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Rice faces questions over CIA prisons

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5 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Rice faces questions over CIA prisons

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice arrives in Europe on December 5 amid increasing controversy, outrage and unanswered questions over the issue of secret CIA terror prisons in Europe. Dr. Rice will be prepared with gloves off, ready to repudiate any criticism of America's human rights record regarding "black sites" – the alleged secret CIA prisons dotted around Europe and the globe. Rice has intimated that the media is whipping up a political storm in a teacup over the allegations and that European leaders will be more interested in focusing on improving relations with the US. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in particular, is keen to warm ties that were left near-frozen by her predecessor, Gerhard Schroeder.

Much of the fuss surrounding Rice's visit is due to a *Washington Post* report in early November that alleged the US has secret prisons in eight countries. It is expected Rice will rebuff potentially embarrassing questions and go on the offensive about the existence of the alleged prisons, as well as clandestine "torture flights" that supposedly ferry Al-Qaeda prisoners around the world. Germany claims 437 such flights abused German airspace. Rice is expected to tell her European allies to "back off" over the issue and focus instead on the war against terror. White House spokesman Scott McClellan hit back at the claims ahead of Ms. Rice's visit, saying that the US does not violate human rights. "When it comes to human rights, there is no greater leader than the USA," he said.

WARM-UPS

1. DIFFICULT QUESTIONS: Write down three difficult questions to ask your classmates. Walk around the class and ask your questions. Discuss why you chose the questions and why you thought they were difficult. Did your classmates answer them? Did your classmates think they were difficult?

2. WHAT'S TRUE? In pairs / groups, talk about how true you think the "fabricated" statements below are:

There are no such things as American-run torture prisons or flights. – Condoleezza Rice
I strongly believed Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. – Tony Blair
I think there's a plan for some US agency to assassinate me. – Hugo Chavez
Zimbabwe's problems are because of British colonial rule. – Robert Mugabe
Iran does not have a policy to develop nuclear weapons. – Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
China is working hard to cut out all human rights abuses. – Hu Jintao
Democracy is working in Myanmar. – General Than Shwe
When it comes to human rights, there is no greater leader than the USA. – White House

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

US Secretary of State / Condoleezza Rice / Europe / controversy / gloves / Angela Merkel / secret prisons / torture / embarrassing questions / the White House

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

4. QUICK DEBATE: Have a quick debate with your partner about the CIA prisons. Students A think the prisons are not a problem and that they should remain a secret – anything to help win the war on terror is OK, Students B think the USA should come clean on the prisons. The world cannot trust America if it has such secrets.

5. TORTURE OPINIONS: Do you agree with these opinions regarding the alleged U.S. use of torture and secret CIA prisons? Discuss them with your partner(s).

- a. America lied over WMD. It's no surprise they'd lie to the world again.
- b. America is not alone. If the prisons exist, Europe's leaders know about them.
- c. It's amazing how the USA makes mistake after mistake.
- d. The USA must do anything it can to win the war on terror.
- e. Which country in the world doesn't have secret prisons?
- f. European leaders are hypocrites. They allow the CIA planes to use their airspace.
- g. If the USA stops pursuing suspected terrorists, the war on terror is lost.
- h. Any EU country that has secret CIA prisons should be expelled from the Union.
- i. Condoleezza Rice should answer every question about the secret CIA prisons.

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

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Condoleezza Rice will be questioned in court about CIA prisons. | T / F |
| b. There are many unanswered questions about the alleged CIA prisons. | T / F |
| c. Dr. Rice said the issue was just a teacup in a storm. | T / F |
| d. The German Chancellor wants to defrost relations with the USA. | T / F |
| e. The <i>Washington Post</i> newspaper broke the secret prisons story. | T / F |
| f. Germany claims US "torture flights" violated its airspace 437 times. | T / F |
| g. Rice will tell her allies to fire questions at her about the prisons. | T / F |
| h. The White House admitted the USA sometimes violates human rights. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| a. amid | secret |
| b. repudiate | retaliated |
| c. dotted | commotion |
| d. intimidated | violated |
| e. keen | reject |
| f. fuss | transport |
| g. clandestine | keep away |
| h. ferry | eager |
| i. back off | surrounded by |
| j. hit back | peppered |

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

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| a. amid increasing | political storm in a teacup |
| b. ready to repudiate any criticism | near-frozen by her predecessor |
| c. alleged secret CIA prisons dotted | of Ms. Rice's visit |
| d. the media is whipping up a | Al-Qaeda prisoners around the world |
| e. keen to warm ties that were left | around Europe |
| f. rebuff potentially embarrassing | European allies to "back off" |
| g. flights that supposedly ferry | controversy |
| h. Rice is expected to tell her | there is no greater leader than the USA |
| i. hit back at the claims ahead | of America's human rights record |
| j. When it comes to human rights, | questions and go on the offensive |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

ODD WORD OUT: Delete the incorrect word in each of the *italicized* groups.

Rice faces questions over CIA prisons

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice arrives in Europe on December 5 *amid* / *surrounded by* / *mid* increasing controversy, outrage and unanswered questions over the issue of *clandestine* / *pristine* / *secret* CIA terror prisons in Europe. Dr. Rice will be prepared with gloves off, ready to *repudiate* / *rebuff* / *retaliate* any criticism of America's human rights record regarding "black sites" – the alleged secret CIA prisons *peppered* / *salted* / *dotted* around Europe and the globe. Rice has intimated that the media is whipping up a political storm in a teacup over the *allegations* / *allegories* / *accusations* and that European leaders will be more interested in focusing on improving relations with the US. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in particular, is keen to warm ties that were left near-frozen by her *forerunner* / *predecessor* / *ancestor*, Gerhard Schroeder.

Much of the *fuss* / *fission* / *brouhaha* surrounding Rice's visit is due to a 'Washington Post' report in early November that alleged the US has secret prisons in eight countries. It is expected Rice will *brush off* / *rebuff* / *recoil* potentially *embarrassing* / *tricky* / *embryonic* questions and go on the offensive about the existence of the alleged prisons, as well as clandestine "torture flights" that supposedly *ferry* / *fly* / *fester* Al-Qaeda prisoners around the world. Germany claims 437 such flights abused German airspace. Rice is expected to tell her European allies to "back off" over *the copy* / *question* / *issue* and focus instead on the war against terror. White House spokesman Scott McClellan hit back at the claims ahead of Ms. Rice's visit, saying that the US does not *violate* / *rape* / *abuse* human rights. "When it comes to human rights, there is no greater leader than the USA," he said.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Rice faces questions over CIA prisons

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice arrives in Europe on December 5 _____ increasing controversy, _____ and unanswered questions over the issue of secret CIA terror prisons in Europe. Dr. Rice will be prepared with _____, ready to repudiate any criticism of America's human rights record regarding "black sites" – the alleged secret CIA prisons _____ around Europe and the globe. Rice has intimated that the media is _____ up a political storm in a teacup over the allegations and that European leaders will be more interested in focusing on improving relations with the US. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in particular, is _____ to warm ties that were left near-_____ by her predecessor, Gerhard Schroeder.

Much of the _____ surrounding Rice's visit is due to a *Washington Post* report in early November that alleged the US has secret prisons in eight countries. It is expected Rice will _____ potentially embarrassing questions and go on the offensive about the existence of the alleged prisons, as well as clandestine "torture flights" that supposedly _____ Al-Qaeda prisoners around the world. Germany claims 437 such flights _____ German airspace. Rice is expected to tell her European _____ to "back off" over the issue and focus instead on the war against terror. White House spokesman Scott McClellan hit back at the claims _____ of Ms. Rice's visit, saying that the US does not violate human rights. "When it _____ human rights, there is no greater leader than the USA," he said.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. ODD WORD OUT: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. 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 "CIA PRISONS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about the CIA, human rights and the allegations of the USA torturing prisoners and using secret prisons.

- 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:

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| • amid | • fuss |
| • gloves | • rebuff |
| • dotted | • clandestine |
| • whipping | • ferry |
| • relations | • back off |
| • keen | • hit back |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. How do you feel when you hear news of scandals involving America's Government and/or secret services?
- c. What is your image of the CIA?
- d. Do you think Condoleezza Rice would lie about the existence of secret prisons?
- e. What do you think should happen to European countries that may have cooperated with the CIA in setting up secret prisons?
- f. Do you think this issue is a storm in a teacup?
- g. Do you think Dr. Rice can improve U.S. relations with European countries?
- h. Which do you think is more important, winning the war on terror or worrying about the torture of terrorists?
- i. Why do you think Germany did nothing about 437 different "abuses" of its airspace by alleged "torture flights"?
- j. Do you think the USA is the greatest leader when it comes to human rights?

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. What do you know about the allegations of secret prisons?
- d. Do you think secret prisons are so bad if they get secrets from Al-Qaeda operatives?
- e. Do you think the use of torture is OK if it gets secrets from terrorists?
- f. Do you believe the White House spokesman's comment that the US does not violate human rights?
- g. What would and what should happen to the USA if the secret prisons, torture and "torture flights" are all found to be true?
- h. Do you think Condoleezza Rice should sit before a European enquiry over the allegations of secret prisons, torture and "torture flights"?
- i. What do you do when asked embarrassing questions?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

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

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

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 Condoleezza Rice's visit to Europe. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. TORTURE: Make a poster outlining the different kinds of torture used around the world. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. EYEWITNESS: You live in a small village in Europe. For the past few years you have seen American planes land near your village. You have secretly looked at what happens at the airfield several times. Write your eyewitness report of what you saw. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| a. amid | surrounded by |
| b. repudiate | reject |
| c. dotted | peppered |
| d. intimidated | violated |
| e. keen | eager |
| f. fuss | commotion |
| g. clandestine | secret |
| h. ferry | transport |
| i. back off | keep away |
| j. hit back | retaliated |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| a. amid increasing | controversy |
| b. ready to repudiate any criticism | of America's human rights record |
| c. alleged secret CIA prisons dotted | around Europe |
| d. the media is whipping up a | political storm in a teacup |
| e. keen to warm ties that were left | near-frozen by her predecessor |
| f. rebuff potentially embarrassing | European allies to "back off" |
| g. flights that supposedly ferry | Al-Qaeda prisoners around the world |
| h. Rice is expected to tell her | there is no greater leader than the USA |
| i. hit back at the claims ahead | of Ms. Rice's visit |
| j. When it comes to human rights, | questions and go on the offensive |

ODD WORD OUT:

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