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President Bush OK'd spying in America

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18 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

President Bush OK'd spying in America

President George W. Bush has confirmed reports that he allowed spying in the USA. In his weekly speech to the American people on Saturday, he said he signed a top-secret order after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center. He authorized agents to listen to and read phone calls and e-mails from people linked to al-Qaeda. He said he strongly believes that spying is a "vital tool" that keeps America free from terrorist attack. He also said his order was "critical to saving American lives." He added: "The American people expect me...to protect them...and that is exactly what I will continue to do."

His radio confession has sparked anger among many people. Republicans and Democrats say Mr. Bush is not respecting civil liberties. Senator Russell Feingold scolded the President for abusing his power. "I tell you, he's President Bush, not King Bush," he said. Another senator said the "shocking revelation... [should] send a chill down the spine of every American". Mr. Bush said the spying program was "consistent with US law." The President criticized the leaking of the information to the media. He stated: "This is a highly classified program that is crucial to our national security."

WARM-UPS

1. 007: You are now a spy. You are working on a top-secret mission for your government. Talk to the other “spies” in your class about your job and your life. Is your job dangerous? What do you think of James Bond? What’s your favorite gadget? Introduce yourselves James Bond-style - “Hi. I’m Bond. James Bond”.

2. CIVIL LIBERTIES: What civil liberties and everyday freedoms are important to you? How would you feel if they were taken away? Talk about this with your partner(s). Use the points below:

- The right to criticize your leaders
- Privacy of mail and phone calls
- Freedom of speech
- The right to a fair trial
- The right to marry a partner of choice
- The choice of using certain drugs
- Freedom to practice any religion
- The right to not carry an identity card

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

Address / spying / speeches / secret orders / e-mails / laws / terrorist attacks / confessions / civil liberties / kings / spines / al-Qaeda / media / national security

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

4. SECRET AGENTS: In pairs / groups, discuss the good and bad points of the following types of secret agent. Which ones do you think would be exciting or boring? Which ones would you like to do?

- a. Becoming a member of an enemy army.
- b. Putting phone taps and listening bugs in the homes of baddies.
- c. Following terrorists to find out about their friends.
- d. Undercover agent - Seeking information from locals in the “enemy” country.
- e. Photographing top-secret documents in the “enemy’s” embassy.
- f. Mission Impossible – kidnapping government members of the “enemy” country.

5. SPYING OPINIONS: Discuss these opinions with your partner(s).

- a. A president can use any spying tactics that protect the country.
- b. People who complain about President Bush hate freedom.
- c. Spying prevents dying. It’s thousands of years old. All countries do it.
- d. Newspapers who report top-secret government information are dangerous.
- e. The War on Terror is much more important than our civil liberties.
- f. Spying saved the world from communism and fascism. We need it.
- g. We already have enough civil liberties.
- h. A country’s leader must always follow the law.

6. SPY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word “spy”. 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. President Bush said he gave senators' addresses to the CIA and FBI. | T / F |
| b. Bush authorized agents to listen to and read phone calls and e-mails. | T / F |
| c. Mr. Bush said spying in the USA was a vital tool to protect America. | T / F |
| d. Mr. Bush said he would stop all spying on American soil. | T / F |
| e. President Bush's confession sparked outrage among many people. | T / F |
| f. A senator said Americans should have a chill down their spine. | T / F |
| g. Bush said the spying program is consistent with US law. | T / F |
| h. Mr. Bush criticized the leaking of the information to the media. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| a. reports | top secret |
| b. speech | count on |
| c. vital | important |
| d. critical | address |
| e. expect | triggered |
| f. confession | rumors |
| g. sparked | criticized |
| h. scolded | owning up |
| i. leaking | essential |
| j. classified | revealing |

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

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| a. Bush has confirmed reports that | anger |
| b. his weekly | phone calls and e-mails |
| c. authorized agents to listen to and read | that is crucial to our national security |
| d. spying is a vital tool that keeps | to protect them |
| e. The American people expect me | down the spine of every American |
| f. sparked | he allowed spying in the USA |
| g. Democrats say Mr. Bush | with US law |
| h. send a chill | is not respecting civil liberties |
| i. the spying program was consistent | speech to the American people |
| j. a highly classified program | America free from terrorist attack |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

President Bush OK'd spying in America

President George W. Bush has _____ reports that he allowed spying in the USA. In his weekly _____ to the American people on Saturday, he said he _____ a top-secret order after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center. He authorized _____ to listen to and read phone calls and e-mails from people _____ to al-Qaeda. He said he _____ believes that spying is a "vital tool" that keeps America free from terrorist attack. He also said his order was "critical to _____ American lives." He added: "The American people expect me...to protect them...and that is _____ what I will continue to do."

agents
exactly
speech
linked
confirmed
saving
signed
strongly

His radio confession has _____ anger among many people. Republicans and Democrats say Mr. Bush is not respecting _____ liberties. Senator Russell Feingold _____ the President for abusing his power. "I tell you, he's President Bush, not _____ Bush," he said. Another senator said the "shocking revelation... [should] send a _____ down the spine of every American". Mr. Bush said the spying program was "consistent with US _____." The President criticized the leaking of the information to the _____. He stated: "This is a highly classified program that is crucial to our national _____."

security
King
civil
law
sparked
scolded
chill
media

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

President Bush OK'd spying in America

President George W. Bush has _____ reports that he allowed spying in the USA. In his _____ speech to the American people on Saturday, he said he signed a top-secret order after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center. He authorized _____ to listen to and read phone calls and e-mails from people linked to al-Qaeda. He said he strongly believes that spying is a “_____ tool” that keeps America free from terrorist attack. He also said his order was “_____ to saving American lives.” He added: “The American people expect me...to protect them...and that is _____ what I will continue to do.”

His radio confession has _____ anger among many people. Republicans and Democrats say Mr. Bush is not respecting _____ liberties. Senator Russell Feingold scolded the President for _____ his power. “I tell you, he’s President Bush, not King Bush,” he said. Another senator said the “shocking revelation... [should] send a _____ down the spine of every American”. Mr. Bush said the spying program was “consistent with US law.” The President criticized the _____ of the information to the media. He stated: “This is a highly classified program that is crucial to our national _____.”

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 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 "SPYING" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about spying, national security and civil liberties.

- 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:

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| • reports | • radio |
| • signed | • scolded |
| • listen | • king |
| • free | • spine |
| • saving | • leaking |
| • exactly | • crucial |

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 spying?
- c. Do you think President Bush has done anything wrong?
- d. Are you surprised governments listen to and read phone and e-mail messages?
- e. How would you feel if your government checked your phone messages and e-mails?
- f. Is there a lot of freedom in your country?
- g. Do you think ID cards and TV cameras in the street take away your civil liberties?
- h. Do you think George Bush has a good record on civil liberties?
- i. What do you think of the "President Bush...King Bush" statement?
- j. When was the last time a chill went down your spine?

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. Which is more important, civil liberties or national security?
- d. Why do you think American politicians are so angry over this?
- e. Do you think presidents and prime ministers can act above the law to protect national security?
- f. Do you think newspapers that report such top-secret information are a danger to national security?
- g. Are you happy with the civil liberties you have or would you like more?
- h. Do you think the US Government might be looking at non-al-Qaeda calls and mails?
- i. Do you trust the leaders of your country?
- 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?

SPEAKING

SPYING ROLE PLAY: Should George W. Bush stop spying in the US?

Team up with classmates who have the same role. Develop your roles and discuss ideas and “strategies” before the role play begins. Introduce yourself to the other role players.

Role A – GEORGE W. BUSH

You know what’s best for your country. You have top-secret information about terrorist attacks that would frighten and panic your nation. You know it is essential to act above the law to save the USA. You are prepared to risk your job to protect the American people. You must protect world freedom. The spying has already saved thousands of innocent people from death.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY THE SPYING SHOULD CONTINUE.

Role B – CIVIL LIBERTIES WORKER

You are angry that Bush is again taking the law into his own hands. He continually abuses the power of the Presidency. He uses the War on Terror to do whatever he wants. He and his colleagues are corrupt. If he stays in power, freedom, civil liberties and democracy will suffer. He has already taken away many freedoms from the people of the world.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY GEORGE BUSH SHOULD RESIGN.

Role C – PRO-BUSH PERSON

You think George W. Bush is the greatest American for decades. You admire his courage. You support all of his actions. Without George W. Bush, the world would be a very dangerous place. Mr. Bush loves people of all nationalities and religions. The spying is essential to stop al-Qaeda from taking more lives.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY MR. BUSH SHOULD HAVE MORE POWER.

Role D – ANTI-BUSH PERSON

You are tired of Mr. Bush. He lied about WMD in Iraq. He lied about winning the war in Iraq. The world is a more dangerous place because of him. His government is full of corruption. He only cares about American power. All other nations in the world hate him. He is the most dangerous person on Earth. The spying is a small part of the danger he presents to freedom.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY PRESIDENT BUSH MUST RESIGN.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

Discuss whether or not the spying should stop immediately.

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 the spying scandal. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. CIVIL LIBERTIES: Make a poster outlining the civil liberties that are an important part of your country's way of life. Include a section about what other civil liberties you feel your country should have. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to US President George W. Bush. Tell him what you think of the spying issue. Give him advice on what to do about it from now. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things? Did you all have the same advice?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| a. reports | rumors |
| b. speech | address |
| c. vital | essential |
| d. critical | important |
| e. expect | count on |
| f. confession | owning up |
| g. sparked | triggered |
| h. scolded | criticized |
| i. leaking | revealing |
| j. classified | top secret |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| a. Bush has confirmed reports that | he allowed spying in the USA |
| b. his weekly | speech to the American people |
| c. authorized agents to listen to and read | phone calls and e-mails |
| d. spying is a vital tool that keeps | America free from terrorist attack |
| e. The American people expect me | to protect them |
| f. sparked | anger |
| g. Democrats say Mr. Bush | is not respecting civil liberties |
| h. send a chill | down the spine of every American |
| i. the spying program was consistent | with US law |
| j. a highly classified program | that is crucial to our national security |

GAP FILL:

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His radio confession has **sparked** anger among many people. Republicans and Democrats say Mr. Bush is not respecting **civil** liberties. Senator Russell Feingold **scolded** the President for abusing his power. "I tell you, he's President Bush, not **King** Bush," he said. Another senator said the "shocking revelation... [should] send a **chill** down the spine of every American". Mr. Bush said the spying program was "consistent with US **law**." The President criticized the leaking of the information to the **media**. He stated: "This is a highly classified program that is crucial to our national **security**."