

Join the national conversation!



Word Generation - Unit 3.05

Focus Words

wiretapping | notwithstanding | eliminate | suspicious | source



Weekly Passage

Alina Woods was talking to her cousin in Mexico over the phone. She remembered hearing about wiretapping on the news. She had heard that the government was listening to international telephone conversations. Government officials were doing this so they could know if terrorists were planning attacks. Alina wondered if someone was listening to her conversation.

After the September 11th attacks, President Bush told the National Security Agency (NSA) to pay attention to conversations between Americans and foreigners who the government thought were suspicious. The NSA could tap phone calls, email accounts, and text messages as sources of information. He told the NSA officials to do this in secret, notwithstanding the fact that they were supposed to ask a court for permission. But President Bush said this secret wiretapping was necessary to keep the country safe. He called his new rules the Protect America Act.

Some people defend the Protect America Act because they think it will protect Americans from terrorists. They think that if a person seems suspicious, it is important to listen to that person's

conversations and read his or her e-mail messages. People who support the President's new rules point out that the Protect America act eliminates any possible delays in getting information about possible terrorists because the government does not have to wait for a judge's permission. They believe it ensure America's safety.

Other people are against the Protect America Act, notwithstanding the need for safety and security. They think wiretapping violates a person's right to privacy. The main problem for opponents is that the Protect America Act allows the President the power to spy without warning or court permission. These people think the price we are paying for security is too high and that we are giving up some of the personal freedom provided by the Constitution.

What do you think? Should secret wiretapping to help the government catch terrorists be legal? Or do you think, notwithstanding the risks of a possible attack, nobody should be able to spy on our conversations without telling us? Where do you stand? Remember someone may be listening!

Unit 3.05

Should secret wiretapping be legal?

Focus Word Chart

Word	Meaning	Forms	Examples of Use	Notes
wiretapping	(n.) - the act of listening in on a telephone conversation to get information			
notwithstanding	(prep.) - despite			
eliminate	(v.) - to get rid of, remove			
suspicious	(adj.) - believed to be potentially dangerous			
source	(n.) - something or someone that supplies information			