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U.S. preacher says “take out” Chavez

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25 August, 2005

THE ARTICLE

U.S. preacher says "take out" Chavez

BNE: A Republican religious leader has stated on television that the assassination of Venezuela's democratically elected president, Hugo Chavez, would be a good thing. Pat Robertson, a TV evangelist and close friend of George W. Bush, said killing Chavez would be cheaper than starting a war to remove him. He added that getting rid of Chavez would stop Venezuela from becoming a "launching pad for communist influence and Muslim extremism". He also said: "I think the time has come that we [take him out]".

Robertson's comments would be considered as promoting terrorism in many of the world's democratic countries. The Bush administration was quick to say it did not share Robertson's views. State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack called Robertson's remarks "inappropriate", but did not condemn them. This suggests, perhaps, that the White House secretly thinks that Mr. Chavez is a problem for the USA. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the comments were harmless and that: "Private citizens say all kinds of things all the time."

WARM-UPS

1. FREE SPEECH: Can a religious leader talk about the assassination of the democratically elected leader of another country? Is this free speech or is it a form of terrorism? Discuss this with your partner(s). What things should a religious leader not say?

2. US FOREIGN POLICY: In pairs / groups, talk about the following areas of US foreign policy. What is the policy? Is it good or bad? What would you change?

- Venezuela
- China
- Israel and Palestine
- Iraq
- Cuba
- North Korea
- Iran
- Russia

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

Religious leaders / US television / assassinations / Hugo Chavez / communism / Muslim extremism / Venezuela / democratic countries / the White House

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

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

5. OPINIONS: Do you agree or disagree with these opinions about Pat Robertson? Discuss them with your partner(s).

- a. Pat Robertson should go to prison for encouraging hate and terrorism.
- b. Religious leaders should not recommend the death of other people.
- c. Free speech is a basic right in America. People can say what they want.
- d. George W. Bush should publicly condemn Mr. Robertson's remarks.
- e. Communism and Muslim extremism are more dangerous than US foreign policy.
- f. Pat Robertson is right. Hugo Chavez is a dangerous man.
- g. Robertson's comments are very dangerous.
- h. Mr. Chavez is democratically elected. America likes such leaders.
- i. Mr. Chavez has different views and American leaders don't like that.
- j. If Mr. Robertson is so worried about Muslim extremism, he should join the US Army and go to Iraq.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think Pat Robertson should go to prison for his comments. Students B think Pat Robertson can say anything he wants. Change partners often.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. A US preacher suggested the US should assassinate Hugo Chavez. | T / F |
| b. The religious leader is an ally of George W. Bush. | T / F |
| c. The preacher said killing Hugo Chavez would save America money. | T / F |
| d. The preacher said Venezuela was a hotbed for extremism. | T / F |
| e. Many countries might think the preacher is promoting terrorism. | T / F |
| f. The Bush administration has remained silent over the remarks. | T / F |
| g. It is possible the White House secretly agrees with the preacher. | T / F |
| h. Donald Rumsfeld condemned the preacher. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| a. stated | kill him |
| b. elected | criticize |
| c. remove | chosen |
| d. launching pad | thought of |
| e. take him out | eliminate |
| f. comments | opinions |
| g. considered | remarks |
| h. views | platform |
| i. condemn | innocent |
| j. harmless | said |

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

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. religious | war to remove him |
| b. democratically | things all the time |
| c. cheaper than starting a | promoting terrorism |
| d. getting rid | leader |
| e. the time | share Robertson's views |
| f. considered as | elected president |
| g. quick to say it did not | that Mr. Chavez is a problem |
| h. McCormack called Robertson's | has come |
| i. the White House secretly thinks | of Chavez |
| j. citizens say all kinds of | remarks "inappropriate" |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

U.S. preacher says "take out" Chavez

BNE: A Republican _____ leader has stated on television _____ that the assassination of Venezuela's democratically _____ president, Hugo Chavez, would be a good _____. Pat Robertson, a TV evangelist and _____ friend of George W. Bush, said killing Chavez would be cheaper than starting a war to _____ him. He added that getting _____ of Chavez would stop Venezuela from becoming a "launching _____ for communist influence and Muslim extremism". He also said: "I think the time has come that we [_____ him out]". Robertson's comments would be _____ as promoting terrorism in many of the world's democratic countries. The Bush administration was _____ to say it did not share Robertson's _____. State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack called Robertson's remarks "_____", but did not condemn them. This _____, perhaps, that the White House _____ thinks that Mr. Chavez is a _____ for the USA. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the comments were harmless and that: "Private _____ say all kinds of things all the time."

rid

elected

take

close

pad

religious

remove

thing

suggests

quick

problem

inappropriate

considered

citizens

secretly

views

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 "US FOREIGN POLICY" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Mr. Robertson's remarks and U.S. foreign policy.

- 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:

- leader
- good
- cheaper
- rid
- pad
- time
- promoting
- share
- inappropriate
- problem
- harmless
- citizens

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think of Mr. Robertson's comments?
- d. What do you think of Hugo Chavez?
- e. Hugo Chavez calls George W. Bush by the nickname "Danger Man". What do you think about this nickname?
- f. Do you think Pat Robertson should be arrested under America's anti-terrorism laws?
- g. What do you think Venezuelans would think of the comments?
- h. Do you think George W. Bush should condemn Mr. Robertson's comments?
- i. Do you think Mr. Bush should telephone Mr. Chavez and apologize for Mr. Robertson's comments?
- j. Do you think Venezuela will become a "launching pad for communist influence and Muslim extremism"?

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 many Americans share Mr. Robinson's views?
- d. Are his comments an acceptable part of free speech?
- e. How will the rest of the world view Mr. Robertson's comments?
- f. Do you think the comments and US foreign policy are similar?
- g. Do you think of Latin American leaders?
- h. What question would you like to ask Mr. Robertson?
- i. What do you think his answer would be?
- 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

ROLE PLAY: This role play is to discuss whether or not Mr. Robertson should be arrested under anti-terrorism charges. Team up with classmates who have the same role as you. Develop your roles and discuss ideas and "strategies" before the role play begins.

Introduce yourself to the other role players.

Role A – Pat Robertson

You have said nothing wrong. You are a free citizen. You have the right to free speech and to express your opinions. America is fighting a war. You believe Hugo Chavez is helping to fund that war. You hate the fact Mr. Chavez always criticizes the USA. Mr. Bush is a great man of peace.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY GEORGE W. BUSH IS A MAN OF PEACE.

Role B – Hugo Chavez

You are shocked and angry at Mr. Robertson's comments. You are a democratically elected leader. You think the preacher should go to prison. You want George W. Bush to guarantee your safety when you visit the UN in New York. You may cut oil supplies to the USA if Bush doesn't apologize.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY GEORGE W. BUSH IS "DANGER MAN".

Role C – Venezuelan citizen

You think Mr. Robertson's comments are shared by most Americans. It is another example of how America hates governments that are different. You are proud that Hugo Chavez is your leader. You think any world leader should be able to criticize the USA without worrying about assassination.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY US FOREIGN POLICY IS BAD.

Role D – George W. Bush

You think Mr. Robertson is free to say whatever he wants. He's a good man. He believes in God and he values human life. There is no need to arrest him under anti-terrorism laws. His comments were just his opinion. You believe Mr. Chavez is not helping the war on terror.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY MR. ROBERTSON IS A GOOD MAN.

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

In pairs / groups, discuss whether you really believe in what you said while you were in your roles.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

U.S. preacher says "take out" Chavez

BNE: A Republican _____ leader has stated on television that the assassination of Venezuela's democratically _____ president, Hugo Chavez, would be a good thing. Pat Robertson, a TV evangelist and close friend of George W. Bush, said killing Chavez would be _____ than starting a war to remove him. He added that _____ _____ Chavez would stop Venezuela from becoming a "launching _____ for communist influence and Muslim extremism". He also said: "I think the _____ _____ that we [take him out]".

Robertson's comments would be considered as _____ terrorism in many of the world's democratic countries. The Bush administration was quick to say it did not _____ Robertson's views. State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack called Robertson's _____ "inappropriate", but did not condemn them. This _____, perhaps, that the White House secretly thinks that Mr. Chavez is a _____ for the USA. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the comments were _____ and that: "Private _____ say all kinds of things all the time."

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 TV evangelist Pat Robertson and his highly controversial views. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. LETTER: Write a letter to Pat Robertson. Tell him what you think of his comments. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

4. US FOREIGN POLICY: Write a short essay on American foreign policy. Write about the good points and the bad points. What are the biggest changes that need to be made? Tell your classmates the main points of your essay in your next lesson. Did you all have similar views?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| a. stated | said |
| b. elected | chosen |
| c. remove | eliminate |
| d. launching pad | platform |
| e. take him out | kill him |
| f. comments | remarks |
| g. considered | thought of |
| h. views | opinions |
| i. condemn | criticize |
| j. harmless | innocent |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. religious | leader |
| b. democratically | elected president |
| c. cheaper than starting a | war to remove him |
| d. getting rid | of Chavez |
| e. the time | has come |
| f. considered as | promoting terrorism |
| g. quick to say it did not | share Robertson's views |
| h. McCormack called Robertson's | remarks "inappropriate" |
| i. the White House secretly thinks | that Mr. Chavez is a problem |
| j. citizens say all kinds of | things all the time |

GAP FILL:

U.S. preacher says "take out" Chavez

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Robertson's comments would be **considered** as promoting terrorism in many of the world's democratic countries. The Bush administration was **quick** to say it did not share Robertson's **views**. State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack called Robertson's remarks "**inappropriate**", but did not condemn them. This **suggests**, perhaps, that the White House **secretly** thinks that Mr. Chavez is a **problem** for the USA. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the comments were harmless and that: "Private **citizens** say all kinds of things all the time."