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Margaret Thatcher

TV Interview for BBC (Falklands, Israel/Lebanon) [*"we fight for peace with freedom and justice and our people down there have had their peace shattered, their freedom taken away"*]

I

Prime Minister the news from the Falklands must be a bit of a blow?

PM

Every time we get bad news from there it's a blow. One feels every incident, every person who is wounded and every death and it is tragic but it will not prejudice the operation on the whole. We can replace the stores from other stores already on shore. We can never of course quite replace—well you can't replace the men and that's the tragedy of it.

I

Do you have any news yourself of the extent of the deaths and injuries? I appreciate you are not going to tell us, but do you know or are they still trying to work it out?

PM

No, I do not have any precise news and we are very wary now of giving figures when we don't know whether they are accurate or not. When you get an incident like that the people are taken away and you know they were taken away with great bravery by some of the helicopters, the main thing is to get them to a place where they can have treatment and you are so anxious to get every one away that it takes quite some time to check exactly where they have gone and how many there were. The main point is to get them to treatment and of course communications are not easy. And so I don't know any more than you do, but it must have been quite serious.

I

Does it weaken your resolve, an incident like this, to see this through to the end even though it does mean more violence and more deaths?

PM

No, it doesn't because we fight for peace with freedom and justice, and our people down there have had their peace shattered, their freedom taken away, and they have no justice and it is always expensive in life, as well as in money, and it is the life that is more important than the money, to restore it. Our forefathers did it for us. We mustn't flinch from doing the same for the next generation. In theory you know these things [end p1] are going to happen. You realise that there will be bad days and very difficult incidents. It doesn't lighten the burden or the blow when it comes. You know you have to go on to achieve your objective.

I

Do you feel this is a personal blow as the person who takes ultimate responsibility, I suppose, as the Prime Minister?

PM

Oh, yes indeed. Like so many other people every time the telephone goes or someone walks in the room with a piece of paper you think I hope it is not bad news. That is your first instinct. There are many parents and families in Britain who feel the same way.

I

Can we deal with the Middle East? Britain appears to be taking quite a hard line on this occasion against Israel.

PM

... the territorial integrity of the Lebanon has been impugned. Lebanon is not a party to the hostility. She has got troops battling in her country. Naturally I think straightaway of the Falklands. Someone invaded the Falklands and they had to withdraw. They refused to withdraw voluntarily so we had to make them withdraw by force. And the Security Council resolutions are quite clear. Not only for a ceasefire but also withdrawal of all the forces as well and we stand by that and so does the United States.

I

But can we actually do anything to put pressure on Israel or is it just the United States that can do that?

PM

I think it is the United States which is in a very much better position to do that. I always hope that they will find a ready response. After all Israel knew what it was like not to have self-determination and not to have borders of her own. With that background one hopes that she will come to respect the borders of other people because all nations have a right to live in peace and security. Bringing that peace and security about is not easy. [end p2]

I

But do you think Israel will listen?

PM

I believe that Israel will listen to the United States and I believe that because of the fundamental nature of the situation that we shall hope to get some progress towards restoration of peace. She will be the first country to know that if hostilities spread in that area it can be very dangerous and I think we all want to limit any spread of conflict.