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Margaret Thatcher TV Interview for BBC (Versailles G7) [*denies accusing US of stab in the back over UN vote*]

John Humphrys, BBC

At the Versailles Summit leaders of the seven major Western industrialized countries have expressed their concern at events in the Middle East. As their two-day meeting ended with a broad measure of agreement on economic issues, the seven heads of government issued a statement calling for an immediate cease-fire in Lebanon and deploring the suffering, destruction and loss of life there. America's special Middle East envoy, Mr. Phillip Habib, arrived in Versailles to talk to President Reagan and later he left for Israel. Our correspondent at the summit, Mark Rogerson:

Mark Rogerson, BBC

The summit leaders' communique expressed concern and called for a cease-fire. President Reagan's Middle East envoy, Philip Habib, after talks here is en route to Israel. So I asked the Prime Minister, were the Israelis justified by the attack on Shlomo Argov Ambassador Argov?

MT

I do not believe it was in retaliation. May I say how distressed I was at the attack on Ambassador Argov, whom I knew, and he was a very, very distinguished person? But you probably have seen that from the police enquiries that also on the hit list was not only Ambassador Argov, but the same hit list included the head of the PLO in London. So I think it's possible that's what is happening in the Middle East now may be, arise, they may have made the attack on Ambassador Argov the occasion of the new hostilities in the Middle East, but I do not believe it was the cause. It is all very tragic indeed.

Mark Rogerson, BBC

Could we turn now to the issue of the Falklands, and in particular to the way the Americans expressed their opinions just the other night, that they would in fact have preferred to change their vote had they been able to do so at the United Nations. Were you as dismayed as the papers said you were?

MT

Do you know I never in fact used that word at all. I read the papers today that said I was dismayed, angry, stab in the back, etc., all the most colourful vivid reports of, of something that, that, em, I ... [*pause*] ... just never felt. The view that I take is this, I've got more to worry about than changing a vote in the United Nations on a motion there. I've got the real situation to worry about and making certain that we look after as best as we can the interests of our soldiers and sailors who are fighting on our behalf down there. So, yes, there was a, a small problem in the Security Council but measured by the enormous problems I have, I didn't ... I scarcely gave it another thought. And may I just add this: throughout this whole conference and throughout the whole time, ever since the United States came and said we staunchly support Britain, they've been the [\[end p1\]](#) *staunchest* possible ally, they're *absolutely* behind us, behind us in our desire to repossess the islands, behind us in doing it, and constructively helpful in every way, and it's still the same now and it will go on being the same.

Mark Rogerson, BBC

Have you been at all concerned about the prospects for what happens when actual hostilities are over, how a complete and permanent withdrawal by Argentina can be, can be kept?

MT

Yes I think we've all been discussing that at this conference this weekend, er, because as I say the whole of the, those present at this conference are behind us, absolutely united, realizing that we must repossess those islands. They are concerned that when we get a ceasefire, it be a ceasefire of the whole situation. As you know we've kept our objective absolutely clear, we've no quarrel with the Argentine people, we have a quarrel with the junta. But our aim is to repossess those islands which are British sovereign territory, inhabited by British people and we hope that when that is done we'll be able to get a total ceasefire so that we can devote *all* our efforts towards rehabilitating the lives of those people and doing a great deal of reconstruction and making secure the island from further attack.