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RESEARCH NOTE 7

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MORE GOVERNMENT / LESS GOVERNMENT BALANCE ON THE TODAY PROGRAMME

One of the key research areas for the TaxPayers' Alliance is exploring why government grows, because bigger government is correlated with higher spending and a larger tax burden on families and businesses. A principal driver of bigger government is the notion that politicians are responsible for everything, and that when something goes wrong in our lives, the government, rather than civil society, should do something about it. For this reason, we were delighted when BBC Radio 4's Today programme announced that their end-of-year poll in 2006 would focus on which law should be repealed.

On New Year's Day, it was announced that listeners had voted overwhelmingly for the repeal of the 2004 Hunting Act, which banned hunting with dogs. This was the culmination of nearly three weeks of sustained coverage for the poll. But how did this affect the overall balance of the Today programme? Did calls for less government, fewer laws and lower taxes dominate the programme for that period?

The TaxPayers' Alliance analysed the Today programme (from 7am to 9am and excluding the main news bulletins) for the first four days of the poll – Monday 11 to Thursday 14 December¹ – to find out the number of "more government" messages and the number of "less government" messages delivered by presenters and guests.

For the full definitions see **Further details**. In brief:

- A **more government message** is one that calls for an expansion in the size of government, supports the existing size of government, or opposes a call for a reduction in the size of government.

¹ We had wanted to also cover the Friday 15 December programme, but this was not available on the "Listen Again" section of the Today programme website. We did contact the BBC to ask them to mend the broken link, but this had not yet happened at the time of going to press.

- A **less government message** is one that calls for a reduction in the size of government, or opposes a call for an increase in the size of government.

The overall results are quite startling:

- **134 "more government"** messages were delivered, against **86 "less government"** messages.

Breaking down the figures into messages delivered by presenters/reporters and messages delivered by guests shows that:

- The presenters / reporters delivered **57 "more government"** messages against **50 "less government"** messages.
- The guests delivered **77 "more government"** messages against **36 "less government"** messages.

Leaving out the items on the programme which covered or were related to the "Christmas Repeal" end-of-year poll, which probably produces a more accurate reflection of the daily output on the Today programme, presents an even starker picture:

- **125 "more government"** messages were delivered in total, against just **59 "less government"** messages.
- The presenters / reporters delivered close to **twice** the number of "more government" messages as "less government" messages. **54 "more government"** messages were delivered, compared with only **34 "less government"** messages.
- The guests delivered almost **three times** as many "more government" messages as "less government" messages. Guests delivered **71 "more government"** messages compared with **25 "less government"** messages.

This suggests that there is both a "more government" bias in the questioning by presenters and in the selection of guests by producers on Britain's premier morning current affairs show.

Implications

A bias towards bigger government on a flagship show like the Today programme is worrying for two reasons.

First of all, more government intervention, more government regulation, more government spending, or higher taxes are seen as the solution to a defined “problem”. The government is not thought of as itself being the problem in some circumstances, and, consequently, less government intervention, regulation or spending or lower taxes are not aired as frequently as they should be as possible solutions.

Secondly, everything the government does, owns, or runs at present, such as its monopoly control of healthcare and education, is seen as the natural order of things, and a different state of affairs is not considered possible. Removing government from the running of healthcare, as in Germany and Switzerland, or education, as in the Netherlands, is barely considered as a possibility. There is no serious discussion of how other countries are able to combine high quality public services with taxes that are far lower as a share of national income than in Britain.

The Today programme presenters compared

The main Today programme presenters on the days we analysed were:

James Naughtie	presented on three days
Carolyn Quinn	presented on two days
Sarah Montague	presented on two days
John Humphrys	presented on one day

The table below compares the number of “more government” and “less government” messages each presenter delivered. As before, the figures are presented including and excluding the items covering or related to the “Christmas Repeal” end-of-year poll.

The figures show a startling difference in the percentages of “more government” messages delivered by the different presenters:

- Including the “Christmas Repeal” poll, **James Naughtie** delivered the highest percentage of “more government” messages, **58%**. The other presenters each delivered a majority of “less government” messages.

- But excluding the poll, which probably produces a more accurate reflection of the daily output on the Today programme, only **Sarah Montague** delivered a majority of “less government” messages. **Carolyn Quinn** delivered **100%** “more government” messages, **James Naughtie** delivered **61%** “more government” messages, while **John Humphrys** delivered the same number of “more government” as “less government” messages.

Table 1: Today programme presenters compared

Presenter	Including “Christmas Repeal” poll		Excluding “Christmas Repeal” poll	
	% “more government” messages	% “less government” messages	% “more government” messages	% “less government” messages
James Naughtie	58%	42%	61%	39%
Carolyn Quinn	40%	60%	100%	0%
Sarah Montague	43%	57%	48%	52%
John Humphrys	43%	57%	50%	50%

Continuing research

It is easy to typecast one media organisation as being “left-wing” and another as being “right wing”, based on anecdotal evidence. We don’t think this helps the debate much. Analysing whether a media organisation or programme has a “more government” or “less government” bias, using quantitative research, is a much more revealing line of inquiry.

This is the TPA’s first paper in this research area. We will continue to look further into the issue of “more government” bias, monitoring both broadcasting and the print media, but particularly the BBC because it is taxpayer-funded.

Comment from the TaxPayers’ Alliance

Corin Taylor, Head of Research at the TaxPayers’ Alliance, said:

“The BBC has a legal obligation to be impartial, both in party political terms and in ideology, and the Corporation’s flagship current affairs programme is failing to live up to this.

Our research indicates that the Today programme is institutionally biased in favour of more government, and by implication, higher taxes. There should be greater emphasis on the role of civil society in solving life’s problems. This clear imbalance may not be intended, but it is there.”

Further details

1. Our definition of a “**more government**” message is a statement or uninterrupted series of statements from a presenter / reporter or a guest that either:

- i) calls for more government intervention / regulation / spending, or higher taxes;
- ii) praises / supports a call for more government intervention / regulation / spending, or higher taxes;
- iii) criticises / opposes a call for less government intervention / regulation / spending, or lower taxes;
- iv) sees government as the solution to a problem;
- v) praises government policy (unless that policy is to reduce the size of government, for example praising a policy to reduce government regulation is a “less government” message);
- vi) accepts as natural that government should be doing what it currently does;
- vii) does more than one of these things.

Examples of “more government” messages from the items we analysed include:

James Naughtie (Presenter): “The issue is what effectively can a government do?”

John Humphrys (Presenter): “Folic acid is good for us but not everyone gets as much as they should, so wouldn’t it be a good idea if we had it automatically in our food, if it were added to flour, so we’d get a dose every time we ate a slice of bread.”

Carolyn Quinn (Presenter): “Did you not try to get help from the state, benefits, that sort of thing?”

Ian Kearns (IPPR): “A proper purpose of government here is to play a role in supporting relationships.”

Evan Davis (Economics Editor): “A government that wants to restrain executive greed could put default limits on executive pay rises.”

2. Our definition of a “**less government**” message is a statement or uninterrupted series of statements from a presenter / reporter or a guest that either:

- i) calls for less government intervention / regulation / spending, or lower taxes;
- ii) criticises / opposes a call for more government intervention / regulation / spending, or higher taxes;

- iii) praises / supports a call for less government intervention / regulation / spending, or lower taxes;
- iv) sees government as a problem;
- v) criticises government policy (unless that policy is to reduce the size of government, for example criticising a policy to reduce government regulation is a "more government" message);
- vi) questions why government should be doing what it currently does;
- vii) argues / implies that businesses / individuals / civil society is better able to deal with a particular issue than government;
- viii) does more than one of these things.

Examples of "less government" messages from the items we analysed include:

Carolyn Quinn (Presenter): "We want you to suggest laws which you think should be scrapped."

Claire Ettinghausen (Hansard Society): "It's really important to take a step back and say 'what don't we need any more?'"

Robert Whelan (Civitas): "It's not the business of the Government to tell people how to live."

Carolyn Quinn (Presenter): "A lot of people would think that this is nobody else's business, it's down to me what I eat and what my weight is."

Alistair Darling (Trade and Industry Secretary): "Only a business can decide where the Post Office ought to be."

3. As explained above, this is not a simple analysis of whether the Today programme is "left wing" or "right wing". We think that a much more revealing line of inquiry is to analyse whether the programme has a "more government" or a "less government" bias: the TaxPayers' Alliance advocates a serious reduction in the level of taxation in Britain and to achieve that requires less, rather than more, government. Hence a number of the "more government" messages that we have classified are those that would be thought of as "right wing".

- For example, James Naughtie interviewed Liam Fox, who argued that the army needs to be expanded. We classified the messages in this interview as "more government" since an increase in the size of the army represents more taxpayer-funded positions.
- We also included statements in favour of BAA being referred to the Competition Commission as "more government" messages. In a complete absence of government intervention there would not be a competition policy at all and the market would decide the level and nature of monopoly.

It goes without saying that not every statement that we have classified as a “more government” message we disagree with!

4. This analysis is a quantitative attempt to measure something that is essentially qualitative, and hence there will inevitably be argument about whether a particular statement should be included and how exactly it should be classified. As will be clear from looking at Table A1 in the Appendix, we have been scrupulous in ensuring that we have included and properly classified every “less government” message that was delivered.

- For example, Mohammed Al-Fayed said that the Diana inquest spent “over £5 million of taxpayers’ money”. Although it is arguable that this statement has nothing to do with larger or smaller government, we included it as a “less government” message because it refers to “taxpayers’ money” rather than, as is often the case, “government money” or “public money”.
- We also quoted Josephine Quintivali, who said: “What we’re talking about here is what the Government funds. Will it fund single women to have IVF treatment?” On first glance it would seem that this is a “more government” message, but given the context of the interview this statement was actually part of an argument against such a thing and hence it was classified as a “less government” message.

5. Further, we deliberately analysed the Today programme in a week when a number of “less government” messages would certainly have been delivered due to the “Christmas Repeal” poll, to be as even-handed as possible.

6. Table A1 provides transcripts of the “less government” and “more government” messages that were delivered, although when a message was long a flavour has generally been given. The table does not give a full transcript of the entire programme, and hence what may appear to be the full transcript of a conversation may not actually be, only the parts of the conversation relevant to our analysis being included. In addition, items that contained no “more government” and no “less government” messages have not been included in the table, since they are not relevant.

7. When comparing the proportions of messages delivered by the main Today programme presenters, we are not implying that the messages that they deliver necessarily reflect their own views. However, presenters do have a choice about the angle from which their questioning comes.

- For example, Iain Duncan Smith was interviewed by James Naughtie about the Conservative social justice policy group’s first report. During the interview James Naughtie said: “The issue is what effectively can a government do?” He could have said: “The issue is what effectively can civil society do?” Or: “The issue is what effectively can be done?”



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APPENDIX

Table A1: Full details and transcripts

Monday 11 December 2006							
Time	Relevant item	Presenter(s) / reporter(s)	Number of "more government" messages	Number of "less government" messages	Guest(s)	Number of "more government" messages	Number of "less government" messages
07:15	Iain Duncan Smith argues that government social policy should be directed at strengthening marriage	James Naughtie	1	0	Iain Duncan Smith	0	0
JN: "The issue is what effectively can a government do?" More government							
07:30	The Government announces renewed efforts to cut through some of Whitehall's famous red tape	James Naughtie, Robert Peston	4	8	William Sargeant (Better Regulation Executive)	1	3
JN: "The Government's announcing another effort to cut through some of Whitehall's famous red tape. It is a promise that the Prime Minister himself has said he has failed to deliver on. This time, he says, it's going to be different. The Cabinet Office thinks it can save £2 billion in the new exercise." Less government							
RP: "This sounds like quite an impressive cull. 500 separate administrative burdens on business, which the Cabinet Office claims will save £2 billion They want to cut 25% off the officially imposed administrative burdens on companies and charities by 2010." Less government							
RP: "Some rules and regulations, frankly, are necessary." More government							
JN: "One person's burdensome regulation is another person's protection." More government							



RP: "Absolutely right. If you think back to the outcry over Farepack. A lot of people think that if Farepack had been a bit more regulated, all those thousands of people who lost their savings wouldn't be in that rather dreadful position today. So not all regulation is necessarily bad." **More government**

RP: "That said, the UK is in something of a life or death struggle with other economies and the costs of doing business elsewhere are less, therefore one does have to be much more careful perhaps than hitherto in imposing these burdens." **Less government**

JN: "How much can be done simply by the simplification of the way government does its business? In other words, not the regulations themselves, although no doubt things can be found that should be got rid of by common consent, but forms, the way things are described, the whole gobbledygook beloved of some bureaucrats. How much can actually be done about that because it never seems to happen?" **Less government**

RP: "If one were going to be slightly churlish what one would say about lots of the announcements today is that it's the Government waking up to the power of the internet to reduce the cost of communicating with citizens and with businesses The internet has been transforming the business of companies, cutting their costs, for years now and you might ask yourself why it's taken government and the public sector so long to wake up to the opportunities presented." **Less government**

JN: "Are you just waking up to something which business, because it has to, has woken up to a long time ago?" **Less government**

WS: "Take car tax ... you can go online and in about 60 seconds achieve the result that previously took you a trip to the post office and two forms A single planning form. At the moment there are 388 across the nation. There will be one in future. To be able to submit your planning application electronically will save a lot of time and effort, both on the providing end ... also on the receiving end." **Less government**

JN: "What is the government's own estimate of how much unnecessary regulation, as distinct from that which is necessary as a protection, there is?" **Less government and more government**

WS: "The commitments that are being made today are to take the first 25%, which I think is a very important and very ambitious target." **Less government**

WS: "Amongst that £14 billion [of regulatory costs] there are some costs that we have no intention of doing anything about because they provide perfectly good benefits." **More government**

JN: "We've been getting a huge post bag on our message board about this, small companies particularly arguing The Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment Regulations. One correspondent says, 'It's a complete disaster for any small company'." **Less government**

WS: "Taking a risk based approach, the idea that people who run their businesses well can expect significantly less inspections, can expect significantly less forms to deliver. There are plenty of things I think the Government has clearly identified that it can do." **Less government**

07:35	Which law would you repeal if you got the chance? We launch our Christmas vote	Carolyn Quinn	0	3	Claire Ettinghausen (Director, Hansard Society), Craig Brown (humourist)	1	3
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CQ: "We want you to suggest laws which you think should be scrapped. We want Britain's least useful or most damaging pieces of legislation." **Less government**

CE: "We often see campaigns for what laws the public or other Members of Parliament would like to see introduced, so I think it's really important to see which laws, perhaps, aren't relevant any more." **Less government**

CE: "Society today is more and more complicated so we've got more and more legislation." **More government**

CE: "It's really important to take a step back and say 'what don't we need any more?'" **Less government**

CQ: "Let's have our first suggestion about how to unclutter the statute books." **Less government**

CB: "I want to repeal the Data Protection Act of 1998, and particularly the part of it which permits closed circuit television cameras...." **Less government**

CQ: "Well if you fancy tackling the idea of CCTV cameras or you have an idea of your own go to our website... or write to us..." **Less government**

07:37	A look at today's papers	Rory Morrison	1	0	None	-	-
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RM: "The Environment Secretary David Milliband has told the Guardian that he wants to issue a carbon credit card to every person in Britain as a central part of his climate change strategy." **More government**

07:47	Thought for the day with Reverend Dr Alan Billings	None	-	-	Reverend Dr Alan Billings (Director of the Centre for Ethics and Religion at Lancaster University)	1	1
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AB: "This weekend a Government minister has been suggesting the naming and shaming of those parents who walk away from their responsibilities towards their children ... Shame can be effective in shaping behaviour. Some years ago I was part of a civic delegation from Sheffield to the Ukrainian city of Donetsk, still part of the Soviet Union. A highlight of our visit was a tour of number three refrigerator factory. Prominently displayed at the entrance were praise and blame boards..." **More government**

AB: "If we were clearer and more confident about the values we hold in common, we might not need public policies that rely on shame, or if we did, they might stand some chance of working." **Less government**

07:50	We speak to Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt	Carolyn Quinn	2	0	Dr Jonathan Fieldon (Chairman, BMA Consultants Committee), Patricia Hewitt	6	0
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CQ: "A series of new performance targets for the NHS has been set out by the Government. They include getting the service into a surplus of £250 million by March 2008 and tackling hospital superbugs." **More government**

JF: "Jobs being frozen, trained doctors, nurses and others not finding jobs to go to Whilst it is good to produce a financial surplus, surely these

aspects need to be sorted first." **More government**

PH: "Next year, when we have another very large increase in the NHS budget to bring down waiting times even further..." **More government**

PH: "What we're saying for the next financial year is the NHS should expect to make a small surplus so that it's got the money it needs for investing in new services in the future." **More government**

PH: "The way in which hospitals will do this is by making more effective use of the unprecedented amounts of money that we're already giving them." **More government**

PH: "Overspending and inefficient use of the huge sums of money we're giving the hospitals is what's causing the financial problem." **More government**

CQ: "Let me just remind you of another pledge you made ... when we were talking about mixed sex wards What's happened on that? Have you solved the problem?" **More government**

PH: "99% of hospitals say that they're providing single sex sleeping accommodation across all their main wards, clearly they're not doing that in every one of their wards, so we've got to get to the bottom of this and just ensure that hospitals do do what patients rightly expect." **More government**

08:15	How important is family breakdown as a cause of wide-ranging social problems?	James Naughtie	2	0	Robert Whelan (Civitas), Ian Kearns (IPPR)	3	3
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JN: "What do you think the implications are for government policy? Your general approach is that government shouldn't tell people how to run their lives. How do you square that with government's responsibility to make a distinction between people who are cohabiting and people who are married?" **More government**

RW: "It's not the business of the Government to tell people how to live." **Less government**

RW: "But I do think it's the business of the Government to make sure that people have the right information on which to base those choices We would like the Government to stop encouraging and subsidising the sort of behaviour that does have poor outcomes for children. At the very least we ought to say public policy should be directed towards encouraging the sort of behaviour that has the better outcomes for children." **More government**

IK: "[Government] policy in this area needs to be wide ranging and nuanced. It has an important economic role which is about job creation, getting people into employment and increasing the employment rate. It involves poverty reduction policies and it involves relationship support policies for all kinds of relationships, and parenting support policies, and policies such as improving work-life balance." **More government**

JN: "One of the things he [Robert Whelan] said ... is that government should try to encourage outcomes in relationships which produce, the evidence tells us, more secure, happier and stable children and that's a proper purpose of government." **More government**

IK: "A proper purpose of government here is to play a role in supporting relationships, but that's not to focus specifically on the relationship of marriage. We might want, for example, to provide information and support to a father going through a marital breakdown, information and support that helps him to continue playing a positive role in parenting with any child involved. That's an appropriate role for government." **More government**

IK: "Encouraging people to get married is not [an appropriate role for government]." **Less government**



RW: "The transferable tax allowance ... I would like to see that as a definite promise on the table." Less government							
08:25	Lionel Barber, Editor of the Financial Times, casts his vote for the law he would like to repeal	Carolyn Quinn	0	1	Lionel Barber (Editor, The Financial Times)	0	1
CQ: "Our 2006 Today Programme vote. It is the Christmas repeal. We want you to suggest laws which you think should be scrapped, and we're looking for Britain's least useful or most damaging pieces of legislation." Less government							
LB: "The law I would like to see suspended is the current extradition treaty with the United States." Less government							
08:58	Round-up at end of programme	Carolyn Quinn	0	1	None	-	-
CQ: "Couple of ideas of laws that should be repealed. The Hunting Ban says Mr B S Crawford. 'That was the most pointless waste of time since New Labour itself.' And Graeme Harkin says people complaining about child abuse should supply the address of the alleged offender. 'It's ridiculous and incomprehensible as a law'. Less government							
		Total	10	13		12	11
					Total "more government" messages		22
					Total "less government" messages		24

Tuesday 12 December 2006

Time	Relevant item	Presenter(s) / reporter(s)	Number of "more government" messages	Number of "less government" messages	Guest(s)	Number of "more government" messages	Number of "less government" messages
07:12	What's the post like in your area? A committee of MPs criticises the postal service.	John Humphrys	1	0	Richard Bacon (Conservative MP, Public Accounts Committee)	3	0

RB: "We were looking at Postcomm, the regulator, and one of the problems is that in their new regime for regulating the Post Office they don't actually measure some of the things that matter most to customers There are more complaints about lost mail than almost any other single thing and yet this wasn't something that postcomm was even measuring." **More government**

RB: "They should make sure that they've got the right targets." **More government**

JH: "We don't want to just have a target, do we, we want them to meet the target?" **More government**

RB: "They've got to make sure that they follow up on it. They've also got to have much simpler compensation schemes They've got to understand why things are lost in certain parts of the country, in certain postcode areas and not others They need to set out much clearer and simpler criteria for judging what is poor performance and investigating it quickly." **More government**

07:25	Folic Acid is good for us but should food manufacturers be adding it to our food automatically?	John Humphrys	2	3	Hillary Powers (Professor, nutritional biochemistry, University of Sheffield), Professor Alan Jackson (Chairman, Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition, which gives advice to the Food Standards Agency)	5	0
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JH: "Folic acid is good for us but not everyone gets as much as they should, so wouldn't it be a good idea if we had it automatically in our food, if it were added to flour, so we'd get a dose every time we ate a slice of bread. Well, that's what we're told is going to happen. There's a report on it being published today, but what about those people who should not have extra folic acid for whatever reason?" **More government**

AJ: "One of the reasons that the Government didn't move ahead with the fortification [of flour with folic acid] was to give some time to look more closely at these possible adverse influences, and that's what my committee has been involved in doing over the last three or four years In the United States of America, Canada and Chile, there has been fortification of flour by law since 1998, and that has been associated with a substantial reduction of 25%-50% in the number of babies born with neural tube defects." **More government**

JH: "If you deprive us of the choice, I completely take your point, and everybody obviously does, about the need for folic acid, but people can make that choice, can't they? They can take extra or they can give extra to their children, or whatever it happens to be, but that is their choice. If it's forced upon us, in our bread, literally, then we have no choice, and that's a dangerous road to go down, isn't it?" **Less government**

AJ: "It's very important to respect and recognise choice, but it's very important that freedom of choice should not be confused with no choice, or poorly-informed choice." **More government**

JH: "But we do have the choice, we can take extra [folic acid]..." **Less government**

AJ: "There are a number of people in the society, those who are most disadvantaged in the society, who have very poor [folic acid] intakes, and they are those at most risk of having babies with neural tube defects. There are other people in the society who choose to take foods that are voluntarily fortified with folic acid, and we know that those people are at risk of taking more folic acid that we would be comfortable with, and so the choice to take fortified foods is associated with people consuming levels of folic acid which are greater than we are comfortable with." **More**

government

JH: "They'll have even more [i.e. more folic acid than they should] if it's in their bread." **Less government**

AJ: "Well the recommendation that we make is that there should be mandatory fortification to improve the intake of those that have the lowest levels of consumption. At the same time there should be regulation on voluntary fortification and the use of supplements to minimise the likelihood of those currently taking levels that are higher than we would be comfortable with." **More government**

JH: "In a nutshell, put it in the bread but take it off the shelf in pill form?" **More government**

AJ: "In pill forms, and in the form of fortified foods, breakfast cereals and margarines." **More government**

07:30	Britain's leading research organisations have been assessing whether research on non-human primates is necessary	Carolyn Quinn	0	0	Dr Jill Langley (Science Director, Dr Hadwin Trust for Humane Research), Professor Chris Higgins (Medical Research Council)	2	0
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CH: "There are about another 3,300 used for toxicology which is a legislative requirement. We shouldn't forget that hundreds of thousands of people volunteer for clinical studies and there are legislative requirements for testing on primates to make sure drugs are as safe as possible before they go into clinical studies with man." **More government**

CH: "We shouldn't forget that we have very strict regulations in this country which effectively preclude any studies which aren't absolutely essential." **More government**

07:37	A review of today's papers	Charlotte Green	1	1	None	-	-
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CG: "Toy manufacturers have defended themselves in the Mail, saying all their goods conform to EU standards." **More government**

CG: "All this from a Home Secretary who a day earlier, says the Daily Express, had savaged the mad bureaucracy which means you can't call Christmas Christmas." **Less government**

07:44	Author A L Kennedy gives us her suggestion for the Today programme Christmas Repeal	John Humphrys, Carolyn Quinn	0	2	A L Kennedy (author)	0	1
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JH: "A few years ago we asked you in the spirit of filling our programme over the quiet holiday period to suggest a new law that we might try to get introduced. Now we're asking you to suggest one that should be dumped. What a list of candidates." **Less government**

AK: "I would repeal the Identity Cards Act 2006." **Less government**

CQ: "There we are, another suggestion for our Christmas repeal." **Less government**

07:47	Thought for the day with Dr Indarjit Singh	None	-	-	Dr Indarjit Singh (Editor, the Sikh Messenger)	2	1
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IS: "The most widely reported way of strengthening the family unit has been a reference to tax incentives for married couples." **Less government**

IS: "As a Sikh I find this disappointing and feel that monetary incentives will do little to combat the underlying social malaise and increasing selfishness that blinds us to wider responsibilities Tinkering with tax incentives is to me yet another example of the current trend in modern society of looking for cures to social ills through the wrong end of a telescope." **More government**

07:50	A new white paper on pensions is introduced today we speak to John Hutton, Secretary of state for Work and Pensions	John Humphrys	3	5	Steve Bea (Head of Pensions, Scottish Life Royal London Group), John Hutton	10	2
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JHumphrys: "One of the achilles heels of this Government is pensions Today a new White Paper on pensions is being introduced, which probably means we'll have a new law soon, and the essence of that is that people will automatically be signed up for a pension, and they'd have to opt out rather than the other way about, opting in." **More government**

JHumphrys: "First a word from the pensions industry you're not very keen on this whole thing, Mr Bea?" **Less government**

SB: "The Government's best estimate at the moment is that, even following these reforms, one third of us will still need means-tested support in retirement." **More government**

JHumphrys: "If you choose not to do your own thing, then the state will do it for you, so by doing it, you have effectively foresworn that extra 40 pence." **Less government**

SB: "Two questions for the Minister ... would he guarantee to your listeners that every pound saved in these personal accounts would make people at least one pound better off?" **More government**

SB: "Could he guarantee that no woman in future could ever save as much as £25,000, and get no value at all?" **More government**

SB: "If he can't guarantee that, then I think your listeners and you should start hearing the same alarm bells that I hear, every time I hear him saying he's going to auto-enrol millions of people into savings." **Less government**

JHumphrys: "There you go Mr Hutton, still the alarm bells. Will you guarantee that every pound makes a pound's worth of difference?" **More government**

JHutton: "The big problem we think, John, is that not enough people are saving for their retirement We've done a lot of work on the principle of automatic enrolment." **More government**

JHumphrys: "Under the new rules, bosses will be forced to pay into a pension scheme The amount they will be forced to pay is less than the amount many of them are paying in anyway at the moment Finance directors all around the country are looking at the cost of their existing

pension schemes and saying to themselves, we can chop this back." **Less government**

JHutton: "The reason why we're proposing this policy is that literally nearly 10 million workers are working in companies that offer no occupational pension at all." **More government**

JHumphrys: "Indeed, I appreciate that." **More government**

JHutton: "That is why the new right to a 3% employer contribution is going to be of huge benefit to millions of workers." **More government**

JHumphrys: "At present, those firms that pay into pension schemes contribute an average of 7.6%. If they can get away with 3%, they will." **Less government**

JHutton: "There are things we can do ... to make sure that when we establish these new low-cost personal pension schemes ... we can minimise the potential impact on existing good-quality schemes. We can, for example, restrict transfers in and out of other pension products." **More government**

JHutton: "We've got to engineer these new pension saving schemes in such a way to minimise the adverse impact on existing schemes." **More government**

JHumphrys: "What about those small firms that can't afford the contributions?" **Less government**

JHutton: "We think the overall impact on the wage bill will be about 0.6 or 0.7%. I think that is reasonable and fair and I think it is the best way to close the problem with our pension system." **More government**

08:10	We hear the views of one prostitute about the Ipswich murders and growing concerns that a serial killer may be at large	Carolyn Quinn	1	0	Toni (name changed)	2	0
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T: "It was really difficult with housing and benefits so that was when I first got into working the streets." **More government**

CQ: "Did you not try to get help from the state, benefits, that sort of thing." **More government**

T: "Yes, that takes a long time to organise. They ask lots of questions and it doesn't just happen there and then." **More government**

08:15	The Office of Fair Trading has referred the operation of the UK's major airports to the Competition Commission	John Humphrys, Greg Wood	4	0	David Ruck (Team Leader, Office of Fair Trading study into BAA)	1	0
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JH: "The Office of Fair Trading has referred BAA, Britain's biggest airport operator, to the Competition Commission." **More government**

GW: "It's down to the fact that BAA owns so many airports The OFT has been conducting a market study of this situation since June, and what it's concluded is that the current market structure does not, in its words, deliver best value for air travellers in the UK. So therefore it's asking the Competition Commission to do a full investigation of BAA." **More government**

DR: "BAA operates a near monopoly in the South East and Scotland and has done so for the past 20 years, and is likely to continue to do so unless

we intervene." **More government**

JH: "So they could take airports off BAA?" **More government**

08:37	We look at how apathy is widely exploited in many areas of life	Carolyn Quinn, Evan Davis	5	0	None	-	-
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CQ: "The Government's releasing proposals to introduce a national pensions saving scheme to which all those without a private pension of their own would be signed up unless they specifically choose to opt out." **More government**

ED: "Given the private sector has long seen the power of apathy, it's great that British pensions policy's about to catch up. By automatically enrolling people in a cheap default pension at last the apathetic will now be modestly catered for. And the great thing about using the principle of automatic enrollment in public policy is that it recognises the freedom of the individual. Some people may not need a pension and they're not forced to have one. But the default option is some pension not none A government that wants to restrain executive greed could put default limits on executive pay rises. They could only be overruled by an active majority of shareholders Or energy efficiency. You don't need to ban people from buying inefficient fridges or even tax them more. Just make people fill out a two page form for permission to buy one in the store. That'll ensure only those who really want one will pursue it I'm sure there are lots of other ideas Areas where it's better for the nanny state to give a gentle nudge, rather than a heavy hand." **More government**

08:47	Sir Oliver Popplewell puts forward his case for repealing tuition fees	John Humphrys	0	1	Sir Oliver Popperwell	1	1
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JH: "What laws would you like to repeal?" **Less government**

OP: "The law I would like to see changed is that relating to top-up fees, and to university fees in general. We ought not to have a lot of these potty universities which the Government have created, on which they've spent a great deal of money." **Less government**

OP: "Money which would be much better spent on providing free tuition for those at proper universities, centres of excellence, where people would be taught and would therefore contribute to society." **More government**

08:50	Should the ban on cyclists using pavements be overturned? One of our listeners takes on Lord Quinton in a bid to convince us it should	John Humphrys	3	3	Gareth Blake, Lord Quinton	4	4
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JH: "Gareth Blake, you're the listener. You want to repeal the laws banning cyclists using pavements." **Less government**

GB: "That's right. I want to replace it with cyclists must give way to pedestrians." **Less government**

JH: "The man who's going to object to that ... is Lord Quinton. You made a very powerful speech You talked about rogue cyclists as I recall.



What do you think of this idea?" **More government**

LQ: "This idea of having a law allowing them to ride bikes on pavements provided they give way to pedestrians seems to me quite absurd." **More government**

JH: "What about those pavements that are pretty quiet, as Gareth Blake says?" **Less government**

LQ: "The laws against cycling on pavements are so feebly enforced that they don't seem to act as any sort of deterrent at all." **More government**

GB: "I just think it is absurd that at the moment the law actually states that children are breaking the law when they cycle on a pavement... [cut off]." **Less government**

JH: "What about that, it's illegal for children to cycle on pavements. That shouldn't be, should it?" **Less government**

JH: "Gareth Blake, your idea is fine, except that it probably isn't needed is it, because you can get away with it most of the time?" **More government**

LQ: "There's no reason why the very large population of pedestrians should be put in difficulties by a relatively small population of aggressive young male riders of bicycles." **More government**

		Total	20	15	30	9
				Total "more government" messages		50
				Total "less government" messages		24

Wednesday 13 December 2006

Time	Relevant item	Presenter(s) / reporter(s)	Number of "more government" messages	Number of "less government" messages	Guest(s)	Number of "more government" messages	Number of "less government" messages
07:12	The Chairman of the Health Select Committee tells us why he thinks financial management in the NHS has failed	Sarah Montague	1	1	Kevin Baron (Labour, Chairman, Health Select Committee)	3	1
<p>SM: "And you blame it [poor NHS financial control] in large part on the growth in staff costs?" Less government</p> <p>KB: "70% of NHS costs are staff. They overshoot all the targets that were made That has clearly a consequence to what money trusts have for doing other things beyond employing people and paying them a reasonable wage." Less government</p> <p>KB: "I'm very happy that clinical grades and others have had big increases in their salaries in the National Health Service." More government</p> <p>SM: "The Government says it's trying to get everything back on track, and in fact there's a promise the NHS will be in surplus by March 2007. Do you see that it could be?" More government</p> <p>KB: "[In direct answer to above question] I think in most part yes." More government</p> <p>KB: "My own primary care trust has been top-sliced by over £6 million and yet we've got very high health inequalities in Rotherham, and I would like to see that money given back to Rotherham as soon as possible to spend on the ill-health that's there." More government</p>							
07:22	The business news with Greg Wood	Sarah Montague, Greg Wood	1	0	Peter Hambro (Founder, Peter Hambro Mining)	0	1
<p>SM: "There's been another development in attempts by the Russian authorities to seize back control of their mineral assets from Western companies." More government</p> <p>PH: "It's very hard to manage a company when an agency oversteps its mark. Mr Midvol is in charge of the environment and not of production." Less government</p>							

07:26	We hear which law author Ross Clarke would scrap as part of our Christmas repeal	Sarah Montague	0	1	Ross Clarke (Author of "How to Label a Goat")	0	1
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SM: "This year, our programme vote is the Christmas Repeal. We want you to suggest a law which you think should be scrapped. We've been looking for Britain's least useful or most damaging piece of legislation." **Less government**

RC: "It is very tempting to think of the nanny state as a modern phenomenon, the invention of bossy New Labour ministers. But that is to ignore the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 This legislation is still very much in force For sheer unfairness I can't think of any other law I would sooner be struck from the statute book." **Less government**

07:30	The Shadow Defence Secretary on a leaked proposal to end allowances for troops spending extended time away	James Naughtie	3	0	Liam Fox	2	0
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JN: "The Defence Select Committee is now arguing that the armed forces may not be able to maintain their commitments abroad because of under-staffing." **More government**

JN: "So what precisely should the Government do in your view?" **More government**

LF: "The army is under-strength and that's to see an increase in the number of those in the army, we'll have to see an increase over time with an improvement in recruitment." **More government**

JN: "Do you think it's time now for the armed forces to expand?" **More government**

LF: "It's impossible to come to any other conclusion at the present time than that the army is under-strength for the commitments it has. Every single infantry battalion in the country is now under-strength. That's the first thing that has to be dealt with The Government needs to make sure that either the army is brought up to strength, or they reduce their commitments overseas." **More government**

07:44	A review of today's papers	James Naughtie, Rory Morrison	1	1	None	-	-
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RM: "In the Independent, Deborah Orr says that the government's policies to drive prostitutes off the streets are making things easier for the killer." **Less government**

RM: "With the Work and Pensions Secretary John Hutton due to announce details of the replacement for the Child Support Agency later, there is speculation about the new body's enhanced powers. The Daily Mail says it will be able to trawl through absent fathers' tax returns. The Sun says the new agency's reach will extend beyond the grave to the estates of fathers who've died or faked their deaths to avoid maintenance payments." **More government**

07:55	The first ever national guidelines are published today on how obesity should be prevented and treated	Sarah Montague	4	5	Dr Susan Jebb (Nutritionist, Medical Research Council), Professor John Walding (University Hospital Aintree in Liverpool)	7	0
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SM: "We get the first ever national guidelines today on how obesity should be prevented and treated. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, NICE, has set out not only how the NHS should deal with the problem, but also what schools, workplaces and town planners should be doing. It says workplaces should be designed to encourage people to be more physically active and it says that in extreme cases the NHS should be able to carry out stomach surgery on obese children." **More government**

SJ: "I think these guidelines are tremendously important because they really give us an evidence-based framework for action We need to convert them into concrete action within the NHS and well beyond that through local authorities, employers and so forth, if we really are going to prevent new cases of obesity developing." **More government**

SM: "So outside the NHS, in workplaces, what should that [the guidelines] mean?" **More government**

SJ: "It [the guidelines] means employers looking at the opportunities they provide for their staff to be active It means looking at any food they provide on site and ensuring that people can make some healthy choices." **More government**

SM: "A lot of people would think this is nobody else's business, it's down to me what I eat and what my weight is." **Less government**

SM: "Can it ever be appropriate to staple the stomach of a child as is recommended in some cases here?" **Less government**

JW: "We have to manage obesity at all levels and the guidance that we've produced provides appropriate advice for health professionals to help guide individuals in making the right choices if they want to help themselves to lose weight Some people find this very difficult and in many cases, perhaps 80% of the time, people won't manage to achieve a 5%-10% weight loss, which we know to be of clinical benefit, just through following a healthy diet and increasing their exercise. And therefore sometimes we do need to consider the use of medication or even surgery There are some children who have very very severe obese problems and in whom this is really the only solution to protect their health for the future." **More government**

SM: "But is it a solution? Because if you've got a 12 year old and you're stapling their stomach you're not addressing the cause of the problem, are you?" **Less government**

JW: "This guideline is only recommending surgery for children who've reached physiological maturity ... and who've tried all of the other means to help them lose weight and have not succeeded in doing so." **More government**

SM: "Some people say why should public money go on something like that, when actually the solution to the problem is down to dieting." **Less government**

JW: "Some people find it impossible to do this [lose weight through dieting] and in terms of cost-effectiveness I see patients very frequently now

who've have this operation who are then able to come off their insulin treatment for their diabetes Research has shown that this sort of treatment is actually cost-effective in the long term." **More government**

SM: "Isn't there a danger that ... the more that you talk about [obesity] it in terms of a disease then people will think this is something that happens to them rather than something that they can do something about?" **Less government**

JW: "The guideline recognises the health risks of obesity, recognises the cost to the nation of obesity, and that the problem requires solutions at all levels and that includes the public health aspects that Susan has just been talking about, as well as guidance for healthcare professionals, so that they can help patients make the right choices for their own health." **More government**

SM: "One of the things you're saying in terms of the public health message is that companies, workplaces should encourage people to be more physically active. Does that mean removing lifts?" **More government**

JW: "What we would like to see happen is that stairs are given a greater priority within the building, so it's the default choice to use the stairs rather than to use the lift." **More government**

08:20	Another suggestion for our Christmas Repeal from Lisa Jardine, Professor of Renaissance Studies at the University of London	James Naughtie	0	1	Lisa Jardine (Professor of Renaissance Studies at Queen Mary University of London)	1	1
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JN: "The Christmas vote this year is the Christmas repeal. We want you to suggest laws that you think should be scrapped. We're looking for perhaps our least useful or most damaging piece of legislation." **Less government**

LJ: "So please join me in voting to repeal the Crime and Disorder Act 1998." **Less government**

LJ: "Let's plough all the money saved back into focused and effective education. Petty punishment for young offenders is just no solution. Education is." **More government**

08:30	The Health Minister, Andy Burnham, on a damning report into financial management of the NHS	Sarah Montague	0	1	Jane Herbert (interim Chief Executive, Hinchingsbrook NHS trust), Andy Burnham (Health Minister)	3	0
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JH: "Our maternity department ... actually costs us several million pounds more each year to run it in terms of the income versus expenditure we get in. The reason for that is that it costs us almost as much to run a small maternity department as it does somebody up the road to run a much bigger one." **More government**

JH: "If we run a maternity department with, let's say 2,200 births, we still have to run a 24/7 obstetrics rota and a 24/7 midwifery rota. But we only



get the income associated with, in our case, something like 2,300 births, whereas the maternity department up the road for the same rotas and roughly the same costs will get the income from, let's say 3,500 births, and that's our basic underlying financial problem." **More government**

SM: "What this report also says is the measures you're taking to get things back on track in some cases are compounding problems." **Less government**

AB: "Where the real long term structural problems exist, it is actually a small overall percentage, but it doesn't minimise the fact that we need to get a grip on the problems in those areas." **More government**

08:47	Our reporter jumps on his bike to discover the truth about cyclists that ride on the pavement	Sarah Montague, Norman Smith	1	1	None	-	-
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SM: "A suggestion by one of our listeners, and this idea of what law would you get rid of, and this man suggested get rid of the law that bans cyclists from pavements." **Less government**

SM: "Lord Quinton [opposing the listener's suggestion] suggested that too many cyclists are happy jumping lights, going on pavements, and were usually, he said, male, under 30 and bursting with testosterone and other aggression-causing chemicals." **More government**

08:53	How much difference can workplaces make in the fight against obesity?	Sarah Montague, Greg Wood	1	0	Doreen MacKenzie (Owner, Knock Travel)	1	0
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GW: "Companies are being asked to do their bit to reverse an epidemic of obesity. The National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence, which is the Government's health advisor, is publishing guidelines today. It wants employers to encourage healthy eating and exercise in their workforce, by, for example, providing bike sheds and removing junk food from canteens." **More government**

DM: "We joined a government work scheme here which analysed each member of staff confidentially ... whether they were overweight or underweight etc, and then they sent me back a pen picture of the company, and from that I was able to identify the areas that I needed to spend a little bit of money on." **More government**

		Total	12	11		17	4
				Total "more government" messages			29
				Total "less government" messages			15

Thursday 14 December 2006

Time	Relevant item	Presenter(s) / reporter(s)	Number of "more government" messages	Number of "less government" messages	Guest(s)	Number of "more government" messages	Number of "less government" messages
07:12	The Secretary of State for Industry, Alistair Darling on the future of post offices	Sarah Montague, John Kay	9	5	Two un-named interviewees, Clive Raisey (Sub-postmaster), Jill Foster (runs local family business), Ann (local shop owner in same building as Post Office), Alistair Darling	9	5

SM: "We'll hear today how much money the Government is prepared to spend on subsidising Post Offices." **More government**

SM: "Our reporter John Kay has been to Bicnall, a Post Office in Somerset which is run by volunteers and is among those under threat." **More government**

JK: "In the queue they're horrified that this shop may not be here this time next year." **More government**

Un-named1: "There are a lot of people in this village that can't walk very far, they don't drive, and if they couldn't come here, what would they do?" **More government**

Un-named2: "The Government has said that they are concerned about the loss of community. We provide that. The Government is saying very clearly that they don't want people to drive. We provide a service on people's doorsteps so they can walk here or cycle here." **More government**

JK: "But because the Post Office only just breaks even, he [Clive Raisey] fears the shop is very vulnerable in the national closure programme."

More government

CR: "We've put 11 years of work into making this shop a viable proposition and now it looks as though the rug's going to be drawn from under our feet." **More government**

CR: "The Government does not seem to understand the needs of the country." **More government**

JK: "I suppose the Government would say the Post Office nationally is a business and if a small rural Post Office isn't making any money and it's, in fact, in deficit, it would have to go." **Less government**

CR: "Does the police service make a profit, the National Health Service, the fire service? No it's a social cost, and that's what the Post Office should be considered as." **More government**

JK: "Jill Foster ... runs a family business, and she says traveling further would cost her valuable time and money." **More government**

JF: "If it was Taunton it would be an hour's round trip, so it is absolutely vital for us." **More government**

JK: "It only just breaks even, and Ann behind the counter thinks if the Post Office was closed, this side of the business would inevitably follow."

More government

A: "If they hadn't come into the Post Office, they might not have bought [our produce]." **More government**

JK: "So if the Post Office counter here closed down, and that draw wasn't here for people, do you think the shop could survive long term?" **More government**

A: "[In direct answer to above question] No." **More government**

AD: "I will tell the House of Commons the number of Post Offices that I think need to be closed We do need a national network of Post Offices. What we need to do though is make sure those Post Offices are in the right place." **Less government**

AD: "Over the last 20 or 30 years people's shopping habits have changed, the way in which people live their lives has changed ... for example, the internet, email ... they can renew their tax disc online These things are happening. We've got to deal with them and to respond to that." **Less government**

SM: "The Post Offices that are concerned are those in rural communities. So how do you decide which ones close? Those in rural communities, are you prepared to subsidise them a great deal?" **More government**

AD: "The subsidy is going to continue, and it is a substantial subsidy and there's no question of that being discontinued." **More government**

SM: "If there is a Post Office, a rural branch, where, if you work it out on the sums, it costs £17 per visit every time somebody goes in, is that a reason to close a Post Office?" **Less government**

AD: "Only a business can decide where the Post Office ought to be." **Less government**

AD: "We've got to strike a sensible balance between those Offices which are losing a lot of money with few customers with the fact that you do need to provide a national network of Post Offices We've got to take account of the fact that the Post Office has problems, and remember, the National Federation of Postmasters themselves have said the present situation is unsustainable." **Less government**

SM: "If it is to be on a firm footing, ultimately what number is it [to be closed]?" **Less government**

AD: "I will tell the House of Commons the reduction in numbers that I think is necessary to achieve that." **Less government**

SM: "And you want it on a firm footing. Is that firm footing that there will be 5,000, 10,000 in five-ten years time?" **Less government**

07:20	Business News with Greg Wood	Greg Wood	4	0	Michael O'Leary (Chief Executive, Ryanair)	1	2
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GW: "It [Ryanair's takeover bid for over Air Lingus] does face some very stiff opposition from the Irish government, and from pilots and unions." **More government**

GW: "How would you make it work seeing as the Irish government has 25% in Air Lingus itself and can effectively block your bid?" **More government**

MO: "They can't block the bid, no more than Ryanair with 25% of Air Lingus can make it succeed on its own." **Less government**

GW: "The UK Government is publishing an update on its White Paper today which, among other things, will say it's still committed to expanding Stansted and Heathrow airports. Is that something that you support?" **More government**

MO: "It is. The London airports need more expansion. However far more important than the expansion of those airports is for the UK Government to come out and agree with our call to break up the BAA monopoly." **More government**

GW: "Well, we do have that Competition Commission investigation into BAA which was announced earlier this week." **More government**

MO: "If there was free and fair competition between the airports you wouldn't have a need for the ineffective regulation presently provided by the CA which has patently failed." **Less government**

07:25	Fourteen severe flood warnings and a further eleven flood warnings were in place in Scotland overnight. Our correspondent Colin Blane is there	Sarah Montague, Colin Blane	0	1	None	-	-
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CB: "Questions are being asked here about why flood defences, which were built very recently at a cost of quarter of a million pounds, don't seem to have done their job." **Less government**

07:32	Information Commissioner, Richard Thomas is angry about agencies which provide people's personal information to the press for a fee	James Naughtie	1	1	Richard Thomas (Information Commission)	2	0
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JN: "Newspapers and Magazines which pay for personal information are named today by the Information Commissioner, Richard Thomas, who's responsible for the operation of the Data Protection Act." **More government**

RT: "So we produced this report earlier this year calling on the Government to increase the penalties to a two-year prison sentence. I'm delighted the Government responded very quickly and has been consulting on that." **More government**

JN: "Where does the law come in here? They [Associated Newspapers, owners of the Daily Mail] say they've never broken the law and journalists are told they must observe the law Are you saying these have broken the law, these enquiries, or not?" **Less government**

RT: "Investigative journalism, none of that is threatened by the existing law. But we do want to increase the penalties." **More government**

07:35	The 2006 Today Programme vote is 'The Christmas Repeal'. We want you to suggest laws which you think should be scrapped. We're looking for Britain's least useful or most damaging piece of legislation	Sarah Montague	0	2	Daniel Hannan (Conservative MEP for South East England)	0	1
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SM: "We are asking you to vote on what law you would like to get rid of. We're looking for Britain's least useful, or even most damaging piece of legislation." **Less government**

DH: "The law I'd most like to scrap is the 1972 European Communities Act In 1972 ... we didn't imagine for a moment that Brussels would become the main source of legislation in this country 80% of the laws in the member nations are proposed by unelected euro officials It's precisely because I believe in European values like freedom and democracy and pluralism, that I've given up on the EU And for the privilege of giving up our democracy, we pay Brussels £12 billion a year, enough to scrap inheritance tax and capital gains tax and still have enough left over to abolish stamp duty." **Less government**

SM: "And keep those ideas coming in." **Less government**

07:50	Tony Butler, former chief constable of Gloucester who worked on the Fred West case, talks to us about the current murder investigation in Ipswich	Sarah Montague, Rory McLean	0	0	Tony Butler (former Chief Constable of Gloucestershire)	1	0
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TB: "Knowing that you've got a good team working for you ... but also to ensure they have the resources. One of the issues that's going to be around here, I'm sure, is the financial issue. In our case, we were towards the end of the financial year, we had a massive increase in costs The Home Secretary of the day ... didn't give me any more money. So that's an issue that needs to be handled. I'm sure the force here will be looking at that and possibly they've already got some reassurance from the Home Office about that." **More government**

08:20	Does Mohamed al Fayed think the Stevens report will reveal the truth behind the fatal car crash which killed Princess Diana and his son Dodi?	James Naughtie, Peter Hunt	0	0	Mohammed Al-Fayed	0	1
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MAF: "After three years, spending over £5 million of taxpayers' money..." **Less government**

08:32	Should foreign languages be compulsory for children after the age of 14? Lord Dearing has written a report on the future of language	James Naughtie	2	1	Lord Dearing	4	1
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JN: "Lord Dearing, the cross-bench peer, he did one very big report earlier into university education and is very respected in the world of education, has been asked to write a report on the future of language teaching. He's publishing his first findings today." **More government**

LD: "There is a problem. The decline in the take-up of languages by 14-year-olds has gone much too far and we need to do something about it and the elements of restoring it are a more interesting textual basis for language study A letter went out to schools beginning of this year from a minister, saying, 'Look, you ought to be going for somewhere between 50% and 90% of your pupils doing a modern foreign language', and I think that's right, and in this report I'm saying to headteachers, look, if you haven't already done that, please do it in the next three months The right time to start doing a language is in primary schools ... and I've made a proposal that in the next review of the primary curriculum, languages should be part of it." **More government**

LD: "I think the main problem has been the curriculum You can do French, or German, or whatever, with a more interesting context There is scope for further investment in teachers, experience and repertoire of teaching and there's some excellent practice around." **More government**

JN: "Are you saying that the correction that you think needs to be done, should be done on a voluntary basis rather than re-instating the compulsion to take a language to GCSE?" **Less government**

LD: "You can't rule it [compulsion] out as a last resort." **More government**

JN: "If the voluntary approach doesn't work, you would say you've got to...?" **More government**

LD: "I think it makes no sense to force young people who are really switched-off against the background that this country has amongst the lowest staying-on rates in education after compulsory schooling." **Less government**

LD: "We've got to get them doing things that motivate them and what's happened since the languages weren't compulsory is that, on the whole, the more academically able pupils have stayed with languages. Those who aren't so lucky have moved away, in quite a big way, to vocational subjects which are motivating to them. And that leads into the Government's new diplomas for specialised subjects. So there is sense in it, in terms

of getting kids really into learning for life." **More government**

08:45	Business update with Greg Wood	Greg Wood	3	1	John Stewart (Hakan Clear Skies)	2	2
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GW: "In just under an hour the Government is expected to re-affirm the commitment to build new runways at London's Heathrow and Stansted airports. Airports play a vital role for UK business but their expansion appears to fly in the face of pledges to combat climate change." **More government**

JS: "If it is built it will require demolition of several hundred homes, possibly more than a thousand and of course a new flight path meaning over 150,000 people under a flight path to Heathrow for the first time." **Less government**

GW: "The Government and the aviation industry would claim that there is great public demand for this and that business needs new airports, airport expansion to relieve congestion and things of that sort." **More government**

JS: "What the Government's got to look at is who is using it? Who's flying to and from Heathrow? Are they contributing to the economy?" **More government**

GW: "The airline industry says that carbon trading by airlines and airport operators will mitigate the carbon generating effects of expanding airports." **More government**

JS: "The proposal for carbon trading right now which is coming from the European Union would do very little to help with growth. In fact the figures show that without carbon trading, by 2030 growth would be 142% in passenger numbers in the UK. With carbon trading, it only reduces to 135-139%." **Less government**

JS: "I tend to feel that for the industry this is a way of them showing they're green and to try and avoid what really would curb growth, and that is taxes on aviation fuel, that is VAT on tickets." **More government**

08:55	The laws on fertility treatment are to change. It is expected that the current need for clinics to consider a child's "need for a father" will be stopped but what will be the implications?	Sarah Montague	3	2	Josephine Quintivali (Founder, Comment on Reproductive Ethics), Ruth Yahil (single mother who had IVF two years ago)	2	3
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SM: "The laws on fertility treatment and embryo research are to change It's expected that among the changes the current need for clinics to consider a child's need for a father will be scrapped." **Less government**

SM: "There are clinics who don't seem to mind so much, don't care so much about the need for a father. Isn't this, if this change comes about today, isn't it just bringing all clinics onto the same basis?" **Less government**

JQ: "I think it's a gesture that the Government doesn't need to fulfill, taking this out of the Act. I think it's a dreadful statement to make about the



role of men." **More government**

SM: "You would, from the sound of it, prefer to see a situation where the law was moved in the opposite direction to ensure that it was only couples, a male and a female, who could have fertility treatment." **More government**

JQ: "There's law like that in Italy. It's very unlikely to be passed here. I'm simply saying who woke up one day saying that this law needed to be touched in this way?" **More government**

JQ: "What we're talking about here is what the Government funds. Will it fund single women to have IVF treatment..." **Less government**

SM: "The advice today is about what is permissible within legislation. NICE, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence will subsequently go on to decide what's appropriate to be funded by the NHS." **More government**

JQ: "I'm saying, if a mother has a right, I really have to make this clear, then does a father as well? Will he have a right to have a surrogate mother? Will it be provided for by the NHS as well?" **Less government**

JQ: "This is a statement that will go into law and it is basically about state provision of infertility treatment. That's what we're talking about, and the suggestion is that the NHS will fund single motherhood." **Less government**

SM: "Is there not a right for a father as well, you talk about the right for a mother? Is this not unfair on fathers?" **More government**

		Total	22	13		21	15
				Total "more government" messages			43
				Total "less government" messages			28

Friday 15 December 2006

Time	Relevant item	Presenter(s) / reporter(s)	Number of "more government" messages	Number of "less government" messages	Guest(s)	Number of "more government" messages	Number of "less government" messages
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We had wanted to also cover the Friday 15 December programme, but this was not available on the "Listen Again" section of the Today programme website. We did contact the BBC to ask them to mend the broken link, but this had not yet happened at the time of going to press.

GRAND TOTAL FOR WEEK	Presenter(s) / reporter(s)	Number of "more government" messages	Number of "less government" messages	Guest(s)	Number of "more government" messages	Number of "less government" messages
			64	52		80
TOTAL "MORE GOVERNMENT" MESSAGES FOR WEEK						144
TOTAL "LESS GOVERNMENT" MESSAGES FOR WEEK						91