

>> Peter Robinson: Welcome to Uncommon Knowledge. I'm Peter Robinson. James Woolsey is the Annenberg Distinguished Visiting Fellow with the Hoover Institution. He's held high positions in the federal government under four chief executives, serving most notably perhaps as President Clinton's Director of Central Intelligence from 1993 to 1995. Mr. Woolsey is a founding member of the organization Set America Free, which wants to reduce American dependence on foreign oil. Jim Woolsey, thanks for joining us.

>> James Woolsey: Good to be with you.

>> Peter Robinson: Segment One. How to assess central intelligence. The CIA told President Bush that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein did not. Here's the question. We hear over and over and over again that that was an intelligence failure. Was it a failure or did the CIA not know because it was unknowable? The question here is, in a democracy, how do you assess? What's the baseline against which you measure the performance of an intelligence agency?

>> James Woolsey: I think it was a failure, but not exactly in the sense that most people [inaudible].

>> Peter Robinson: Not incompetence? Not obvious bungling?

>> James Woolsey: Well, first of all, they should never have gotten into the phrase weapons of mass destruction. It's an old Soviet agitprop phrase and it links together chemical, bacteriological and nuclear, which are extremely different. There's no question Saddam had chemical weapons. He used them against the Iranians and the Kurds. No question that he had a major biological weapons program. His brother-in-law ran it, who defected [inaudible].

>> Peter Robinson: Chemical Alli?

>> James Woolsey: No, Kamel [assumed spelling] who defected to and then redefected back in '95, '96. The question was where was this wherewithal to produce chemical and bacteriological weapons? And could it have been destroyed quickly? What you need to produce bacteriological weapons is roughly equivalent to a microbrewery attached to a restaurant to do anthrax.

>> Peter Robinson: Easy to hide.

>> James Woolsey: Sure, or destroy. Chemical weapons can be produced by relatively minor modifications to chemical plants used for other purposes like fertilizer. The thing that would be quite distinctive and where I think there was a failure in a sense was suggesting that their nuclear program was up and running. Whereas in fact we know they had had several nuclear programs that we in the United States and the IAEA all missed back in the '80s. But it's entirely plausible that the entire biological weapons stockpile that, for example Colin Powell was talking about when he testified before the United

Nations, if reduced to powder, the anthrax, could have fit in about four suitcases. It could have gone across the Syrian border in the back seat of a Volkswagen.

>> Peter Robinson: So let me put the question to you in a very bald way. George Tenet, your successor at one remove as Director of Central Intelligence, presides over the agency. President Bush inherits him from Bill Clinton. He presides over the agency as it says, to the president.

>> James Woolsey: Mm-hmm.

>> Peter Robinson: There are weapons of mass destruction.

>> James Woolsey: Mm-hmm.

>> Peter Robinson: We go in. There are no weapons of mass destruction. Should the president have removed Tenet? Should heads have rolled? Was it the kind of failure for which there ought to have been consequences at the agency?

>> James Woolsey: Well consequences yes in terms of the way you re-look at things. But, look, all, virtually all of Saddam's divisional and core commanders thought that he had chemical weapons because they'd used them in the past. They just didn't think their unit had them. If George Tenet had been the most accomplished spymaster of all time, had successfully recruited let's say a dozen Iraqi generals, each one would have said, "Well my unit doesn't have chemical weapons, but the one to my right and the one on my left does. I'm sure of that." I don't know what kind of intelligence failure you call that. That would have lead them more astray if you'd gotten more intelligence because it's what one often calls red on red deception. He was deceiving his own people, his own senior people.

>> Peter Robinson: I see. All right. The Robb of the Silverman-Robb report which examined intelligence operations after we went into the war, after we discovered that there were no weapons of mass destruction, noted that even though the first Gulf War had taken place a decade before, even though since the Clinton administration, regime change had been the official policy of the United States, the Central Intelligence Agency had not devoted so much as a single agent full-time to investigating the question of weapons of mass destruction. Did they devote insufficient resources?

>> James Woolsey: Well, I don't know the sense in which they said that because certainly there was a good deal of attention being paid to the issue, but you have someone who's full-time -- a bunch of people who are full-time on Iraq, and each one is doing something with respect to different types of weapons, I don't think that means there's no attention being paid to chemical, bacteriological or nuclear weapons.

>> Peter Robinson: Okay, let me sum it up this way then to see if you think this is a fair assessment or fair summary of what took place and then we'll go on to the next segment. The Central Intelligence Agency, full of hard-working, intelligent, by and large

competent people, did at the very least a plausible job -- I'm giving you a range here -- at the very least they did a plausible job of assessing the threat from Iraq. Or would you put it more strongly and say nobody did a better job? All the intelligence agencies believed that there were weapons of mass destruction on the ground in Iraq. And what that suggests is that it is just unimaginable how anybody could have done a better job. President Bush was right to keep George Tenet in place. It wasn't an intelligence failure. It was simply that they were unable to detect what was fundamentally unknowable.

>> James Woolsey: The key failure, I think, was lumping all of them together and letting people ask you whether or not there are, quote, weapons of mass destruction. The answer should have been, here's what we know about chemicals, infrastructure, destroyability, storability, etcetera. Here's what we know about bacteriological. Here's what we know about nuclear, enrichment processes, etcetera. Then in response to the question, "But are there weapons of mass destruction?" The answer is, "You didn't hear me. I gave you our analysis."

>> Peter Robinson: All right. Segment two. Directing Central Intelligence. President-elect Obama -- or by the time this program airs, President Obama has named Leon Panetta to head the CIA. Sixteen years as a Democratic congressman, four years in the Clinton administration, first as Director of Office of Management and Budget, then as Whitehouse Chief of Staff. This is a man with broad experience of the way Washington works, direct intelligence experience, zero. The Economist magazine: "Mr. Obama is installing a man whose experience lies in politics and management, not spookery," close quote. What do you make of that? Good appointment? Bad appointment? On the face of it plausible?

>> James Woolsey: Well, Leon Panetta is a very able individual with a successful career. That same could have been said about John McCone in the early 1960s when President Kennedy appointed him to succeed Allen Dulles after Dulles was effectively let go after the Bay of Pigs. McCone had no background in intelligence and he was a superb Director of Central Intelligence.

>> Peter Robinson: George H. W. Bush as director?

>> James Woolsey: George was -- George H. W. Bush was a fine director. He was in a relatively brief time, but McCone had a great deal to do with pressing the agency to do what was necessary, actually some of it while he was on his honeymoon in Paris, to find the Soviet missiles in Cuba. The bureaucracy was not responding particularly well and McCone, he was an investment banker. But he was a very successful, bright, able, tough individual. He did a superb job as director of the Central Intelligence and he had no background in it at all. It helps, I think, to have an intelligence background, but it's not essential.

>> Peter Robinson: All right. Back to Bush. Daniel Drezner, the Bush Administration, by way of getting back to Panetta, to whom I want to return in a moment. Daniel Drezner of The New Republic writing in 2003, quote: "The CIA is in open revolt against the

Whitehouse," close quote. Bill Kristol writing in The Weekly Standard in 2007, quote: "A group of unelected bureaucrats from the CIA leaked almost daily against the Whitehouse," close quote. Is it plausible that if you're the incoming administration, and you look at the relationship between George W. Bush and the CIA, and you conclude, based on quite a lot of evidence -- I just gave you a couple of quotations from journalists working in Washington who were watching the situation as it unfolded -- that the CIA contains elements that are dangerous. That you as a political matter have to have somebody in CIA whose first job is to make sure the CIA does no harm to you, the administration. Is that a plausible way of looking at the CIA?

>> James Woolsey: No. It's not. I don't think so. I think that the CIA has a number of extraordinarily able professionals and in recent years they've done a very good job of moving to obtain some extremely hard-to-come-by intelligence with respect to the war on terror. The people who make those sort of assertions ask them why it is that these predator drones, which by the way the CIA developed, seem to keep being able to shoot into caves in Afghanistan and Pakistan and kill senior Al Qaeda members. Are they just lucky? Are they just lobbing missiles at random caves and somehow seem to hit the Al Qaeda people? Anyone who understands anything about intelligences knows that that could not be the case. I think the most serious undermining of the sensible consideration of an issue by the administration in recent years did come from the intelligence community, but it didn't come from the CIA. It came from the Director of National Intelligence's Office and The National Intelligence Council's ridiculous estimate, a little over a year ago in December of '07, about the Iranian nuclear program. They took one small part of the program, that which it's easiest to shut down and start up again, and which takes the last time, namely the warhead design, and in their headline ignored the enrichment of uranium, which the Iranians kept doing, the building of delivery vehicles, ballistic missiles, which they kept doing, and gave the entire world the impression that the entire Iranian nuclear weapons program had been halted. That's ridiculous. And that was not the CIA that did that.

>> Peter Robinson: Let's take that as a case study in how an administration -- brief case study -- in how an administration has to handle intelligence. The President of the United States, George W. Bush, had at that point invested a huge amount of capital in trying to persuade our allies, particularly in Europe, to ratchet up the pressure on Iran.

>> James Woolsey: Mm-hmm.

>> Peter Robinson: This is diplomatically intricate. Untold hours had gone into it on the part of the Secretary of State, on the highest levels. And then out comes this crudely written report saying, in effect, or the message the people took from it in effect was, "Ah, the nuclear program in Iran is no problem [inaudible]." And cutting off the legs of the President's effort.

>> James Woolsey: That wasn't the CIA.

>> Peter Robinson: Okay, it wasn't the CIA, but how should the Bush -- how does a president come to grips with all these various pieces of intel --

>> James Woolsey: The senior person in the National Intelligence Council and the Director of National Intelligence, I think should have taken one look at that analysis and sent it back and said, "This confuses the issue." Tom Friedman wrote a great satire of it two or three days after it came out.

>> Peter Robinson: Tom Friedman, no well-known Bush supporter.

>> James Woolsey: Right. I mean it was imminently satirizable. And, you know, when I was Director of Central Intelligence, which essentially was the older job that combined the CIA Head and the Community Head job that's now expunged

>> Peter Robinson: You were the top intelligence officer in the country.

>> James Woolsey: Well, my Head of National Intelligence Council was Joe Nye, who had been head of the Kennedy School at Harvard until very recently.

>> Peter Robinson: Right.

>> James Woolsey: And Joe and I, the first National Intelligence Estimate that we got was on the drug trade. And it was not well done. We sent it back and it still wasn't very well done. We sent it back six times. And it wasn't that we said you have to conclude X rather than Y, we said, "Look what's useful is to explain to people how the drug trade works, not to try to predict the price of cocaine. That's like trying to predict the price of oil. Here's how we want it structured." And after about six times the bureaucracy said, "Oh, well, okay, yeah. I guess they're serious." And they rewrote it. It was a very fine estimate. That's kind of the job of the Head of the National Intelligence Council among others, but that position is now no longer reporting to the Director of the CIA. It reports to the Director of National Intelligence.

>> Peter Robinson: Give me one -- to close out this sentence -- just give me one sentence of recommendation for Leon Panetta and one for President Obama in dealing with intelligence.

>> James Woolsey: Don't try too much to be liked.

>> Peter Robinson: Okay. Tough hombre needed. Segment three. World War IV. James Woolsey speaking in 2003, quote: "The United States is engaged in World War IV," close quote. Do you still believe the war on terror represents a struggle as global, as titanic, as World War I, World War II and the Cold War?

>> James Woolsey: Effectively yes, but although Norm Podhoretz has continued with that phrase.

>> Peter Robinson: He wrote a book called World War IV.

>> James Woolsey: Which I thought was a fine book. I have started talking about the great war of the 21st Century, or the long war of the 21st Century, because when people hear the phrase World War they think of the Normandy and Iwo Jima and whereas the Cold War is probably a better analogy. But in the Cold War, our enemy, the Soviet Union, its ideology was effectively, by the 1950s pretty much dead. It was pretty live back in the '20s and '30s, but by the 1950s, I say slightly tongue in cheek there were probably more true believing communists in the bookstores in the upper west side of Manhattan than there were in the Kremlin. These were basically -- Soviet leadership were thugs with a cover story. And they didn't want to die for the principle of each according to his ability, to each according to his need. They wanted to keep their dachas. That's not what we have now. Al Qaeda, Hezbollah, Ahmadinejad, a number of Wahhabi clerics in Saudi Arabia are fanatically in favor of the proposition of Jihad. They are in many ways theocratic, totalitarian, genocidal maniacs. They are not thuggish bureaucrats like most of our Soviet adversaries. So it's a very different kind of war in which we have to take ideology and their view of their religious beliefs quite different from say, most Indonesians believe Sadat Islam, or most Sufis believe Sadat Islam.

>> Peter Robinson: Right, right.

>> James Woolsey: But we have to take seriously the fact that the fanaticism is religiously motivated and in a sort of a Muslim equivalent of the Spanish Inquisition, that Torquemada was a fanatic too. And you couldn't understand him without understanding why he was that.

>> Peter Robinson: He really believed what he said he believed.

>> James Woolsey: He really believed he was doing God's will by burning Jews and Muslims at the stake and, and dissident Christians and stealing their money.

>> Peter Robinson: Let me continue to quote you from 2003: "We need to say to the terrorists and the dictators and also to the autocrats, who from time to time are friendly with us, 'We understand we're going to make you nervous. We want you to be nervous. We want you to realize that for the fourth time in 100 years, this country is on the march,'" close quote. We've just elected a president who opposed the war in Iraq and would like to get out as quickly as practicable. Are we still on the march?

>> James Woolsey: Well, I hope so. And the reason we're still on is that things, at least as of now, are going reasonably well. They're not solved, but reasonably well, in Iraq. And the reason that's happening is that John McCain and David Petraeus and a few others persisted in the face of the Bush Administration for three and a half years, fighting the same type of search and destroy tactics that McNamara and Westmorland fought in Viet Nam and which at that time, in '67 drove even me into the anti-war movement. I was founder and president of Yale Citizens for Eugene McCarthy for President in '67, '68. Not because I wanted to lose the Viet Nam War, but because I knew what we were doing was

ineffective. I understand people who got very fed up with the Iraq War during the three and a half years that they were fighting search and destroy. When they changed to Petraeus' strategy, they've had a rather substantial success. They should have changed a lot earlier.

>> Peter Robinson: You're not going to give Bush credit for turning around on that in 2007?

>> James Woolsey: I give him a lot of credit for turning around on it, encouraged by McCain and Petraeus.

>> Peter Robinson: Right.

>> James Woolsey: I give him negative credit for having not turned around for three and a half years when he had people --

>> Peter Robinson: In your judgment he took way too long.

>> James Woolsey: Oh, he had people on active duty like Shinseki at the beginning of the process who served in Viet Nam, who remembered Viet Nam, who had lived this crazy search and destroy strategy that Westmoreland was operating under and which they were operating under in Iraq for three and a half years.

>> Peter Robinson: Vice-President Cheney, during an interview in December after 9/11, quote: "We set out to do what we thought was necessary and essential for the country. I feel very good about a lot of the things we've done in this administration. I think that they will be viewed in a favorable light when it's time to write the history of this era," close quote. Do you share that overall assessment of the Bush Administration?

>> James Woolsey: It's a mixed assessment. I would say that the Administration gets a great deal of credit for keeping us safe for the last seven years, for the intelligence operations that make it possible to target the right caves in Afghanistan and Pakistan. I think their heart has been in the right place. They've been trying to serve the country and do their best. I think their biggest mistake was not listening to people like Shinseki and McCain and Petraeus right after we took Baghdad and waiting three and a half years to listen to them.

>> Peter Robinson: You're implicitly blaming Rumsfeld quite heavily, aren't you? Because isn't he the one who made it difficult for them to reach past him to the Shinsekis and Petraeuses?

>> James Woolsey: I think the commanding generals and the Secretary of Defense and the President -- they have to figure out who was responsible for what aspect of what recommendations. But the package was really not good. And the resulting actions were most negative in terms of the ability to succeed in the war. The other thing I think we should have done, and Bernard Lewis and I wrote an Op-Ed in The Wall Street Journal at

the time, in the fall of '03, is instead of drafting up a new constitution for them, for the Iraqis as occupiers, we should have given them back their 1920s constitution, which was a very successful constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament, with a bill of rights, from the '20s until 1959. The Bathists took the Iraqi's constitution away from them in '59. If we had given it back to them, we would have gotten a huge amount of credit.

>> Peter Robinson: And we wouldn't have needed to run the country by way of the Coalition Provisional Authority for 14 months, is that right?

>> James Woolsey: Not that way. We might have had somebody in authority working with them. But, you know, Amartya Sen, the Nobel Prize-winning economist is wonderful on these issues. He talks about building on the institutions of public reason that exist in any society, like say the Loya Jirga in Afghanistan.

>> Peter Robinson: You take what you find.

>> James Woolsey: There are institutions -- were institutions of public reason going back some decades in Iraq. If we had build on those, instead of starting from scratch right after we conquered Baghdad, I think things might likely have gone a lot better.

>> Peter Robinson: I want to come to the next segment on energy in just a moment, but setting energy independence aside for just a few more seconds, give me your word of advice to the incoming administration on how it should conduct the war on terror, continue to conduct the war on terror.

>> James Woolsey: You have to think like your enemy. You can't succeed in anything like this unless you put yourself in the enemy's shoes. You have to appreciate, in the sense of understand, his religious fanaticism. Americans are often rather uncomfortable with that. They think that, you know, well, it's just crazy to have these views that we want a worldwide caliphate and have the battle to end all wars and the infidels all go to hell and we will all go to heaven, I think. But a number of people actually believe that. And you can't outwit them without understanding that their fanaticism is in a sense honest. You have to have people who have either been there, know the culture, are extraordinarily empathetic, some combination of those. Put yourself in the enemy's shoes, first and foremost.

>> Peter Robinson: Segment four. Greenocon. In February, 1998, you testified to the House Committee on National Security as follows. Longish quotation, but it's your own words, so I don't think you'll find it unpleasant listening to them. "We are headed toward a massive transfer" -- 1998, a decade ago -- "We're headed toward a massive transfer of the world's resources. Hundreds of billions, ranging toward trillions of dollars into this volatile region, the Middle East. Those funds will support much governmental and private activity that is not in the U.S. interest, to put it mildly. I can think of no more important long-term strategic issue than this and I can think of no single step that would be more likely to reduce the risk of war into which the United States might be drawn than for the world to begin to move decisively and promptly away from dependence on Mid-

East oil," close quote. Since you spoke those words a decade ago, both the consumption of oil and the price of oil have gone up. Are you willing, or do you wish in any way to amend that statement a decade later.

>> James Woolsey: Not at all. The only change I would make is instead of saying Mid-East oil, I'd say oil, period. We have to do to oil what like the coming of the electricity grids at the end of the 19th Century did to salt. Salt was the only way to preserve meat. Countries who had salt mines were more important than others. Countries went to war over salt mines. But the coming of the electricity grid, among other things, but mainly that, made it the case that you could have frozen meat instead of meat that had been in salt brine, a hugely important part of the human food chain. And salt, within a relatively few years, was totally destroyed as a strategic commodity. We still have it. We'll have it on our tables today when we eat --

>> Peter Robinson: [Inaudible] by the war.

>> James Woolsey: Are we salt independent? Who knows? Who cares? It's just a commodity that's traded in international commerce. But it was destroyed as a strategic commodity. Its monopoly was destroyed, and that's what we need to do to oil. Not just Mid-Eastern oil. Oil, period. Its monopoly over transportation has to end as soon as possible.

>> Peter Robinson: Now, a decade later and all this transfer of hundreds of billions of dollars has taken place. What specific -- here's the contrast. Over the same period we've been trading more and more and more with China and hundreds of millions of people have risen out of poverty as a result of their ability to engage in free trade with the United States. Good thing. Middle East, I think, right? By and large a good thing? Middle East you're arguing, "Wait a minute. We can't engage in free trade. We don't want those countries to get richer." What are the specific threats?

>> James Woolsey: Free trade is fine, but you have to destroy the monopoly in order to have free trade in fuels. And furthermore, when oil -- Collier, Professor Collier at Oxford is very good on this point -- where oil as a commodity with a huge amount of economic rent becomes the central commodity of a country, and that country is already either a dictatorship or an autocratic kingdom, oil enhances the power of the state. That's why Tom Freidman calls what he calls the first law of petrol politics that the price of oil and the path of freedom run in opposite directions.

>> Peter Robinson: Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Russia, Venezuela?

>> James Woolsey: The 22, I think, states of the Arab League, according to Bernard Lewis several years ago, the numbers may have changed a little bit recently, plus Iran have approximately the population of the United States and Canada together. Other than petro-chemical exports, mainly oils and L & G, etcetera, other than that, they export to the world, less than Finland, a country of five million people. They don't do anything except pump oil and some little bit of gas and sometimes refined products. That enhances

the authoritarianism of those states. Now, if you're already a democracy like Norway, nice Norway hasn't been turned into a dictatorship by finding a lot of oil, but we have a serious problem in that we are enhancing the authority and the power of Putin and Ahmadinejad and Chavez and the Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia every time we pull into the filling station.

>> Peter Robinson: Bad Guys. Now, you have in more recent years added to the strict national security argument, a second argument. You're concerned about global warming, climate change.

>> James Woolsey: Mm-hmm.

>> Peter Robinson: Okay now. Hang on. Listen to a couple of your fellow tough-minded conservatives. Nigel Lawson, Chancellor of the Exchequer under Prime Minister Thatcher has spoken of, quote: "The irrationality and intolerance of Econo -- of enviro-fundamentalism," close quote. Economist Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, quote: "Global warming is a myth. Global warming activists want to restrict our freedom. It is our duty to say no," close quote. Jim, you are hugely compelling when you talk about the national security need for independence from oil. Why don't you just leave it at that and stay away from this contentious issue of confusing science on global -- just leave it alone?

>> James Woolsey: First of all, I rather like contention or I wouldn't have spent 22 years as a litigator, but the real reason is because those who warn us about climate change -- not just global warming. I mean some of it -- Amory and Hunter Lovins's phrase, global weirding, is probably better than global warming. You might have the Gulf Stream interfered with and Europe [inaudible] Northern Europe get cooler. But we have put a -- we are in the process of doubling the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere beginning at the beginning of the industrial age. And it is almost impossible to find a distinguished climatologist that is not worried about this, very worried about it. You can find economists. You can find politicians. But climatologists are almost unanimous, including very distinguished ones like John Holdren who's just taking over a lot of these duties for President Obama. And I think what the mistake is is assuming that climate change is either entirely anthropogenic or not anthropogenic at all. It's certainly -- the earth's axis is probably tilting and we're in the middle of a several thousand-year warming period. That's happened throughout the history of the earth. But try an analogy to the human body. If you or I were unlucky enough to be genetically predisposed toward lung cancer, that doesn't mean we should say, "Well, okay, let's smoke six packs a day." I mean, you shouldn't make the problem worse and you ought to try to make it better even if there's more than one cause.

>> Peter Robinson: All right, final segment. Segment five. Biography. Very interesting life you've lead. But there's some at least apparent inconsistencies. 1967 you helped to organize Yale Citizens for Eugene McCarthy. During the Carter Administration you served as an Undersecretary of the Navy. During the administration of George W. Bush you become an advocate of the war on Iraq.

>> James Woolsey: H. W. Oh W. [inaudible].

>> Peter Robinson: No, no, I'm going to W. Bush and your current reputation as a neo-conservative. And now here you are. You were an advisor to John McCain. Jim, there's a journey there from Gene McCarthy to John McCain. What happened to you?

>> James Woolsey: Well, I was opposed to the way the Viet Nam War was being fought. And that's why I helped organize the McCarthy campaign. But when I went on active -- my, I never considered not going on active duty and I would have gone to Viet Nam if I'd been ordered to. In fact, I was ordered to the Pentagon. I worked on intelligence matters and then I worked with Paul Nitze on arms control negotiations. I then became General Counsel of the Senate Armed Services Committee for John Stennis and Scoop Jackson, who was a senior member and worked with them. I don't think either civil liberties or protecting the environment are at odds with believing that the U.S. Military ought to be strong, that sometimes we may have to use it and that we ought to bear a substantial role in the world for helping keep the peace and help the world move toward democracy and the rule of law.

>> Peter Robinson: So you may have made common cause with Democrats, but you've never been a squish?

>> James Woolsey: Well, I am a Democrat. I'm still a Scoop Jackson Democrat -- Joe Lieberman Democrat.

>> Peter Robinson: [Inaudible] Scoop Jackson. Now you've touched on something of great historical importance. I'm just about old enough to remember Scoop Jackson, but a lot of people who are going to be watching this on the internet are not going to have any clue who Scoop Jackson was or what he means, what he stands for. Just give me a couple of sentences on that position in American politics.

>> James Woolsey: Well, think of a Norwegian-American social democratic background Joe Lieberman. Scoop and Joe probably agree before [inaudible] --

>> Peter Robinson: Patriot?

>> James Woolsey: Yes, absolutely.

>> Peter Robinson: Strong America.

>> James Woolsey: Strong national security.

>> Peter Robinson: Willingness to use the welfare state. Some [inaudible] willingness to redistribute and so forth?

>> James Woolsey: Right, right, yes. Yeah, that's a fair summary.

>> Peter Robinson: All right, Francis Fukuyama writing it -- by the way, will you accept the term neo-conservative?

>> James Woolsey: I think it's kind of a silly term because I don't feel I'm a neo anything. I was born a Scoop Jackson Democrat to two Scoop Jackson Democrat parents and I've never been really anything else. So the phrase neo tends to mean somebody who started out on let's say a Trotskyite and then shifted over to be a conservative. I've always been fairly conservative on defense and foreign policy issues and fairly liberal on domestic issues and I'm very comfortable with that position and I never really changed.

>> Peter Robinson: All right. Francis Fukuyama writing in 2006. He uses a label you've just refused to accept, but you'll get the point: "The neo-conservative moment appears to have passed," close quote. And what he's referring to here, he means Jim Woolsey, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Joe Lieberman, have all been so discredited by the war in Iraq, that the movement is finished. George W. -- if you want a handy political index -- George W. Bush is as he leaves office, his standing in the polls have been lower longer than those of any other chief executive. How do you reply?

>> James Woolsey: Would Mr. Fukuyama or anyone who agrees with that believe that Iraq would be better off under Saddam Hussein or that the world would be a better place if Saddam were still ruling?

>> Peter Robinson: So you reply by swinging. You come right back at that [inaudible].

>> James Woolsey: Well, sure. I mean, the other thing is that you don't have to take part in becoming a straw man of saying having people believe that you always want to go to war if you want to support the increase in democracy and the rule of law. I was chairman of the board of Freedom House for several years. And it's important to realize that the world's gone from about 20 democracies in 1945 to 120 today. And they don't fight each other. It's very, very rare that democracies, especially ones that operate under the rule of law go to war with one another. So that helps with peace as well as prosperity and freedom. Now very few of those were imposed by American force of arms, Germany, Italy, Japan, Panama in the 1980s, Iraq now. But almost all of that 100 increase has been from increased prosperity from the end of the Cold War, from all sorts of other causes.

>> Peter Robinson: With the force of American example.

>> James Woolsey: And the force of American example. And why people feel like they have to be opposed to the notion of increasing the amount of democracy and rule of law and prosperity and peace in the world because George W. Bush fought this Iraq War for three-plus years the way Westmoreland and McNamara did, I find a very unbalanced stance.

>> Peter Robinson: Okay. So the question then becomes, as a political matter, you view your position as thoroughly valid, as valid today as ever and you understand that the political damage, or your argument would be that the political damage to that position was done by pursuing it in the wrong way for three and a half years in Iraq, right?

>> James Woolsey: Mm-hmm.

>> Peter Robinson: So the question now is, I would think -- I think you and I would agree and I imagine we could demonstrate by way of polls that a large part of Barack Obama's appeal, particularly in the primaries -- one reason he was able to get traction where Hillary Clinton did not -- was because he opposed the war in Iraq. As a political matter, your position has lost ground. How do you get it back?

>> James Woolsey: Well, I'm not a politician. I don't --

>> Peter Robinson: But surely you're interested in the question?

>> James Woolsey: I'm interested in the question. And my view is that polls are not the heart of the matter. One needs to do the right thing. And I think the right thing is helping encourage the growth of democracy and the rule of law in the world. It was a tough call whether to do that by using force in Iraq. And a number of people who at first supported it then shifted gears later and said, "Whoops, we shouldn't have supported it." I think they probably shifted gears mainly because of the way this administration fought it for three, three and a half years. If they'd adopted what McCain and Petraeus were saying right away, I think this would have gone a lot more favorably.

>> Peter Robinson: Final question. Largely what has happened here is that, from Reagan on, possibly even from Nixon on, the embodiment of your position has taken place largely in the Republican Party. Scoop Jackson's gone. Joe Lieberman was nearly ridden out of the Democratic Party, right?

>> James Woolsey: Mm-hmm.

>> Peter Robinson: And now the Republican Party is widely discredited. On the other hand, Barack Obama comes in, he appoints Hillary Clinton, who in testimony is letting it be known that she intends to be pretty tough. The question is, is there an opening under Barack Obama -- this is my last question -- is there an opening to create an enlarged space for the Jim Wooseys and Joe Liebermans and the remaining Scoop Jackson Democrats to reclaim some wing, at least, of the Democratic Party?

>> James Woolsey: I don't know. I've always, I think, been better able to understand what dictators and terrorists are doing than I have with the American electorate is going to do. I'm not a good election predictor or American political analyst. I have to say that the Democratic Party's been around, originally under the different name of Republicans since Thomas Jefferson, and it's gone through quite a few permutations. And some of its stances have been kind of crazy, but over history, over 200 years, it's renewed itself. And

my great hope is that it will continue to do so and will provide a reasonable national security-concerned entity with perhaps a different emphasis in its debate with the Republican Party in American politics. But whether it does or not, we'd have to try to get the country to do the right thing under whatever party's ethos.

>> Peter Robinson: Jim Woolsey, thank you very much.

>> James Woolsey: Thank you.

>> Peter Robinson: I'm Peter Robinson for Uncommon Knowledge. Thanks for joining us.