



## Episode 888: Trump New Jersey Campaign Chair Says Neocons Got to Him

Guest: Mike Doherty

**WOODS:** I go long stretches on this podcast talking about things that have absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the news. I mean, whatever it is, maybe we're talking about if Martians came to Earth, would they have rights. I mean, whatever it is, we're talking about it here. And I'm not always plugged into the news, because the news half the time is depressing and I don't want every single episode to be depressing. But I'm so overwhelmingly crushed about what's going on and what could potentially go on in Syria that I've got to talk about it. I almost want to devote a whole week to it. And then I saw the news item, Murray Sabrin sent it to me, about you and what you had to say, and I thought that was very interesting. So let's start off with – I told people who you are. What exactly was your role with the campaign in 2016?

**DOHERTY:** Well, as you know, I'm from New Jersey and Governor Christie was in the race for president, and most of the New Jersey Republicans were on board right from the get-go. I didn't have the greatest relationship with Governor Christie, but the real important thing was I had supported Ron Paul in 2008 and 2012. We had a great rally at the state house with Ron Paul coming in with a huge number of people, and the real message on Ron Paul was: we need to stop this stupid interventionist foreign policy that the United States has been in engaged in. It's going on for 100 years right now. We're the home of Woodrow Wilson that ran for reelection in 1916 essentially lying to the American people, saying, "Reelect Woodrow Wilson. He kept us out of war," all the time plotting to get us right back into World War I.

So when Donald Trump came along, you know, you have an ear for the truth, and he was saying some things that no other politician was saying in 2015, and that was: the U.S. really needs to think about its interventionist foreign policy. And time and again, he stated we're going to have an "America first" foreign policy, we're not going to get involved in these stupid wars in the Middle East, blowing up Iraq, blowing up Libya that created this migrant crisis in Europe. And perhaps the most wonderful moment was when he took Jeb Bush down in South Carolina and the entire establishment said Trump's finished, Trump's finished. But he said, No, you lied about weapons of mass destruction, your brother did, and it's a disastrous war. And so when he started talking about those issues, Donald Trump, that's when I really wanted to support the man, because that's the kind of leader the United States needs right now.

**WOODS:** So what exactly did you do for him? That's what I'm driving at.

**DOHERTY:** Oh, well, I was his campaign cochairman here in New Jersey. Right out of the box, I was his surrogate, went around New Jersey, made media appearances. I was a real cheerleader for Donald Trump, and so —

**WOODS:** Okay, so in other words, it's a big deal for you to be saying what he did in Syria is a big, big problem. And in fact, I think you've said that the neocons got to him. I've been reading news reports about it. Why don't you share with us exactly what you told the press in New Jersey?

**DOHERTY:** Well, look, I was his number one supporter right out of the box in October of 2015 and I really had a lot of hope in him. He was speaking differently than the other candidates. And he had made campaign commitments to all of us, millions of supporters, military veterans, conservatives, libertarians, that he was going to knock off these unnecessary wars in the Middle East, and I believe that he's surrounded by these folks down in Washington, D.C., and they finally got to him. I think his instincts are correct, but the entire intelligence establishment, the military establishment, they always seem to be agitating for U.S. intervention. So I'm very disappointed. I'm disappointed that he made these commitments to millions of Americans and at the first opportunity he reverses course.

**WOODS:** The pressures are really overwhelming, as you say, for intervention. It's very interesting to see, for example — even leaving out the military industrial complex and the revolving door of contractors and military people who just come in and out — leaving all that aside, you've got the fact that the media would not even recognize the legitimacy of this guy until he started dropping bombs. And then suddenly they stand up and salute. It's the most perverse, backward system in the world. You would think that — in a normal society, that would be the thing that would make you withdraw consent, but no, that's what makes them yield up their consent. It's insane.

So I could easily see how somebody who doesn't have very well formed views could get swept up — or his daughter's influencing him. Who the heck knows what's behind all this? So it seems like if you were to get somebody who was able to get in there and stand up to the most powerful interest group for bigger government, which is what the military industrial complex is, you'd have to have somebody who's so ideologically pure, he's just impossible to corrupt. It would have to be a Ron Paul. I think the Donald Trump example is making that clear.

**DOHERTY:** Well, I thought he had a real opportunity to maintain some type of principle here. The way he was beat up during the campaign, I've never seen an individual take such a beating from all sides, from the Republican establishment, from the media, from the Democrats. And he showed really broad shoulders, so I think his instincts were correct that the U.S. interventionist foreign policy needs to change. But you can see, down in Washington, D.C., I guess, he seems to be bringing in folks to his administration, instead of bringing in Rand Paul types, he's bringing in the Washington, D.C. insiders, and so that's a real tragedy. You need to surround yourself with advisors that have a different mindset. We're seeing now Steve Bannon being pushed out. We saw General Flynn pushed out. So I think he's really almost standing alone. But I still have some hope that President Trump, after hearing from millions of supporters over the weekend that they're very disappointed in his Syria decision, will have enough intestinal fortitude to stand up and start doing the right thing.

**WOODS:** Yeah, I hope so. Another thing that's – well, there's one thing that's disappointed me and another thing that's cheered me about his supporters. The disappointing thing is that everything he does – like for example, the people he appoints, there have been a few decent people. I don't deny that. I don't think anybody can deny that. But by and large, there have been a lot of people that just give me the creeps, and I get some excuse about, Well, he needs people with experience in Washington. Well, eh, all right. If that's what you want to say, all right, that's fine. And then when this bombing in Syria comes along: well, you know, he had to show the world something, and look, it's a brilliant plan because it gets the media off his back and it does blah, blah, blah.

So in other words, everything he does, no matter how outwardly terrible it looks, there's some brilliant explanation for this secret plan he has. You know, I'm a Catholic and hear that all the time – I've heard that all the time in the Church when, ever since Vatican II we've had very odd popes who do very odd, left-liberal things. And so I get all these excuse factory excuses about, Well, if you stand on your head and you read from right to left, it kind of looks sensible what the pope is doing. They can't just say, You know? He's made a bad decision. Let's just be honest about it. He's made a bad decision. So that disappoints me.

What cheers me, though, is precisely what you just said, that unlike Obama supporters who either ignored his foreign policy or made excuse after excuse for it, a lot of prominent Trump people are coming out and saying this is a big problem. Michael Savage is an example. Ann Coulter's an example. Paul Joseph Watson, all down the list. That doesn't mean these are the greatest people in the world and I agree with them on everything, but it means that they have some integrity, and I'll take that.

**DOHERTY:** Well, yeah, basically if you watch – I can't watch TV news these days. It's pure propaganda, and all the folks that appear on the news are being paid to be there and spout their lines. But I think there is a development, the Internet and programs such as yours, Tom. It's this alternative media where you can actually get a different perspective, and I think more and more Americans are tapping into that alternative media. I can't even watch Fox News because it's just rah, rah, war, and knowing the people, all you have to do is look into their biographies and you see why they're saying what they're saying. So it's more important than ever that folks like Savage and Ann Coulter and you stand up and give the president feedback and let him know that his strongest, most loyal supporters that were with him throughout the entire campaign are very disappointed. And I'm hoping that this strong feedback will get to the president and he will change his policies moving forward.

**WOODS:** I want to ask you about something you said to the press in New Jersey. You said, "All of my conservative colleagues, all of my West Point colleagues, we're all against this. We supported him because we were sick of all of those foreign wars." First of all, tell me about your military experience, and secondly, give me some examples here. Tell me about some conversations you've had with people.

**DOHERTY:** Well, I'm a 1985 graduate of the United States Military Academy. I showed up there July 1st, 1981, the height of the Cold War, and I was proud to serve in the Army. I was stationed in Germany, and it gave me a perspective. I was a nuclear artillery officer. We were there to defend NATO from the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet

Union. And the Warsaw Pact was up to the border of West Germany. As you know, it had Poland, Romania, Hungary, East Germany. So it was a real threat to Western Europe. And since that time, the Soviet Union has totally collapsed. The Warsaw Pact totally collapsed. Russia has retreated back to its borders. And at the time, the U.S. made commitments that we were not going to expand eastward with NATO and move up to Russia's border, but we've done just that. So commitments were made and the United States really didn't keep those commitments, and to see folks say that Russia's being aggressive, it just defies logic.

So being over there, seeing that firsthand, seeing how Russia's retreated – my three sons all served in the military, one in the Army; we have a Marine, my son, Ryan, who served in Iraq; my youngest son, Jared, served in the Air Force with an explosive ordnance disposal unit in Afghanistan. So we're committed to a strong defense, national defense, not a national offense. But my other colleagues – I had colleagues that served overseas, as well, West Point graduates, my classmates, and I've got to say, frankly, we're sick and tired of these foreign wars. We're spending trillions of dollars, our soldiers are getting blown up and losing limbs, and for what? For what? I mean, this is what Donald Trump said during the campaign. Why are we spending trillions of dollars to blow up countries, to create this migrant crisis? So folks with common sense – all you have to do is open your eyes and have life experience, and I think that's why my colleagues – I stand with my colleagues.

And yes, we're all texting each other over the weekend, on Thursday night, my colleagues, my graduate colleagues from West Point, class of '85, how we're just disgusted with this. It needs to end and folks need to stand up and say enough is enough. Let's take care of the United States. Let's have a national defense as opposed to trying to remake the world in the image of Woodrow Wilson.

**WOODS:** How about people who say that during the campaign, Trump seemed to jump around on foreign policy a bit? I mean, he would talk a lot about how Obama had been too weak and we've got to really destroy ISIS and this and that. And that's not necessarily an America first position, because ISIS is not really primarily looking at America. ISIS has plenty of fish to fry in the Middle East. So could it not be the case that maybe Trump is just not a systematic enough thinker to really trace out one consistent line of thought in his foreign policy? It was very erratic.

**DOHERTY:** Well, perhaps, because he was still developing some of his views. But what I heard him say when he was really challenged, when Hugh Hewitt challenged, when Jeb Bush challenged him, he was very clear to me. He said the idea of regime change, the idea of the U.S. going in and blowing up these countries and remaking the government and having democracies, this is a bad idea.

So among all the candidates, what was our choice, Tom? We had Hillary Clinton. She's the interventionist. She was the author of Libya disruption. And then we had Lindsey Graham. We had Chris Christie who wanted to shoot down planes, Russian planes in Syria, all kinds of crazy talk. So the one person who actually was – I guess Rand Paul was in for a while. The one person who was really getting traction that was speaking to those issues was Donald Trump. So really we didn't have much of a choice, so that's why we all went with Donald Trump, the conservatives, military veterans.

**WOODS:** So give me an overview of what you think the right foreign policy ought to be. It's not necessarily – well, actually, I don't know what your foreign policy is in general. I have a sense because you were with Ron Paul and you supported him, but what should it look like?

**DOHERTY:** Well, first and foremost, the U.S., if you had to pick a spot on the face of the Earth, one of the most defensible, out-of-the-way places in the world, literally, is the United States. The United States is protected by two vast oceans: the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. We have weak neighbors to the north and to the south. We should take advantage of that. We should be the Switzerland of the Western Hemisphere – who, by the way, Switzerland has a very strong military for the size of its country. But it has been able to stay out of military conflicts, even though it's in the crossroads of Europe. So the United States, in my opinion, should take advantage of its great strategic location, and we should use that to benefit the American people. We do not have to get involved in any of these foreign wars.

It is absolutely tragic what happened in 1917 when Woodrow Wilson got the declaration of war from Congress and sent us into Europe. There was absolutely no reason for us to get involved, and it's been a century of warfare, a century of propaganda and lies to the American people. And it needs to end, but it's a very tough battle we have because it's so entrenched, the military industrial complex that President Eisenhower spoke about. So I think we should have the Monroe Doctrine. We want other countries to respect our backyard and not mess around in the backyard of the United States.

So if we want the Monroe Doctrine respected, why can't we respect other major regional powers like China, like Russia, and allow them to have their spheres of influence? What the heck are we doing in the South China Sea, basically China's Gulf of Mexico, telling them what they can and cannot do in international waters? Why are we committed to the defense of Vietnam, a communist country that killed 58,000 Americans that is still a communist form of government, has not repudiated communism, yet now we're sending them heavy weapons, selling them heavy weapons, saying we're going to defend you against communist China? It's absolutely insane.

So I think we should bring our troops home. We should have a strong national defense, not a strong national offense. We should respect other major regional powers and work with them. And this occurred back in the 1800s. You would have Britain and Japan, they had a naval cooperation treaty where Britain covered one part of the world and Japan covered another part of the world. They didn't have an idea that Britain had to dominate every corner. But the United States, we want this unipolar world where we dominate and police every corner and it's our obligation. I don't think it's our obligation to spend trillions of dollars and have our soldiers killed for what?

**WOODS:** I want to say one more thing. There's an article about a back and forth you had with a prominent figure in New Jersey politics who is unhappy that you're unhappy because, Look, all respectable opinion is in favor of this Syria strike, so what's the matter with Doherty? Tell me about that.

**DOHERTY:** Well, there's a gentleman, Steve Rogers, and it's interesting because both of us were big Trump supporters. We were both delegates of the convention. We both

worked on the campaign together in New Jersey, and how he's running for governor. We have the governor's race in 2017. He's in the Republican primary. It's interesting; he was in the Navy and the military and I was in the Army. So when I expressed my disappointment in Donald Trump's decision to bomb Syria, he basically said, Well, Doherty's got no understanding of what's going on and he really doesn't understand the situation and we're all with President Trump. So this is just a — it's so easy to rah, rah, and jump in there. It's actually a lot more difficult and nuanced to say, Wait a second. In the big picture, this really doesn't make a lot of sense. So there's been a little bit of a dust up. Two former Trump supporters going in different directions.

But look, I'll stand by my vision of the truth. I think for a hundred years, the United States has been totally off the rails, and it was really ironic to me that 100 years to the day that we entered World War I — it's almost like a sick joke. Hey, Americans, if you think we're changing our interventionist foreign policy after 100 years, well, we're going to do it on the 100th anniversary just to let you know that we're doubling down.

So I think Donald Trump, it's still to be written, his history, and we're going to see which direction he goes. But he's got to know the reason he did get elected is because of his non-interventionist, America-first foreign policy. That got him over the top, and if he thinks that his millions of supporters, his strongest base is going to stick with him if he brings us to a war in Syria and more foreign interventions, I think he's sadly mistaken. So that's why I felt it was so important and so encouraging that there was strong feedback from across the board, his strongest supporters said, President Trump, you made a big mistake here — and unlike the Obama supporters who really kept their mouths closed after Obama ran one way and then totally reversed with the military intervention. So I still have some hope.

And alternative media, shows such as yours, Tom, are really having an impact. The young people today, they simply don't watch TV like we did growing up in the '70s, and now they're getting their news from alternative sources, and that's where you're getting a different perspective. That's where the truth can come in. So I think there is some hope.

**WOODS:** Well, let's hope so. That's all I can say. It's really been quite demoralizing, and it would be nice if his New Jersey campaign co-chair had his ear, because we'd be in a lot better shape than we are now. Unfortunately, it is — I tweeted out, Look, if Bill Kristol and Hillary Clinton and *The New York Times* are all cheering you, doesn't that tell you something? I mean, is there ever a time when that's — can you imagine that being a good thing?

**DOHERTY:** [laughing] Well, absolutely, and we have to add, of course, Lindsey Graham —

**WOODS:** Yeah, all of them.

**DOHERTY:** — as well as John McCain and Chuck Schumer are all on board, as well. So that must mean you're doing the right thing, if those three individuals are supporting your policy.

**WOODS:** Yeah, insane. Absolutely insane. Well, Mike, thanks for – thanks for not being like so many other partisan people who just make excuses or who change their positions and hop all around in order to defend some politician. I think everybody's had just about enough of that, and it's great that somebody as prominent as you in the whole campaign has come out and spoken as you have. And I appreciate also your time with us today. Thanks so much.

**DOHERTY:** Well, thanks, Tom. Look, if anybody's a student of history, you can see that empires ultimately go bankrupt and collapse, and we have a great constitutional republic here in the United States, a great tradition. Our Founding Fathers clearly said avoid all of these foreign entanglements, searching out foreign monsters to destroy. And we've done it for a hundred years, and the bottom line is we're a bankrupt country, \$20 trillion in debt.

And we've been very fortunate. We've engaged in all of these military conflicts around the world and we have not had a major war on U.S. soil. And our days of good luck, we really need to watch it, because one of these days, something really bad is going to happen. There's going to be some really bad blowback, and I'm talking maybe a war on U.S. soil if we keep this up. We should avoid this stuff. We should reboot the United States. Our infrastructure's falling apart. We can't take care of Americans. Social security is going bankrupt. Right across the board, the numbers are not looking good for the United States.

So I think we've had a century of warfare; let's reboot the country. Like Donald Trump said, let's make America great again, build our infrastructure, take care of Americans, secure our borders, stop this illegal immigration that's occurring, and stop this whole boogey man. Like, how come everybody's a boogeyman? China's evil, Russians are evil. Everybody's bad. Iraq – it's sort of sick. Maybe after awhile you have to think, maybe Americans have a problem, that everybody's the boogeyman. Because I've been to foreign countries; I've lived in foreign countries, and it's not as bad as it's portrayed on the nightly news. It's really not as dangerous a place if we just mind our own business and stay right here in the United States.

**WOODS:** Well, amen to that. Thanks again, Mike.

**DOHERTY:** Thanks, Tom. Keep up your great work, because I can't tell you, folks such as you, Lew Rockwell, Ron Paul, you're having an impact. You really are. The young people, one of my classmates, class of '85, his son is right at West Point right now. And guess what. He tells me, from talking to his son and his classmates, the cadets at West Point right now, they're not drinking the Kool-Aid. They realize that we've been sold out by these neocons. So the young people, there's a lot of hope with this alternative media and Internet news that we can get, and I'm hoping that there's going to be a change, and so we need to keep fighting. What's the alternative? To give up. We really can't give up, Tom.

**WOODS:** Yeah, and I was thinking the other day as I was watching Thomas Massie on television that there really wasn't a point of view like this in the media until Ron Paul came along. I'm not saying nobody every opposed military action, but I'm talking about having a systematic view. Not just saying this particular one is unwise, but saying the whole interventionist project has been, at the very least, let's say a mixed bag, to put

it mildly. And so maybe the benefit of the doubt should be given to the noninterventionists for a change. That just wasn't around before. And now suddenly, in the same way that you wouldn't read in the financial press a critic of the Fed – yeah, you might read a critic of one little policy – you know, the interest rate should go up by 50 instead of 25, some kind of thing like that, but you wouldn't see somebody who was just against the thing across the board. And now you do, and that is something. No, we're not running the show, but that is a step ahead.

I asked Ron Paul, who has the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity, some time ago I asked him on my show, Can you think of any organization that's ever existed that's been in favor of just nonintervention across the board? He couldn't think of one. Even the Anti-Imperialist League from 1898, that thing was active really until about 1902 or '3, and then it stuck around; it didn't actually fully die out until 1920. But they didn't even oppose entry into World War I. I mean, talk about a compromised organization. So there was nothing like it until now. So that means a corner has been turned, and we need to at least acknowledge that that is a good thing.

All right, that's it. I promised I'd keep you less time than I already have, so I'm going to let you get going. Thanks so much.

**DOHERTY:** Okay, Tom. Thank you. Have a good day.