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Bush & Blair attacked by Mugabe & Chavez

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18 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Bush & Blair attacked by Mugabe & Chavez

The leaders of Zimbabwe and Venezuela have denounced U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair for being the main causes of world hunger, pollution and war. At an event in Rome on October 17 to mark World Food Day, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Venezuela's Hugo Chavez took full advantage of their speeches by turning them into tirades. Mr. Mugabe lambasted Blair and Bush as "two unholy men of our millennium" and likened them to the World War II dictators and allies Hitler and Mussolini. Chavez accused what he termed "the North American empire" as being a "menace" that threatened "all life on the planet". The verbal outbursts by both Chavez and Mugabe were greeted with applause and standing ovations from many delegates.

US ambassador Tony Hall quickly hit back, lamenting that Messrs. Mugabe and Chavez "chose to politicize an event that was meant to be about feeding the hungry people of the world," according to Associated Press reports. Hall said Mugabe's presence and "scathing remarks" made a "mockery" of the occasion, especially as Zimbabwe is currently struggling to feed an estimated 3.8 million people and has to import at least 37,000 tons of food a week. "Mugabe, especially, should not have been invited," Hall said. "He would be the last person, I think, an organization should invite to talk about hunger." Once Africa's breadbasket, Zimbabwe's economy is now crippled and drought stricken. Mr. Mugabe blames Britain's colonial injustices for his country's economic malaise.

WARM-UPS

1. HELLO GEORGE: In pairs / groups, role play a sudden meeting between your country's leader and either George W. Bush, Tony Blair, Robert Mugabe or Hugo Chavez. You all meet by chance when you sit at the same table in a coffee shop. Repeat the role plays with different partners and roles. Change partners again and talk about what you said and heard while in your roles.

2. THE POPULARITY STAKES: Is the leader of your country very popular? What are his/her successes and failures? Talk about the popularity, successes and failures of the following leaders, or choose others you'd prefer to talk about.

- Robert Mugabe
- George W. Bush
- Hugo Chavez
- Tony Blair
- Ariel Sharon
- Pervez Musharraf
- Vladimir Putin
- Junichiro Koizumi
- Hosni Mubarak
- Jacques Chirac

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Zimbabwe / Venezuela / world hunger / pollution / war / Hitler / Mussolini / menaces / standing ovations / food imports / colonialism / crippled economies

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. WORLD FOOD DAY: In pairs / groups, talk about what you know about World Food Day. How should it be celebrated? Outline what you think the aims of this day should be.

5. HUNGER: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "hunger". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. MUGABE OPINIONS: In pairs / groups, talk about what you think of these opinions Robert Mugabe expressed on World Food Day:

- a. Bush and Blair can't decide who rules in Africa, Asia, Iran or Iraq.
- b. Many black Africans are poor today because of British colonialism.
- c. The agricultural subsidies in rich countries are crippling African farmers.
- d. America and Britain are the real terrorists - they use their power to intimidate.
- e. America and Britain are conducting an "unholy campaign in Iraq".
- f. The Bush and Blair alliance is the same as that between Hitler and Mussolini.
- g. Land reforms in Zimbabwe are necessary to help Zimbabweans.
- h. Bush and Blair attacked an innocent country (Iraq).

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Robert Mugabe and Hugo Chavez hit George Bush and Tony Blair. T / F
- b. Mugabe and Chavez were speaking in Rome on World Friendship Day. T / F
- c. Chavez said Bush and Blair resembled Hitler and Mussolini. T / F
- d. Mugabe and Chavez were booed, jeered and heckled by delegates. T / F
- e. The US ambassador thanked Mugabe for his constructive speech. T / F
- f. Zimbabwe exports 37,000 tons of food a week to aid hungry Africans. T / F
- g. The US ambassador said Mugabe should not talk about hunger. T / F
- h. Zimbabwe is the breadbasket of Africa. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| a. denounced | peril |
| b. mark | sickness |
| c. tirades | joke |
| d. menace | observe |
| e. applause | ruing |
| f. lamenting | paralyzed |
| g. scathing | condemned |
| h. mockery | clapping |
| i. crippled | tongue-lashings |
| j. malaise | cutting |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. to mark | World War II dictators |
| b. took full | breadbasket |
| c. likened them to the | ovations from many delegates |
| d. verbal | crippled and drought stricken |
| e. greeted with applause and standing | a mockery of |
| f. scathing | advantage of |
| g. made | malaise |
| h. Africa's | World Food Day |
| i. Zimbabwe's economy is now | outbursts |
| j. economic | remarks |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Bush & Blair attacked by Mugabe & Chavez

The leaders of Zimbabwe and Venezuela have _____ U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair for being the _____ causes of world hunger, pollution and war. At an event in Rome on October 17 to mark World Food Day, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Venezuela's Hugo Chavez took _____ advantage of their speeches by turning them into tirades. Mr. Mugabe lambasted Blair and Bush as "two unholy men of our _____" and likened them to the World War II dictators and _____ Hitler and Mussolini. Chavez accused what he termed "the North American empire" as being a "menace" that _____ "all life on the planet". The _____ outbursts by both Chavez and Mugabe were greeted with applause and standing _____ from many delegates.

US ambassador Tony Hall quickly _____ back, lamenting that _____ Mugabe and Chavez "chose to _____ an event that was meant to be about feeding the hungry people of the world," according to Associated Press reports. Hall said Mugabe's presence and "_____ remarks" made a "_____ of the occasion, especially as Zimbabwe is currently struggling to feed an estimated 3.8 million people and has to import at least 37,000 tons of food a week. "Mugabe, especially, should not have been invited," Hall said. "He would be the _____ person, I think, an organization should invite to talk about _____." Once Africa's breadbasket, Zimbabwe's economy is now crippled and drought stricken. Mr. Mugabe blames Britain's colonial _____ for his country's economic malaise.

allies
verbal
main
millennium
ovations
denounced
threatened
full
scathing
injustices
Messrs.
hunger
mockery
hit
last
politicize

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Bush & Blair attacked by Mugabe & Chavez

The leaders of Zimbabwe and Venezuela have _____ U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair for being the main causes of world hunger, pollution and war. At an event in Rome on October 17 _____ World Food Day, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Venezuela's Hugo Chavez _____ advantage _____ their speeches by turning them into tirades. Mr. Mugabe lambasted Blair and Bush as "two _____ men of our millennium" and likened them to the World War II dictators and _____ Hitler and Mussolini. Chavez accused what he termed "the North American empire" as being a "_____ " that threatened "all life on the planet". The _____ by both Chavez and Mugabe were greeted with applause and standing _____ from many delegates.

US ambassador Tony Hall quickly hit back, _____ that Messrs. Mugabe and Chavez "chose to _____ an event that was meant to be about feeding the hungry people of the world," according to Associated Press reports. Hall said Mugabe's presence and "_____ remarks" made a "_____ " of the occasion, especially as Zimbabwe is currently struggling to feed an estimated 3.8 million people and has to import at least _____ tons of food a week. "Mugabe, especially, should not have been invited," Hall said. "He would be _____, I think, an organization should invite to talk about hunger." Once Africa's breadbasket, Zimbabwe's economy is now crippled and drought _____. Mr. Mugabe blames Britain's _____ injustices for his country's economic _____.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'full'** and **'advantage'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "WORLD HUNGER" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about world hunger and who might be responsible.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| • denounced | • hit |
| • mark | • politicize |
| • advantage | • mockery |
| • unholy | • struggling |
| • menace | • breadbasket |
| • standing | • injustices |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of the attack on Bush and Blair?
- c. Which of the four leaders mentioned in the article do you most and least respect?
- d. Do you think George W. Bush and Tony Blair cause hunger, pollution and war?
- e. Do you think George W. Bush and Tony Blair are "unholy"?
- f. Do you think Hugo Chavez is a champion for poorer countries?
- g. What do you think of the comparison with Hitler and Mussolini?
- h. Do you think George W. Bush and Tony Blair have made the world a better place?
- i. What do you think are the solutions to end world hunger?
- j. Who is the last person in the world you'd want to talk to?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think it was right to make such speeches at a World Food Day event?
- d. Should Mr. Mugabe have spoken at the event when so many of his own people are starving because of his policies?
- e. Why do you think many delegates stood up and applauded Mugabe and Chavez?
- f. Do you think "the North American empire" is a menace that threatens "all life on the planet"?
- g. Do you agree with ambassador Hall's comments that Mugabe made a mockery of the proceedings?
- h. Do you think colonial rule is to blame for Zimbabwe's economic malaise?
- i. How do you think Messrs. Bush and Blair might respond to the attacks?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

WORLD LEADER: The world must choose a leader. There is a shortlist of two – George W. Bush and Tony Blair. In pairs / groups, discuss which of the two men should get the job. Talk about the criteria in the left hand column. Put a mark out of ten for the two men in the middle columns and give the reasons for this mark in the right hand column.

CRITERIA	BUSH/10	BLAIR/10	REASON(S)
Vision			
Intelligence			
Oratory skills			
Past successes			
Leadership			
Fashion			
Popularity			
Other			

Change partners and show each other your scores. Do you agree with each other's reasons?

Discuss what the world would be like with your choice of man as leader.

Which country's leader (except George Bush and Tony Blair) do you think would make the best world leader and why?

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on World Food Day. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. HUNGER: Make a poster outlining the places in the world where people suffer from extreme hunger. Think of some solutions to stop so many of the world's poor people from dying of hunger. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all think of similar solutions?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Mr. Mugabe or Mr. Chavez (or both). Tell them what you think of their speeches at the World Food Day event in Rome. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. F d. F e. F f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| a. denounced | condemned |
| b. mark | observe |
| c. tirades | tongue-lashings |
| d. menace | peril |
| e. applause | clapping |
| f. lamenting | ruing |
| g. scathing | cutting |
| h. mockery | joke |
| i. crippled | paralyzed |
| j. malaise | sickness |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. to mark | World Food Day |
| b. took full | advantage of |
| c. likened them to the | World War II dictators |
| d. verbal | outbursts |
| e. greeted with applause and standing | ovations from many delegates |
| f. scathing | remarks |
| g. made | a mockery of |
| h. Africa's | breadbasket |
| i. Zimbabwe's economy is now | crippled and drought stricken |
| j. economic | malaise |

GAP FILL:

Bush & Blair attacked by Mugabe & Chavez

The leaders of Zimbabwe and Venezuela have **denounced** U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair for being the **main** causes of world hunger, pollution and war. At an event in Rome on October 17 to mark World Food Day, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Venezuela's Hugo Chavez took **full** advantage of their speeches by turning them into tirades. Mr. Mugabe lambasted Blair and Bush as "two unholy men of our **millennium**" and likened them to the World War II dictators and **allies** Hitler and Mussolini. Chavez accused what he termed "the North American empire" as being a "menace" that **threatened** "all life on the planet". The **verbal** outbursts by both Chavez and Mugabe were greeted with applause and standing **ovations** from many delegates.

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