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American rethink on waterboarding

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9th February, 2008

THE ARTICLE

The White House has said it has not ruled out the use of the controversial interrogation technique of waterboarding. The technique simulates the 'victim' drowning. Investigators strap suspects on their backs to a board and then pour a constant flow of water over their face, making it difficult for them to breathe. Many consider it to be torture and want a ban under international law. The controversy surrounding the method increased this week when the CIA admitted for the first time that it used the method on three high-profile Al Qaeda detainees five years ago. Washington official Tony Fratto argued the practice was legal. He said: Every technique that has been used by the CIA...was lawful." Video evidence of the CIA using waterboarding had previously mysteriously vanished.

The CIA banned the use of waterboarding in 2006. The new debate on whether to bring it back is based on the possibility of a future terrorist attack. Mr Fratto told reporters: "It will depend upon circumstances." In December 2007, lawmakers passed a bill to ban the CIA from using waterboarding, although President George W Bush has threatened to veto it. Democrats are arguing there is no longer a need for the interrogation technique because times have changed since the 9-11 attacks. Senior Democrat Dick Durbin said that after 9-11: "There was the belief that additional catastrophic attacks against the homeland were inevitable. And we had limited knowledge about Al-Qaeda and its workings....Those two realities have changed." Mr Fratto said any future use of waterboarding would require presidential authorization.

WARM-UPS

1. TORTURE: Walk around the class and talk to other students about torture. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

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

controversy / interrogation / drowning / torture / CIA / Al Qaeda / evidence / debates / future terrorist attacks / lawmakers / changed realities

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. PREDICTION: With your partner(s), use all of the above words and phrases to make your own story of what you think is in the article. Change partners and share your stories.

4. TORTURE TECHNIQUES: Talk with your partner(s) about the following ways of torturing detainees. Rank them in order of the worst. Share your ideas with others.

- a. _____ techniques using water
- b. _____ sleep deprivation
- c. _____ methods that use sharp objects
- d. _____ the use of dogs
- e. _____ physical beatings
- f. _____ electrocution

5. SECURITY: With your partner, talk about which of the items below are OK to do to keep the country safe from terrorist attack.

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • waterboarding | • interviews for travel visas |
| • phone tapping | • torture |
| • airport fingerprinting | • detainment a la Guantanamo Bay |
| • CCTV everywhere | • surveillance |

6. THE 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.

7. QUICK ROLE PLAY: Student A **strongly** believes that it's OK to use torture to protect the country's security; Student B **strongly** believes that torture is totally wrong, for whatever reason. Change partners again and talk about your roles and conversations.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. America has decided to use waterboarding to interrogate people. | T / F |
| b. Waterboarding is where people drink dangerous amounts of water. | T / F |
| c. The CIA recently admitted using waterboarding on 3 people. | T / F |
| d. Video film of the CIA using waterboarding strangely disappeared. | T / F |
| e. The CIA has already banned the use of the waterboarding method. | T / F |
| f. George W Bush is very much against the use of waterboarding. | T / F |
| g. A US politician said America no longer needs to use waterboarding. | T / F |
| h. In future, only the US president could authorize waterboarding. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. ruled out | a. prisoners |
| 2. interrogation | b. permission |
| 3. constant | c. conditions |
| 4. detainees | d. disastrous |
| 5. vanished | e. barred |
| 6. banned | f. questioning |
| 7. circumstances | g. disappeared |
| 8. veto | h. continual |
| 9. catastrophic | i. reject |
| 10. authorization | j. excluded |

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

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. the controversial interrogation technique | a. the method |
| 2. The technique simulates the 'victim' | b. Al Qaeda detainees |
| 3. making it difficult for them | c. veto it |
| 4. The controversy surrounding | d. to breathe |
| 5. it used the method on three high-profile | e. its workings |
| 6. The new debate on whether | f. drowning |
| 7. George W Bush has threatened to | g. authorization |
| 8. catastrophic attacks against the homeland | h. of waterboarding |
| 9. limited knowledge about Al-Qaeda and | i. to bring it back |
| 10. require presidential | j. were inevitable |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The White House has said it has not _____ out the use of the controversial interrogation technique of waterboarding. The technique _____ the 'victim' drowning. Investigators strap suspects on their backs to a board and then _____ a constant flow of water over their face, making it difficult for them to breathe. Many consider it to be torture and want a _____ under international law. The controversy surrounding the method increased this week when the CIA admitted for the first time that it used the method on three high-_____ Al Qaeda detainees five years ago. Washington official Tony Fratto argued the _____ was legal. He said: Every technique that has been used by the CIA...was _____. " Video evidence of the CIA using waterboarding had previously mysteriously _____.

The CIA banned the use of waterboarding in 2006. The new _____ on whether to bring it back is based on the possibility of a future terrorist attack. Mr Fratto told reporters: "It will _____ upon circumstances." In December 2007, lawmakers passed a bill to ban the CIA from using waterboarding, although President George W Bush has threatened to _____ it. Democrats are arguing there is no longer a need for the interrogation technique because _____ have changed since the 9-11 attacks. Senior Democrat Dick Durbin said that after 9-11: "There was the _____ that additional catastrophic attacks against the homeland were _____. And we had limited knowledge about Al-Qaeda and its workings....Those two realities have _____. " Mr Fratto said any future use of waterboarding would _____ presidential authorization.

practice

simulates

ban

vanished

ruled

profile

lawful

pour

inevitable

depend

times

require

changed

debate

belief

veto

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

The White House has said it has not _____ the controversial interrogation technique of waterboarding. The technique simulates the 'victim' drowning. Investigators _____ backs to a board and then _____ water over their face, making it difficult for them to breathe. Many consider it to be torture and _____ international law. The controversy surrounding the method increased this week when the CIA admitted for the first time that it used the method _____ Al Qaeda detainees five years ago. Washington official Tony Fratto argued the practice was legal. He said: Every technique that has been used _____." Video evidence of the CIA using waterboarding had previously mysteriously vanished.

The CIA _____ waterboarding in 2006. The new debate on whether to bring it _____ the possibility of a future terrorist attack. Mr Fratto told reporters: "It will depend upon circumstances." In December 2007, lawmakers passed _____ CIA from using waterboarding, although President George W Bush has threatened to veto it. Democrats are _____ longer a need for the interrogation technique because times have changed since the 9-11 attacks. Senior Democrat Dick Durbin said that after 9-11: "There _____ additional catastrophic attacks against the homeland were inevitable. And we had limited knowledge about Al-Qaeda _____Those two realities have changed." Mr Fratto _____ waterboarding would require presidential authorization.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

video	evidence

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ruled out• simulates• flow• high-profile• lawful• vanished	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2006• possibility• depend• times• inevitable• require
---	--

STUDENT TORTURE SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about torture in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
	_____	_____	_____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

DISCUSSION

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
 - b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'torture'?
 - c) What do you think of the waterboarding technique?
 - d) Do you think waterboarding sounds like torture?
 - e) Do you think all countries really follow bans on torture?
 - f) Why do you think the CIA took so long to admit to using waterboarding?
 - g) Do you think the CIA or US Army have used unlawful interrogation techniques?
 - h) Do you think the video tapes of the CIA using waterboarding really "mysteriously vanished"?
 - i) What do you think you'd be like under torture?
-

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think the USA should bring waterboarding back?
- c) Why do you think the USA wants to use waterboarding so much when there are many other lawful techniques available?
- d) Do you think George W Bush will veto the waterboarding bill?
- e) Has your country ever been accused of using torture?
- f) Do you think it's OK to use a little torture to protect national interests?
- g) What questions would you like to ask White House spokesman Tony Fratto?
- h) What do you think his answers would be?
- i) Did you like this discussion?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

The White House has said it has not (1) _____ out the use of the controversial interrogation technique of waterboarding. The technique (2) _____ the 'victim' drowning. Investigators strap suspects on their backs to a board and then pour a constant (3) _____ of water over their face, making it difficult for them to breathe. Many consider it to be torture and want a ban (4) _____ international law. The controversy surrounding the method increased this week when the CIA admitted for the first time that it used the method (5) _____ three high-profile Al Qaeda detainees five years ago. Washington official Tony Fratto argued the practice was legal. He said: Every technique that has been used by the CIA...was (6) _____." Video evidence of the CIA using waterboarding had previously mysteriously vanished.

The CIA banned the use of waterboarding in 2006. The new debate on whether to bring it back is based (7) _____ the possibility of a future terrorist attack. Mr Fratto told reporters: "It will (8) _____ upon circumstances." In December 2007, lawmakers passed a bill to ban the CIA from using waterboarding, although President George W Bush has threatened to (9) _____ it. Democrats are arguing there is no (10) _____ a need for the interrogation technique because times have changed since the 9-11 attacks. Senior Democrat Dick Durbin said that after 9-11: "There was the (11) _____ that additional catastrophic attacks against the homeland were inevitable. And we had limited knowledge about Al-Qaeda and its workings....Those two realities have changed." Mr Fratto said any future use of waterboarding would (12) _____ presidential authorization.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1. | (a) rules | (b) ruled | (c) rolled | (d) ruling |
| 2. | (a) stipulates | (b) stimulates | (c) simulates | (d) simultaneous |
| 3. | (a) flow | (b) flew | (c) flaw | (d) flowing |
| 4. | (a) upon | (b) around | (c) over | (d) under |
| 5. | (a) by | (b) in | (c) on | (d) to |
| 6. | (a) lawful | (b) lawless | (c) lawmaker | (d) lawmen |
| 7. | (a) by | (b) in | (c) to | (d) on |
| 8. | (a) deepen | (b) depend | (c) deep end | (d) deepened |
| 9. | (a) vitalize | (b) vat | (c) vote | (d) veto |
| 10. | (a) long | (b) length | (c) longer | (d) lengthy |
| 11. | (a) believe | (b) belief | (c) believer | (d) believable |
| 12. | (a) require | (b) request | (c) requisite | (d) requiem |

WRITING:

Write about *torture* for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

[illegible]

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 out about the debate in the USA on the use of waterboarding. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. TORTURE: Make a poster about the different kinds of torture that are being used illegally around the world. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. NATIONAL SECURITY: Write a magazine article about the need to protect the security of your country. Include imaginary interviews with a security chief and an average citizen.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down new words and expressions.

5. LETTER: Write a letter to US President George W Bush. Ask him three questions about the use of waterboarding. Give him three suggestions on what he should do instead of using this technique. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. ruled out | a. excluded |
| 2. interrogation | b. questioning |
| 3. constant | c. continual |
| 4. detainees | d. prisoners |
| 5. vanished | e. disappeared |
| 6. banned | f. barred |
| 7. circumstances | g. conditions |
| 8. veto | h. reject |
| 9. catastrophic | i. disastrous |
| 10. authorization | j. permission |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. the controversial interrogation technique | a. of waterboarding |
| 2. The technique simulates the 'victim' | b. drowning |
| 3. making it difficult for them | c. to breathe |
| 4. The controversy surrounding | d. the method |
| 5. it used the method on three high-profile | e. Al Qaeda detainees |
| 6. The new debate on whether | f. to bring it back |
| 7. George W Bush has threatened to | g. veto it |
| 8. catastrophic attacks against the homeland | h. were inevitable |
| 9. limited knowledge about Al-Qaeda and | i. its workings |
| 10. require presidential | j. authorization |

GAP FILL:

American rethink on waterboarding

The White House has said it has not **ruled** out the use of the controversial interrogation technique of waterboarding. The technique **simulates** the 'victim' drowning. Investigators strap suspects on their backs to a board and then **pour** a constant flow of water over their face, making it difficult for them to breathe. Many consider it to be torture and want a **ban** under international law. The controversy surrounding the method increased this week when the CIA admitted for the first time that it used the method on three high-**profile** Al Qaeda detainees five years ago. Washington official Tony Fratto argued the **practice** was legal. He said: Every technique that has been used by the CIA...was **lawful**." Video evidence of the CIA using waterboarding had previously mysteriously **vanished**.

The CIA banned the use of waterboarding in 2006. The new **debate** on whether to bring it back is based on the possibility of a future terrorist attack. Mr Fratto told reporters: "It will **depend** upon circumstances." In December 2007, lawmakers passed a bill to ban the CIA from using waterboarding, although President George W Bush has threatened to **veto** it. Democrats are arguing there is no longer a need for the interrogation technique because **times** have changed since the 9-11 attacks. Senior Democrat Dick Durbin said that after 9-11: "There was the **belief** that additional catastrophic attacks against the homeland were **inevitable**. And we had limited knowledge about Al-Qaeda and its workings....Those two realities have **changed**." Mr Fratto said any future use of waterboarding would **require** presidential authorization.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - b 2 - c 3 - a 4 - d 5 - c 6 - a 7 - d 8 - b 9 - d 10 - c 11 - b 12 - a