky that nobody had anticipated. So we'll see.

Q: Okay. Well. On that happy note—[laughter]

Marten: Yes. We stay relevant. [laughs]

Q: Yes. Staying relevant. I think that's all the questions I had—

Marten: Great.

Q: —but you're welcome, if there's anything you'd like to add or anything else that—

Marten: No, I think that's it. You covered all the issues really, really well. And everything that I wanted to talk about that I've contributed to at Harriman got talked about. So—

Q: Fantastic. Well, thank you again for your time.

Marten: Thank you, Caitlin!

Q: It's been delightful.

Marten: Yes.

[END OF INTERVIEW]