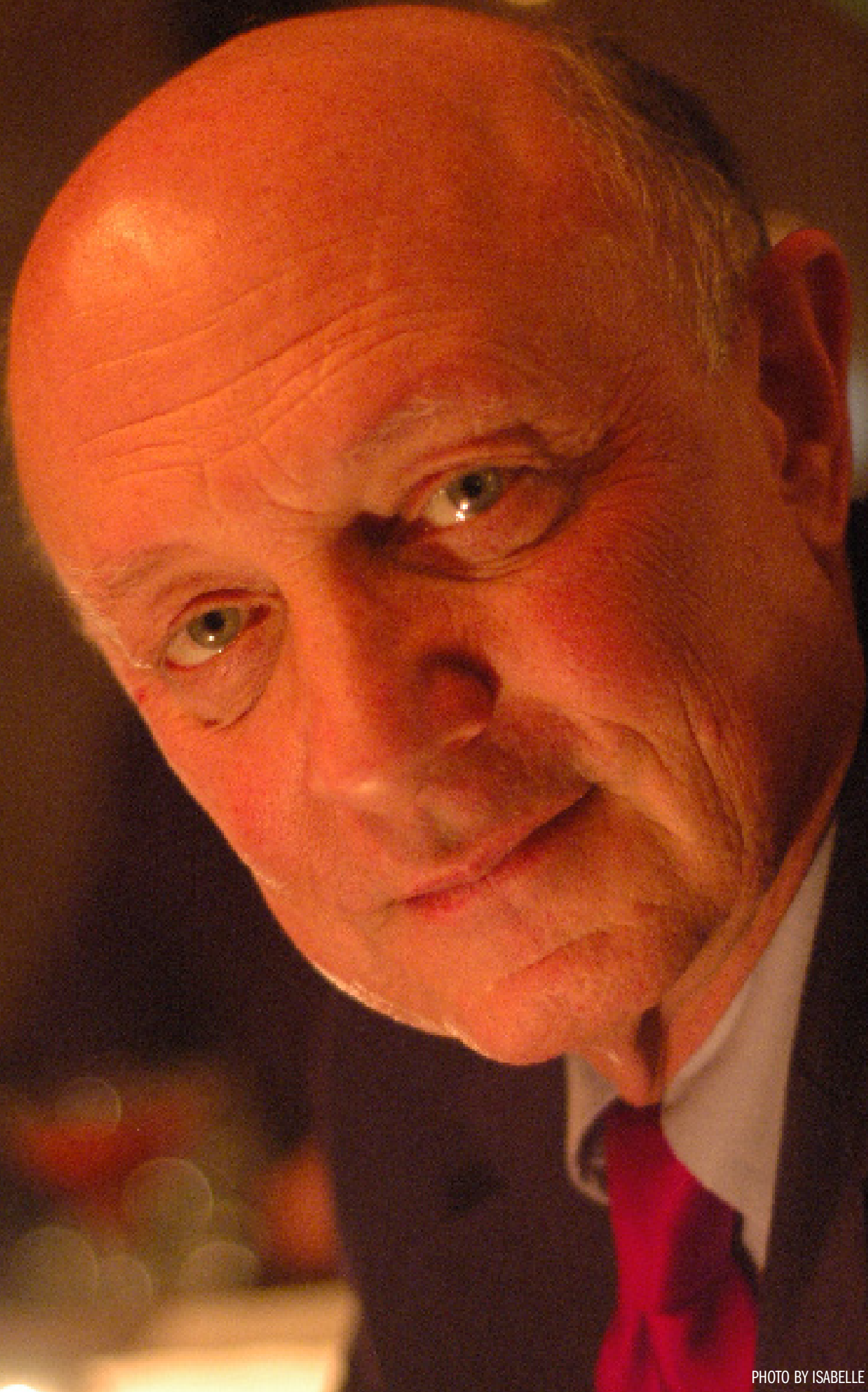


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James Woolsey lets us in on some answers from the past and some ideas for the future. A long time Mid-Westerner and Rhodes Scholar, this former CIA Director ('93-'95) has recently been featured in such publications as *Vanity Fair* and *The New York Times* issuing a stark warning for an American defeat in Iraq. Mr. Woolsey sheds some light on his post cold war tenure at the CIA, America's troubles across the globe, and the ways in which he suggests we might solve them. *The Observer's* Editor-In-Chief, Brendon McQueen, recently caught up with Mr. Woolsey in New York City and got a rare look into the world of Langley's one-time superintendent.

OB- Why are you here at the Zionist Organization of America and why are they giving you an award?

JW- It's call the Defender of Israel award, and I suppose it has to do with my having spoken out from time to time in support of Israel on various matters. Last summer, for example, I spoke down at the Presbyterian Church general assembly in Alabama. The Presbyterians had come out with a policy two years ago to divest of investments that the church had in companies that dealt with Israel. I thought that taking, essentially, the side of Hamas (which I said at Columbia, is a theocratic totalitarian genocidal organization) against the Middle East's only real stable democracy, was about as far from what I thought the American church ought to be doing as I could imagine. It's probably one or two things like that over the years.

OB- Do you believe success, as defined by a stable democracy that can defend and sustain itself, is possible in Iraq?

JW- It's possible at some point. It may not be possible very soon. I believe that most countries and societies, really essentially all, can, at some point, move towards democracy and the rule of law. The world has gone from 20 democra-

ing what he calls "institutions of public reason," which is a phrase I think he borrowed from Ralshes, the philosopher. One good example would be the Loya Jirga in Afghanistan, a tribal council essentially. And there are institutions like that in almost all parts of the world that are the expression of government steps taken by consensus, deliberation, and debate. There's a wonderful passage, for example, in Nelson Mandela's autobiography about the village meetings that he used to go to in his native village when he was a little boy and how they made decisions. It clearly had a big impact on his view of what to do once he was able to become president of South Africa. So I think all societies have these types of traditions in one way or another, but it may be very difficult for them to move quickly to balloting. They may need a bigger middle class, and they may need time to deal with ethnic and religious strife. There are all sorts of reasons why one shouldn't think of moving toward democracy as just moving in and having an election. So if you look at it that way then yes, I think at some point Iraq or some component parts of Iraq will see a similar kind of evolution to what we've seen in 120 countries around the world.

OB- Recently there was an abduction of 150 people from a government agency in Iraqi. We have been in Iraq for

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cies in 1945 to about 120 today (those are Freedom House numbers). Thirty of those have serious problems with the rule of law, like Indonesia, but they still have reasonably fair elections and that's over sixty percent of the world's governments and sixty percent of the world's people. That includes a lot of what some people would think are surprising places like Mali and Mongolia, [which are] both perfectly functional democracies. The point, I think, is to build on the democratic traditions that exist in the country itself even if those don't necessarily involve balloting. One of the best people writing on this subject is Amartya Sen, the Nobel Prize winning economist at Harvard. He talks about all societies hav-

some time now, and it seems as though there is continuous turmoil in the region. When do you think these kinds of episodes will calm down?

JW- I don't know, it could be years, it could be decades, I don't know, It has taken different countries different ways and different periods of time to get over their propensities to kill one another, I mean, one of the most hideous, if not the most hideous example in world history was the Germans. Generally a civilized and advanced country, [they] conduct[ed] the holocaust. That would not, I think, have worked - for Germany wouldn't have worked itself into a po-



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sition of evolving into a peaceful relationship with the rest of its neighbors without force being used against Germany, and sometimes one has to do that. But sometimes these, these ethnic and religious hatreds, will wind down. One example now is Northern Ireland. It's not at peace completely but the several decades of evolution toward terrorism and then the winding down through negotiations and people deciding that they had had enough of sectarian killing and the British running a very professional counter-terrorism operation all moved Northern Ireland into being a different place than it was ten to twenty years ago. How long would something like that take in Iraq? I don't know.

OB- Do you think the US should have invaded Iran, what is thought of as largely the principal supporter of terrorism in the region, instead of Iraq?

JW- Yeah, I was in favor of moving against Milosevic in the early nineties and eventually the Clinton administration did shortly after I left in mid '95 after Srebrenica. I was in favor of moving against the government of Rwanda in '94, I think we could have stopped close to a million people being murdered if we had done that. And I was in favor of moving against Iraq in '98 not only when I testified in support of the Iraq liberation act but I was also in favor of deposing Saddam Hussein back in '91 when we had 500,000 troops in the country and then backed off. So I'm not always looking for places to use force, and I haven't yet proposed the use of force against Iran, but if it comes down to a question of whether Iran gets to have a nuclear weapon and there are no other alternatives left, no effective sanctions or blockades or any other way to change things, then we may have to

use force because I agree with John McCain that the use of force against Iran is an absolute last resort and is the worst outcome in that part of the world except for one. The one outcome that's worse is letting this theocratic totalitarian genocidal regime have nuclear weapons.

OB- On the topic of genocide, you spoke recently at Columbia University and said that you supported the invasion of Iraq because of Saddam's genocidal actions. What are your feelings on Darfur and the international inaction to curb the nearly 400,000 people who have already been killed?

JW- It's abominable and the reason that we haven't been able to get the security council behind it is principally because China would veto any such steps since China has a lucrative oil deal with Sudan. The best solution for something like Darfur would be for the Security Council to decide to take action, the way they did in deciding to move against Saddam in '91. But China's closeness to the Sudanese regime, because of its oil deal, I think, will make that impossible and I think the US has been working, so far not to much effect, to try and find other people to take this on since, to put in mildly, we have our hands full in that part of the world these days. I think we could probably provide logistics and support and airlift and air power and so forth. If we could find a group of effective fighters to go in on the ground, I think they could deal with the Janjaweed [translated-"devils on horse back"] in relatively short order. But the problem is the tradition of the United Nations in pulling forces together - it's symbolic. It's a company of troops from Senegal and a company from New Zealand and a company from Norway and a company from Brazil and that's not an effective way to pull people together that are going to need to fight effectively. You can have an organization like that if all they need to do is wear blue helmets and stand on a line in the Sinai or in Cyprus or somewhere and be kind of a symbolic barrier against two groups attacking one another. But if they are to fight, they would have to be assembled in at least, I think, brigade sized

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units, and they ought to train together and work together. My suggestion once some years ago was that we should have at least a brigade or two of permanently assigned troops to the United Nations but that it shouldn't be from a whole

bunch of different countries. It should be just from two countries, perhaps symbolically from two different parts of the world. My nomination was the British and the Nepalese because the Nepalese Gurkha fought in the early 19th century against the British and have fought together with the British for many, many years and quite effectively. I think an integrated British/Nepalese Gurkha force would make short work of these Janjaweed murderers who are killing all these people in Darfur.

OB- But that won't happen until the Chinese say okay?

JW- It won't happen through the United Nations but

OB- How do you think the recent paradigm shift (Fall '06) in Washington will affect not only the war in Iraq but also the intelligence communities in general - the democrats taking over Congress and the Senate?

JW- We have been having elections every two years for about 2 1/3 centuries now, We've had intelligence for over 2 1/3 centuries because Washington was very active within intelligence during the revolutionary war. I don't know if there will be any major changes.

OB- What impact do you think the CIA had on creating Osama Bin Laden, i.e. supplying and training the

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there are other places/ways it can be done. In '95 in Bosnia and in Kosovo in '98, unlike the situation with Iraq in '91, we did not have security council authorization to go in, we just pulled together allies and did it, but as I say, The United States has its hands full right now and I think it would be hard to argue that we ought to spread ourselves into other conflicts in the Middle East unless [there is] a matter, something as serious as Iran getting a Nuclear weapon.

OB- Do you believe the authorization for the Director of National Intelligence was necessary to repair communication within the intelligence community and other government agencies, and if not, why wasn't there just a retooling of the CIA?

JW- I think the problem as is revealed quite clearly in the excellent first 250 pages or so of the 9/11 Commission Report was not about communications between foreign intelligence organizations. There was no basic problem in communications between National Security Agency and the CIA, or between the National Reconnaissance Office and the Defense Intelligence Agency. Virtually everything that went wrong went wrong either between the foreign intelligence community, mainly the CIA and the FBI, or within the FBI. So, as far as I'm concerned, the problem was one that should principally have been dealt with by some policy changes, and a number of those, not all, were made in the Patriot Act and also perhaps by a Deputy National Security Adviser to the President who had substantial authority over both the CIA and FBI. At least some aspects of their jobs was empowered to get them to work together much better than they had in the past and to make some of these changes inside the FBI that need to be made.

Mujahideen fighters during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan?

JW- As I understand it, uh, they didn't really work with him, what they did at the insistence of Pakistani Intelligence was, essentially, to provide money. The Pakistanis picked the people who were going to be assisted and to what degree. One of the people they worked with was Gobadin Hekmajir, who was a very Islamic, hard-line guy and may have been close to Bin Laden. I'm not sure, but this was back in the eighties when I was practicing law.

OB- Under what circumstances did you leave your post as director of the CIA?

JW- I began to be very bothered by the fact that I never really got to see the president. I had been in GCI for about 19-20 months in the late summer, early fall, of '94, when that little airplane crashed into the south lawn of the white house and the white house staff joked, saying, "that must be Woolsey still trying to get an appointment." I went to the vice-president, whom I'd known for many years and who'd really suggested that I be part of the administration, Gore. And I said, this was some time late in '94, probably November, and I said that "I had gotten frustrated that, although I went to national security council meetings, at least most all of them, not all, I had only seen the president in a private meeting, me and my deputy, him and Tony Blake, twice in two years." He [Gore] said that "he knew that that had been the case and he didn't know why," and I said, "do you think he wants me to step down?" And he said, "I don't think so but let me find out." So, he called me back a couple days later and I went down to see him. He said, "No, I asked him. He thinks your doing a fine job and he doesn't want you to leave." And I said, "okay, thanks, do you think things are going to

change?” and he said, “I can’t tell you they are going to change.” So, um, my family and I took a vote around the Christmas tree. I abstained, and it was 4-nothing to get out. So I decided they were right and the next day, the day after Christmas, we were leaving, that day or the day after on a sailing vacation. I took a note down to the White House, left it, that I was resigning and I got a call from both the president and the vice president and they said, “are you sure you want to?” And I said, “yeah, I really do and I’ll be glad to stay through January to help with the transition or anything,” they said “fine,” and I went sailing for a week. When I came back [...] it was morning around Jan 4th, or something like that, and I got a call from Erskine Bowles, who was the new deputy White House chief of staff. He had come from the Small Business Administration. I didn’t know him, and he said, “Jim” and I said, “Yeah Erskine” and he said, “you’re testifying this week” and I said “yeah”, [...] the annual sort of state of the world testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee and he said, “but you’ve resigned” and I said, “yes” and he said, “but you shouldn’t be testifying for the administration when you’ve resigned,” and I said “well, thanks for your interest and goodbye.” I put in a call to Leon Panetta and Tony Lake, both of whom I’d known for many years, the Chief of Staff and National Security Adviser. Several hours went by and they didn’t get a call back so I figured somebody had decided they wanted me to leave sooner rather than wait around through all of January. So I called up my staff and we arranged my going away reception for three or four days later, and I asked my Deputy [Bill Studeman] if he would do the testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee. I called my old law firm and asked if they wanted me back and they said “sure come on back.” And by then it was sort of time to go home and at that point I got a call from Sandy Berger, another old friend I had known for a long time who was the deputy to Tony Lake and Sandy. She said, “do you suppose you could do this testimony next week before the Senate Intelligence Committee?” I said. “Sandy, do you know this guy Bowles, down there, do you guys ever talk or anything?” He said, “oh yeah, I know about that phone call, that was a mistake that should have never happened. We really need you to do the testimony.” I said, “well, I’ve announced already that I’m stepping down and that was going to be my first day back at my law firm and I will have resigned by then...well, I’ll show up on the hill that morning and if anybody’s curious about why this guy who’s nominally at least a private citizen is testifying for the administration, I’ll refer them to you.” And he said, “yeah just have them call me we’ll sort it out.” So [...] the previous day, I had my farewell reception at the CIA and [...] the next morning I went down to the hill and testified about the state of the world for the Senate Intelligence Committee and then went to my law firm in the afternoon and started practicing law. Then somehow, some White House staffer or someone has lied to Simon and Benjamin (Who?) and one or two people who have writ-

ten these books about the Clinton administration and they said that, I remember the two of them, I think there was someone else too, who said that I was fired, but its not true. I told them it wasn’t true but they don’t seem to care.

O- That’s weird,

JW- Yeah, [He laughs] that was my reaction.

O- Why do you think that president Clinton was so uninterested in your important positions?

JW- You have to remember the period. From early 93’ to early 95’ was an odd period in American history. We had just won the cold war, Yeltsin was in the Kremlin, and relations with him were quite good. He seemed to be introducing democracy to Russia - the only problem was he seemed to drink a bit too much. Other than that, he was pretty much everything the United States might want. Things were pretty quiet with China. We’d been struggling for 45 years [...], this was just 4 years after the wall went down, three and a half years after, the Berlin wall went down, and the Clinton administration had several messes it needed to deal with. One of them was Somalia, one was Bosnia, and both of those had more or less been bequeathed to them by the Bush one administration, and then they had a mess in Haiti that was partly their own doing, but none the less, it was a mess. And those three messes sort of dominated the attention of foreign policy. They weren’t situations where, at least as of early 95’, the administration was willing to try to do anything decisive to make anything happen. They just kind of wanted them to go away. [...] By the way, those first two years, President Clinton, who’s well known all his life as a domestic policy wonk, had a new healthcare program, he had a new tax program, he had a lot of domestic things he wanted to change. So, I think foreign policy generally, it wasn’t just intelligence, was pretty much on a back burner; it wasn’t something they were focusing on. I mean you compare it to today where we are all worried about Iran having a nuclear weapon and war in Iraq and North Korea and Venezuela, there is a lot the president, National Security Adviser, DCI, has to try to figure out how to affect the outcome. But back in 93’ to early 95’, there wasn’t a lot of that kind of attention being paid by policy makers. The thing that was getting peoples attention, and Vice President Gore was very good at this, was figuring out how to utilize our understanding of foreign countries to improve the ecological situation, reduce disease, reduce unemployment, and focus on long term issues, about Africa, that sort of issue. The intelligence community could be of some help there and Gore actually did call on us and I met with him a number of times about things, like on using the reconnaissance satellites to help understand what was happening to crops and ecology in parts of the world, things like that. So it wasn’t that nobody was interested

in doing anything, it's that the sort of thing one would typically have spies doing wasn't really at the top of the agenda, I mean, look at Somalia, where we did some intelligence collection trying to catch Aided (a person?). It was sort of a cop a robber game that went on for months - Milosevic, Bosnia, lots of chaotic war lords... it didn't lend itself, a lot of it, to human intelligence collection. We developed the predator drone to be a reconnaissance vehicle over Bosnia. That one was something the CIA did, I had a hand in that. But if you look at it from the point of view of a brand new President three plus years after the Berlin wall goes down who has several messes he needs to deal with but mainly what he's focused on is health care and taxes and budgets, it's a little more understandable.

O- In looking at your time at the CIA and looking at the rest of what you've accomplished over your long career, at what point do you think you felt like you were making the most positive change or when did you feel the most fulfilled.

JW- The treaty now is only a shadow of its former self. It still affects the Russian's stationing of forces in places like Moldavia and Georgia, but at the time we negotiated it (1991, the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty) it was right at the end of the Cold War. I took over the negotiations as ambassador and chief negotiator, as chance would have it, a few days before the Berlin wall went down. We were working very hard to try to sort of solidify the gains at the end of the Cold War and do it in a way that limited the possibility of future military force use in Europe...in a way that let Germany stay a unified Germany, stay within NATO. We were working very hard and very fast. This was from late 89' to mid to late 91', the two years I was the ambassador and chief negotiator for this treaty, and in a lot of ways that was the most enjoyable government assignment I had.

O- How do you think the Bush Administration is handling North Korea?

JW- North Korea is really a tough problem. I think that there has not really been any chance of talking North Korea out of its nuclear weapons program; the only country that has any real leverage over them is China. And the Chinese have actually, I think, been helpful. South Korea has not, but China has, so I think there is at least a chance to bring more pressure on North Korea by working together with China. But it's going to be difficult because that country is very hard to influence even for China, and even given China's control over a substantial share of their energy and food.

O- What is your stance on Energy and the Environment?

JW- Energy and Environment - I'm working on trying to help move away from, the way I put it is, oil and dirty forms of coal, because I don't say fossil fuels because no-

body is really moving away from the use of natural gas, and there's not any great reason to move away from it. It contributes some carbon to the atmosphere but considerably less than oil and much, much less than coal. So I'm focusing on things like (both in my consulting business and its writing and speaking and so forth) enhancing the role of renewable fuels like ethanol or butanol and not just fuels but finding... working on ways that the economy can move much more toward having a carbohydrate basis than a hydrocarbon one. For the chemical industry, too, plastics, the more things that can be made out of feed stocks other than petroleum, the better I would like it. Also, things like plug-in hybrid gasoline electric cars. Being able to utilize electricity a lot more, it requires cleaning up the electricity grid, but even with the current grid, plug-in hybrids put out an awful lot less carbon than gasoline powered vehicles, and this has a strategic dimension - not relying on the very volatile Middle East, [it's] very dangerous. A third of the world's proven reserves are there and a lot of the oil infrastructure is there, and that's a big problem. It also has a global warming dimension. [You've] got to go after the emissions of vehicles if you're going to make a big dent in this, and it has the dimension of adding to the likelihood of being able to build up rural societies around the world, countries which are now seeing a lot of their young men either flooding into the cities or immigrating to try to earn money and send back to their families. What you want is for them to be able to earn a living, if they want to, on their own land. That, in turn, means they need to be able to grow more than just food crops. Unless they are very specialized and very highly compensated, they'll just be subsistence farmers unless they are doing something else, and the something else could be growing biomass and producing ethanol in a village, moving toward this carbohydrate rather than hydrocarbon economy - not only in Nebraska but in Bangladesh. That whole set of issues is something I work on in different ways - speaking, writing, consulting with utilities, automobile companies, department of energy, department of agriculture, etc...

O- Thank you for your time, sir.