

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview.
Short Film: “Woolsey Evades Questions by Insulting Jan” (5 Minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Goal

In this short (2:17) film, students see former CIA Director James Woolsey refuse to answer interviewer Jan Helfeld’s question on what principle(s) he uses to determine whether the U.S. military should invade another nation.

Instructions

1. Play the short film above here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65q4XPK_IJ8.
2. Discuss as a class by asking for volunteers for their thoughts.

Debrief Questions

1. What is your take on *how* former CIA Director James Woolsey answers the simple question that Jan Helfeld asks him?

AWV, but he is a little shaken by the question and clearly doesn’t want to answer it, because it would likely expose (a) that the CIA has/had no real principle on when it thinks the U.S. military should invade a nation, or (b) doesn’t want to let the public know what this principle is, because it would be too embarrassing to admit.

His insults of Helfeld seem to indicate that he is not used to being challenged/asked meaningful questions by interviewers, which is typical of government bureaucrats. It’s much easier to claim that an interviewer is stupid than answer a difficult question that should be answered.

2. What do *you* think should be the principle under which the U.S. government operates to determine whether it invades a foreign nation?

AWV, but ideally, students will answer with something like “Only after Congress declares war legally on that nation [shouldn’t Congress follow the Constitution?], and only if that nation has attacked us or is about to.”

3. How do you think America’s founders would have answered Jan Helfeld’s question, given their principles on foreign intervention?

AWV, but a lot better than Woolsey!