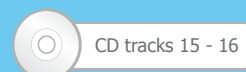




# US bar chat

Authentic conversations by native American speakers



## Pre-Emptive Strikes

This month, two young Americans, Jennifer and Sam are talking about pre-emptive strikes. Listen to the conversation and answer these two questions:

What does one of the speakers say in favour of **pre-emptive strikes**?

What does the other speaker say against pre-emptive strikes?

Jennifer: Hey, erm, I just heard that Bush has **been given a mandate** to **strike** at any country they want, that they might suspect of being involved in terrorist activity.

Sam: Oh my God, are you serious?

Jennifer: Yeah, no, I think it's **pretty cool**.

Sam: Why? Why would you say that that's cool?

Jennifer: Well, because there's so much terrorism going on that, you know, somebody has to take care of it.

Sam: Oh my God, **give me a break**. I mean, the whole thing of pre-emptive strikes is just completely illegal.

Jennifer: Yeah, but if you know that somebody's a terrorist, and, **I mean**, it's just like acting before something else happens.

Sam: But that's the thing, though, nothing is going to happen, I don't think, at all.

Jennifer: But look at what else has happened. It's already happened so we need to stop it before it starts again.

Sam: What are you talking about? I mean, pre-emptive strikes just cause people, I mean, it just causes a great amount of **collateral damage**, and it just causes people to hate you more.

Jennifer: Yeah, but if you knew someone wanted to kill you and your family what would you do, **sit around** and wait for them to do it?

Sam: Give me a break, violence is never the answer. Things should be **dealt with through proper channels**.

Jennifer: No, I think it's completely justifiable. I mean, we can't let September 11th happen again.

Sam: Yeah, but the thing is, **like**, you really have to try and use diplomacy to **bring governments to their senses**. I mean, violence, like I said, violence is never the answer.

Jennifer: Yeah, but look at the type of methods that the terrorists are using. These are not normal methods of negotiating with



other countries.

Sam: So, what, you think that civilised governments should **descend to their level**?

Jennifer: Well, I think in certain cases the use of force is necessary.

Sam: Give me a break, that just causes lots of innocent people to die.

Jennifer: Well, if you want to **sit back and wait** that's great, but I think we need to do something about it.

Sam: I mean, that completely goes against international law. It's not a crime until a crime has been committed.

## ANSWERS

1. One of the speakers is in favour of pre-emptive strikes because something has to be done about terrorism, we have to act before something terrible happens, the terrorists have unusual methods that require unusual actions, and we can't just sit back and wait.
2. The other speaker is against pre-emptive strikes because of all the collateral damage, violence is never the answer, things have to be dealt with through diplomacy, and the fact that we shouldn't descend to the level of terrorists.

## GLOSSARY

**a pre-emptive strike** *n*  
an attack against a country before it attacks you (often to eliminate supposed terrorists)

**to be given a mandate** *exp*  
to be given permission to do something

**to strike** *vb*  
to attack

**pretty cool** *exp*  
quite good

**give me a break** *exp*  
people often use this expression when they hear something they think is silly/stupid

**I mean** *exp*  
people often use this expression for emphasis or for correcting themselves

**collateral damage** *n*  
death and destruction caused to innocent people/civilians during a bombing raid

**to sit around** *phr vb*  
to do nothing; not to act

**to deal with something through the proper channels** *exp*  
to use diplomacy to find a solution to a problem

**like** *exp*  
people often use this when they are thinking what to say. It doesn't mean anything

**to bring someone to their senses** *exp*  
to cause someone to start thinking logically/rationally

**to descend to someone else's level** *exp*  
to do the same bad things that another person/group does. By doing this, you lose the moral advantage

**to sit back and wait** *exp*  
to do nothing; not to act