

PRIME MINISTER

*Custom*

AWKWARD QUESTIONS

Judging from my briefing of the media at 2.00pm - admittedly before they had seen the communique - the press is short of a story. This underlines the importance of presenting your case in the most positive light.

Their main concern was to find out where you had got your way and where you hadn't.

My line was that any drafting group involving 42 countries was bound to compromise and to use language in a resourceful way. Undoubtedly there were passages in the communique which we would have written differently - notably the passage on Southern Africa.

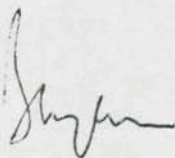
But we had felt able to sign up on everything. The drafting reserved our position where necessary. Annex I identifies our three reservations. The press are aware of these and the reasons for them.

The draft statement anticipates the media's main questions:

1. What from your point of view is the main result Hasn't the conference brought forth a mouse - or mice?
2. What has most pleased and displeased you?
3. What, if anything, have you learned?
4. Have you changed your mind on anything as a result of the discussions?
5. Are these conferences worthwhile? What changes would you like to see?
6. Whither Commonwealth?

As of now, two other questions are likely to arise:

1. Andropov's letter - line to take at Annex II.
2. Meeting with Mugabe - line to take at Annex III.



B. INGHAM

29 November 1983

The communique expresses the unanimous view of Heads of Government except in the following passages, where our position is reserved.

Southern Africa

A            Para 14, second sentence: ".....the overwhelming majority of Heads of Government rejected the proposals of the South African Government for "constitutional" change....."

We could not go along with those who condemned the constitutional proposals out of hand; we think it necessary to suspend judgement on them.

Middle East

B            Para 21, final sentence: ".....most Heads of Government reaffirmed their view that the Palestine Liberation Organisation, as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, must be involved on an equal footing in negotiations....."

We cannot agree to the two phrases underlined.

Law of the Sea

C            Para 34. The first sentence is unanimous. All the rest begin "Most Heads of Government" or "There was a widespread view". Having taken a decision not to sign the Convention, we could not agree to these sentences.

LETTER FROM ANDROPOV

Line to take:

I received a letter dated November 24 from Mr Andropov through diplomatic channels.

It is not our practice to reveal the contents of confidential exchanges.

[A reply will be sent in due course].

MEETING WITH MUGABE

Line to take:

I met Mr Mugabe for an hour over drinks last Friday. Mr Mugabe asked that the meeting should be a private one and so we did not reveal it had taken place. I understand reports of it have now been published in Zimbabwe.

In a frank but friendly discussion Mr Mugabe brought me up to date on developments in Zimbabwe.

I did mention to Mr Mugabe the officers who are still in detention in Zimbabwe and he is, of course, fully aware of our views.

PRESS CONFERENCE, RADIO AND TV

I have put the media on an hour's notice for a press conference should the Conference effectively end at lunchtime. We should however try to avoid those press conferences being held by Mrs Gandhi/Mr Ramphal and by Mr Trudeau on his return from China (fixed for 6.00pm).

As I mentioned in my minute to you of last night, we shall not be able entirely to confine your press conference to British journalists. There will, for example, be a number with American outlets so there will be interest in the extent to which the Commonwealth has gone anti-American or has been prevented from doing so.

The news left in the communique is as follows:

- Cyprus, where we need to defend language which is rather harder than our resolution at the UN;
- Grenada, about which there is a great deal of interest in how conflicting views have been reconciled;
- Southern Africa; and, of course,
- the extent to which you have reserved your position by such phrases as "Most Heads of Government". (I am having a note prepared on this).

The main problem in presenting this conference to paint your contribution as a positive rather than a blocking role. This has been achieved over International Security and to a large extent over the international economic scene and we have emerged as resourceful drafters.

The attached speaking note attempts to put the most positive gloss on your contribution, and that of your officials, and I think you should use it as a short opening statement if you agree with it.

Another reason for saying a few opening words on these lines is to meet head on questions about your view of the Commonwealth and the value of these biennial conferences.

Needless to say, the speaking note reflects the line I have been taking in the score or so briefings I have given over the period of the conference.

Finally, just a reminder about the mechanics.

We have arranged for the press conference to be held in the main drawing room with the door as background. Still photographers will be to your left and TV to your right.

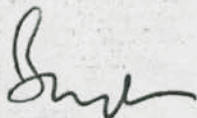
Both radio and tv will record the press conference but I have arranged for you to give short (4-5 minutes) news interviews to BBC Radio and IRN, BBC TV and ITN in the library next door.

In addition BBC Overseas Services would like to put 2-3 questions to you on the future of the Commonwealth - its potential and problems - for a programme they are making at the conference. They have already interviewed Mrs Gandhi, Mr Muldoon and Mr Lee Kuan Yew and are trying to arrange to interview African leaders.

I have said provisionally that you will do this.

I have however rejected a bid for an interview by Indian TV. I think 5 interviews on the trot are enough. Agree?

Attached is the draft speaking note.



B. INGHAM

29 November 1983

This has been an extremely hard working conference - over 10 hours of discussions on our weekend off, you will recall - and it has been a useful and valuable seven days we have spent in New Delhi and Goa.

Mrs Gandhi, our host, has kept our noses to the grindstone. The outcome in terms of words is two Declarations - one on international security from Goa and the other on economic action from here in New Delhi; and a separate communique on a host of other subjects, not all of which have been discussed in depth but which reflect the concerns of the 42 countries taking part.

That leads me to the first point about this Conference. It is an unrivalled opportunity for leaders representing a quarter of the world's people - from countries large and small, developed and developing, rich and very poor - to talk to each other in a common language. To express their hopes, their fears - and, yes, their frustrations.

For me, the Conference brings into much sharper focus the preoccupations of a host of countries reaching into all four corners of the earth.

For that reason alone I find this week we spend together every two years - and this is my third Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting - a valuable institution.

But learning is also a two-way process. And so the Conference is also an opportunity.

And I have seized the opportunity it has afforded to get over the British - and sometimes the Western - point of view with vigour and I believe some effect. For example:

On International Security the Commonwealth knows how passionately I want to see both nuclear and conventional disarmament on a balanced and verifiable basis; security at a much lower level of armaments, if we can get it; and our determination to pursue a dialogue with Russia to that end.



On economic action our conviction that improvement starts at home; on the prime importance of pursuing prudent domestic economic policies; but our recognition of the need to help on the poorest as we in the UK do - two-thirds of our aid goes to the 50 poorest countries; and our conviction that the world cannot be improved by new institutions or conferences but by making existing institutions, which haven't done a bad job at all when you think of the turmoil of the last 10 years, work more effectively.

On Southern Africa where time and again my officials and I have sought to get over the point that problems like linkage cannot be washed away by words; we have to find practical solutions to problems as we are, for example, to help Namibia to the independence we all want for her.

On Grenada where after some very moving contributions from the small Eastern Caribbean states I sought to put recrimination to rest; to prepare ourselves to help Grenada find a happier democratic future; and more generally to address ourselves to the serious practical issue of how we can offer protection to small, vulnerable States.

This is one of the many tasks the Commonwealth has set itself as it leaves New Delhi.

I hope next time we meet together in 1985 we can legitimately say that the world is a more secure, safer, more prosperous place in which to live.

For this, in spite of all our differences of perception and view, is what the Commonwealth seeks.

PRIME MINISTER

YOUR PRESS CONFERENCE TOMORROW

You have agreed to give a press conference in the main drawing room at the Residence tomorrow evening at 7.00pm. We expect about 30, largely but not exclusively British journalists, to attend. We shall bring them by bus to the Residence for 6.50pm.

We intend that you should sit at a table with the main door as a back-drop and with the journalists seated in front of you. A few still photographers will attend; they will be to your left. BBC and ITN tv cameras will be to the right.

Radio and tv will most likely record the press conference but I have said that you will give the usual short news interviews (4-5 minutes) afterwards to BBC Radio, IRN, BBC TV and ITN. These interviews will be done next door in the library.

I will give you a brief for the press conference tomorrow afternoon when news coverage in Britain is clearer. We shall keep you posted on news from home up to 7.00pm.

Additionally BBC Overseas Services have asked if at the end of the four interviews they could put to you two or three questions for a feature they are making at the Conference on the Commonwealth - how do you see its future - its potential and its problems? They claim to have already interviewed Mrs Gandhi, Mr Muldoon and Lee Kuan Yew and are trying to get one or two Africans.

Content to do the usual four radio and tv interviews plus BBC Overseas Services?

*Yes - if throat holds out,*

Finally, the High Commissioner would very much like you to give an interview to Indian Television before you leave but there has been no time in your programme and the only opportunity would arise tomorrow evening after the press conference. However I think that five interviews on the trot are more than enough. Content not to respond to Indian Television's request?

*Will see - if throat holds out*  
*not*

*B. Ingham*

B. INGHAM  
28 November 1983

COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING, NEW DELHI

INTERVIEW BY

THE PRIME MINISTER,  
THE RT HON MARGARET THATCHER FRS MP

TO

MICHAEL BRUNSON OF ITN

ON

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29 1983

Press Office,  
10 Downing Street,  
London, SW1.

01-930 4433

MICHAEL BRUNSON: PRIME MINISTER, THE CONFERENCE DID NOT DO A NUMBER OF THINGS, IT DID NOT FOR EXAMPLE CONDEMN US ACTION ON GRENADA AND IT DID NOT AGREE TO A SUGGESTION FOR A NEW WORLD ECONOMIC SUMMIT AND IT SUGGESTED THAT S S ... THAT THAT WAS THE RESULT LARGELY OF YOUR INTERVENTION. 2

MRS. THATCHER: WELL, BOTH OF THOSE THINGS WERE VERY WISE. ON GRENADA WE MAY HAVE TAKEN DIFFERENT VIEWS AND THERE WERE WIDELY DIFFERING VIEWS EXPRESSED BUT WHAT WAS THE POINT IN PUTTING IN DIFFERENCES OF VIEWS WHEN THE REAL THING IS TO CONCENTRATE ON THE FUTURE FOR GRENADA. WE WANT DEMOCRACY TO BE RESTORED IN GRENADA AND TOGETHER WE DECIDED WE WOULD SEE HOW WE COULD SET ABOUT IT. MUCH WISER THAN SPENDING TIME ON REGRETTING WHAT HAPPENED AND THE OTHER ONE WAS A WORLD ECONOMIC SUMMIT. YOU KNOW, IT IS RATHER CLASSIC THAT WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, YOU CALL ANOTHER CONFERENCE OR SET UP A NEW ORGANISATION. WE'VE GOT VERY GOOD INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE IMF AND THE WORLD BANK AND GATT. THEY'VE CHANGED REALLY REMARKABLY AND ADAPTED TO DIFFERENT ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES, THEY'VE A LOT TO DO, SOME OF THE DEBT POSITIONS OF VARIOUS COUNTRIES AREN'T SORTED OUT. IT'S MUCH, MUCH BETTER TO STRENGTHEN THEIR AUTHORITY AND THEIR SCOPE THAN TO THROW DOUBT UPON THEIR ACTIVITIES.

M. BRUNSON: DID YOU SPEND MOST OF YOUR TIME THEN SAYING 'NO', DEPRESSING THE CONFERENCE?

MRS. THATCHER: OH NO, NO, NO, IF YOU JUST SAID 'NO' YOU WOULDN'T GET ANYWHERE. YOU PUT YOUR OWN ARGUMENTS VERY FORCIBLY, OTHER PEOPLE PUT THEIR ARGUMENTS VERY FORCIBLY BUT OUR ARGUMENTS ARE SOUND ARGUMENTS, THAT'S WHY SO OFTEN THEY PREVAILED

M. BRUNSON: WHY WERE YOU NOT ABLE TO AGREE TO THE SECTION IN THE ... AS WE UNDERSTAND YOU RESERVED YOUR POSITION ... ON A SECTION IN THE COMMUNIQUE WHICH CONDEMNED AS FRAUDULENT THE RECENT REFERENDUM IN SOUTH AFRICA?

MRS. THATCHER: I DON'T THINK 'FRAUDULENT' AND I DON'T THINK ACTUALLY THAT WORD WAS USED. I THINK IT WAS A WORD CALLED 'CHAMP' - SHORTER - THAT IS NOT COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE AT ALL AND THE POINT WAS MADE IN THE REST OF THE SENTENCE.

M. BRUNSON: DO YOU NOT THINK THOUGH THE SENTENCE .....

MRS. THATCHER: WELL, I ALSO .... CAN I JUST SAY THAT ALSO PUT THE VIEW THAT A NUMBER OF US KNOW QUITE A LOT OF PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA WHO ARE WORKING VERY HARD TO GET MULTIRACIAL SPORT AND THEY SAY TO ME - ~~Look~~, EVERY TIME WE TAKE A STEP FORWARD, IT REALLY DOESN'T HELP FOR YOU TO BEAT US ABOUT THE EARS AND I AGREE WITH THEM, EVERY TIME THEY TAKE A STEP WHICH GOES IN THE DIRECTION IN WHICH WE WANT THEM TO GO, WE REALLY SHOULD BE ENCOURAGING THEM AND NOT HITTING THEM.

M. BRUNSON: ONE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT DECLARATIONS I THINK YOU MIGHT AGREE IS THE GOA DECLARATION CALLING FOR INCREASED DIALOGUE. WHAT PRACTICAL STEPS CAN YOU NOW TAKE TO FULFIL THE SORT OF WORDS THAT WERE USED IN THE GOA DECLARATION.

MRS. THATCHER: I THINK THAT BY HAVING FAR MORE POLITICAL CONTACT WITH BOTH THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND WITH THE SOVIET UNION, MALCOLM RIFKIND AS YOU KNOW WENT TO MOSCOW IN RECENT YEARS, WE DO GET THE CONTACT IN THE VARIOUS DISARMAMENT CONFERENCES AND SO ON. IT'S NOT QUITE ENOUGH, I THINK YOU NEED TO TALK LONGER. I AM GOING TO HUNGARY SHORTLY, BUT I THINK IT'S TIME THAT WE FACE TO FACE TALKED THESE THINGS THROUGH, BOTH AT OFFICIAL LEVEL BECAUSE YOU KNOW OFFICIALS DO A TREMENDOUS LOT OF THIS AND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING A LOT MORE UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS AND AT POLITICAL LEVELS.

M. BRUNSON: BUT PERHAPS INSTEAD OF GOING TO HUNGARY SHOULD YOU NOT BE GOING TO MOSCOW?

MRS. THATCHER: NO, I DON'T

THINK SO. I DON'T THINK THAT ONE SHOULD NECESSARILY ALWAYS STREAM TO MOSCOW, I THINK THAT IT WOULD BE VERY ADVISABLE IF SOME OF THEM CAME TO THE WESTERN WORLD A LITTLE BIT MORE. THEY COME TO THE UNITED NATIONS BUT I THINK THAT MR. ANDROPOV HAS NEVER SET FOOT IN A NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRY.

M. BRUNSON: ARE YOU INVITING HIM TO LONDON?

MRS. THATCHER: I'M NOT AT THE MOMENT NOR HAVE I ANY PLANS TO INVITE HIM TO LONDON BUT YOU DON'T JUST JUMP FROM SAYING YOU WANT MORE DIALOGUE AND CONTACT, YOU CAN'T JUST JUMP FROM THAT RIGHT UP TO A SUMMIT MEETING, YOU'VE GOT REALLY TO WORK AT IT FROM THE GROUND UP, AND THAT'S WHAT WE SHALL DO.

M. BRUNSON: AND ONE OF THE WAYS THAT YOU MIGHT BE DOING THAT IS TO REPLY TO HIS LETTER WHICH I GATHER WAS COINED IN EXTREME TERMS.

MRS. THATCHER: I DIDN'T FIND ANYTHING SURPRISING ABOUT HIS LETTER, I WOULDN'T KNOW ANY LETTERS THAT COME FROM THE SOVIET UNION THAT ARE++ COINED IN EXTREME TERMS. WE ARE DEPLOYING CRUISE, GERMANY IS DEPLOYING PERSHING, ITALY IS DEPLOYING CRUISE, WE'RE DOING SO BECAUSE THE SOVIET UNION HAS WALKED OUT OF TALKS BECAUSE SHE HAS COMPLETED HER DEPLOYMENT OF SS20S, SHE EXPECTED US TO TALK WITH HER THE WHOLE TIME SHE WAS PUTTING SS20S UP AT ONE A WEEK AND NOW WALKS OUT MERELY BECAUSE WE'RE STARTING TO DEPLOY THE ANSWER TO SS20S, SHE IS THOROUGHLY UNREASONABLE.

M. BRUNSON: AND YET YOU WERE SAYING YOU WANT TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE, IT SOUNDS FROM WHAT YOU'VE SAID THAT IT'S GOING TO BE DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH THAT DIALOGUE.

MRS. THATCHER: NO, I DON'T THINK IT'S GOING TO BE DIFFICULT AT ALL, I'D FAR RATHER PUT MY VIEW RATHER COGENTLY FACE TO FACE.

M. BRUNSON: AND YOU'LL BE DOING THAT BY REPLYING TO MR. ANDROPOV?

MRS. THATCHER: WELL, NOT FACE TO FACE BUT ON PAPER.

M. BRUNSON: THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENTS MEETING, NEW DELHI

INTERVIEW BY

THE PRIME MINISTER  
THE RT HON MARGARET THATCHER FRS MP

TO

JOHN OSMAN OF BBC RADIO

ON

TUESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 1983.

Press Office,  
10, Downing Street,  
London, SW1.

01-930 4433

JOHN OSMAN: PRIME MINISTER, CAN YOU TELL ME ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT THE LETTER YOU'VE RECEIVED FROM MR. ANDROPOV?

MRS. THATCHER: NO, WE DON'T USUALLY REVEAL CONFIDENTIAL EXCHANGES, BUT AS YOU KNOW WE HAVE DECIDED TO DEPLOY CRUISE AND PERSHING MISSILES, THE SOVIET UNION UNFORTUNATELY WALKED OUT OF THE TALKS ALTHOUGH THERE'S STILL SOME TIME TO GO BEFORE DECEMBER 31ST, WE HAVE TO DEPLOY THEM BECAUSE THE SOVIET UNION HAS PUT UP THE SS20S AND PUT THEM UP AT THE RATE OF ONE A WEEK, DURING THE TIME THE TALKS WERE BEING HELD, SO THEY'RE NOT NOW IN A POSITION TO SAY THAT WE, AFTER FOUR YEARS, ARE DEPLOYING OUR OWN.

J. OSMAN: HAVE YOU SENT A REPLY YET?

MRS. THATCHER: I SHALL SEND A REPLY ALMOST AS SOON AS I RETURN.

J. OSMAN: NOW AS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE ITSELF WHAT WOULD YOU REGARD AS ITS PRINCIPAL ACHIEVEMENT?

MRS. THATCHER: I THINK WE'RE VERY FORTUNATE THAT WE MET SO SOON AFTER THE GRENADA AFFAIR AND THE CYPRUS MATTER, IT GAVE A CHANCE FOR, I THINK IT WAS 33 HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, AND OTHERS REPRESENTED BY FOREIGN SECRETARIES, TO DISCUSS THESE THINGS TOGETHER, THEIR IMPLICATION, BOTH FOR THE CARIBBEAN AND OF COURSE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST AND TO COME TO AN AGREED STATEMENT. ON GRENADA AS YOU KNOW WE WEREN'T GOING TO HAVE RECRIMINATIONS OR DISAGREEMENT OVER THE PAST, WE ALL SAID - LOOK, GRENADA HAS A SECOND CHANCE TO RE-ESTABLISH DEMOCRACY, LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TO HELP HER DO THAT.

J. OSMAN: THERE DO SEEM TO BE QUITE A NUMBER OF DIVISIVE ISSUES - THE MIDDLE EAST, TO SOME EXTENT GRENADA, WORLD ECONOMY, WHICH WOULD YOU HAVE REGARDED AS THE TOUGHEST OF THEM LOOKING BACK OVER THE PAST WEEK?

MRS. THATCHER: I THINK THE TOUGHEST ONE TO GET THE RIGHT AGREED COMMUNIQUE ON WAS GRENADA, BECAUSE WE HAD TO SIT TALKING IT THROUGH FOR A VERY VERY LONG TIME AND THEN WE AGREED THE STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNIQUE YOU CAN SEE, WITH EACH NATION, GIVING ITS VIEWS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ABOUT THE PAST. NOW THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERED WAS THE FUTURE.

J. OSMAN: DO YOU SEE THE COMMONWEALTH IN FACT AS A UNIFYING FORCE, A CONSTRUCTIVE FORCE OR IS IT MERELY A TALKING SHOP?

MRS. THATCHER: I SEE IT AND I THINK THIS CONFERENCE HAS BEEN VERY MUCH EVIDENCE OF THIS, AS A FORCE FOR RECONCILIATION, BECAUSE YOU CAN SEE, AS I'VE INDICATED, GRENADA WAS ONE OBVIOUSLY AND AS A MEANS OF CONTACT WITH OTHER HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AND HEARING THEIR VIEWS, IT'S QUITE OBVIOUS, IF YOU'RE IN THE PACIFIC, YOU MAY HAVE A DIFFERENT VIEW OF THINGS FROM SOMEONE IN THE CARIBBEAN, OR SOMEONE FROM CYPRUS AND THE MEDITERRANEAN, OR FROM THE WESTERN VIEW. YOU ACTUALLY SIT AND TALK WITH THEM AND HEAR THOSE VIEWS. THEY MIGHT HAVE A DIFFERENT VIEW OF THE CONDITIONS THE IMF ARE TRYING TO PUT ON THEM FOR LOANS, YOU ACTUALLY HEAR THEM, YOU HAVE A MUCH ENLARGED UNDERSTANDING, AND THAT IS TREMENDOUSLY HELPFUL, YOU KNOW THE WHOLE WORLD IS TALKING NOW ABOUT MORE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, WE'VE JUST HAD IT AND WE HAD QUITE A NUMBER OF DATES FOR IT AND IT REALLY DOES WORK.

J. OSMAN: YOUR JOURNEY WAS WORTHWHILE?

MRS. THATCHER: OUR JOURNEY WAS NECESSARY.

J. OSMAN: IS THERE ANY OTHER PARTICULAR POINT THAT YOU'D LIKE TO MAKE, PRIME MINISTER?

MRS. THATCHER: I THINK WE HAD TWO BIG DECLARATIONS, ONE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND, WELL, WE ALL WANT DISARMAMENT, TO BE ABLE TO GET ACROSS THE VIEW - YES, WE DO WANT DISARMAMENT - BUT NONE OF IT IS GOING TO JEOPARDISE OUR SECURITY. YOU MUST KEEP YOUR SECURITY AND YOUR WAY OF LIFE AND THEREFORE YOUR DISARMAMENT HAS TO BE BALANCED AND VERIFIABLE, AND ON THE ECONOMIC SCENE, AGAIN WE WERE ABLE TO GET ACROSS THAT HOWEVER MANY CHANGES YOU MAY DESIRE IN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND I THINK THEY'VE DONE REALLY RATHER WELL UP TO DATE, NONE OF THEM CAN WORK UNLESS WE EACH OF US RUN OUR OWN AFFAIRS IN A SOUND WAY AND THAT'S NOT ... NOT A BAD RECORD FOR ONE CONFERENCE.

J. OSMAN: THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED PRIME MINISTER.



COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING, NEW DELHI

INTERVIEW BY

THE PRIME MINISTER  
THE RT HON MARGARET THATCHER FRS MP

TO

JOHN SIMPSON OF BBC TV

ON

TUESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 1983.

Press Office,  
10, Downing Street,  
London, SW1.

01.930 4433

JOHN SIMPSON: PRIME MINISTER IT'S FAIRLY CLEAR FROM WHAT WAS SAID AT THE CONFERENCE AND WHAT APPEARS ACTUALLY IN THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE THAT BRITAIN HAD A FAIRLY MAJOR EFFECT, THAT YOU HAD A FAIRLY MAJOR EFFECT, ON THE WRITING OF THE COMMUNIQUE AND PERHAPS CHANGES FROM WHAT OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD HAVE LIKED.

MRS. THATCHER: WELL WE HAVE TO AGREE THE COMMUNIQUE AND YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT, FREQUENTLY IT FELT TO ME TO PUT NOT ONLY THE BRITISH VIEW BUT THE WESTERN VIEW AND I WAS HELPED IN THAT BY PIERRE TRUDEAU WHEN IT CAME TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND OF COURSE ALSO BY MR. HAWKE.

J. SIMPSON: BUT WAS IT A QUESTION OF, AS IT WERE, FIGHTING THE WEST, FIGHTING THE AMERICAN CORNER?

MRS. THATCHER: NATO WAS FIGHTING FOR THE NATO VIEW, WE ARE A DEFENSIVE ALLIANCE, WE THREATEN NO-ONE, WE HAVE ALREADY AGREED THAT WE WOULD NEVER USE OUR WEAPONS EXCEPT IN RESPONSE TO AN ATTACK AND IT WAS TRYING TO GET ACROSS THAT . . . . ALTHOUGH YOU TALK ABOUT THE TWO SUPER POWERS, DON'T EQUATE THEM, AMERICA IS A FREE COUNTRY, A FREE SOCIETY AND MOST OF US THERE REGARD FREEDOM AND JUSTICE AS BEING THE THING FOR WHICH WE LIVE. THAT IS NOT TRUE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND I THINK IT'S A MISTAKE JUST TO TALK ABOUT THEM AS IF THEY WERE THE SAME.

J. SIMPSON: BUT WAS THAT THE KIND OF ARGUMENT WHICH PEOPLE FROM THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES WHICH AFTER ALL MOSTLY COMPOSE THE COMMONWEALTH PARTIES. WAS THAT THE KIND OF ARGUMENT THEY ACCEPTED . . . ?

MRS. THATCHER: WELL, NOT NECESSARILY BUT AS YOU SEE YOU FIND THAT THE COMMUNIQUE IS REASONABLY BALANCED, REASONABLY BALANCED.

J. SIMPSON: SO NO CONDEMNATION OF THE AMERICANS OVER GRENADA?

MRS. THATCHER: NO, INDEED.

J. SIMPSON: AND ALSO NO CONDEMNATION OF SOUTH AFRICA . . . WELL, AT LEAST NOT SUCH A CONDEMNATION OF SOUTH AFRICA AS MANY PEOPLE WOULD HAVE LIKED?

MRS. THATCHER: IN SOUTH AFRICA, YES, WE DID CALL . . . WE DID CALL FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS, WE RECOGNISE THAT MOST OF THE WORK OF THE CONTACT GROUP ON NAMIBIA HAS IN FACT BEEN COMPLETED BUT WHETHER ONE LIKES IT OR NOT THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH AFRICA HAS MADE A LINKAGE WITH CUBAN TROOPS IN ANGOLA AND WHATEVER WE SAID ABOUT IT, THAT LINKAGE WILL NOT GO AWAY. I MYSELF WOULD MUCH MUCH PREFERRED FOR THEM TO CALL FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF BOTH SOUTH AFRICAN AND CUBAN TROOPS, THAT TO ME WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH MUCH MORE EVEN HANDED BUT WE COULDN'T GET THAT THROUGH.

J. SIMPSON: TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF THE GOA DECLARATION ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, WAS THAT COINED IN THE KIND OF TERMS THAT YOU WOULD FIND USEFUL IN DEALING WITH THE RUSSIANS?

MRS. THATCHER: I DON'T KNOW THAT I THOUGHT ABOUT DEALING WITH THE SOVIET UNION, WE TEND TO DEAL WITH THEM THROUGH THE DISARMAMENT FORA, AMBASSADORS IN LONDON AND THROUGH DIRECT COMMUNICATION. I THINK IT SHOULD HELP TO MAKE THEM RECOGNISE THAT WE IN THE WEST AND THE COMMONWEALTH ARE VERY FIRM IN WISHING PROPERLY TO DEFEND OUR WAY OF LIFE. YES, WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO DEFEND IT AT A LOWER LEVEL OF WEAPONRY BUT WE'RE NOT GOING TO JEOPARDISE THE THINGS WE HOLD DEAR.

J. SIMPSON: YOU RECEIVED WHILE YOU WERE HERE IN GOA, YOU RECEIVED A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT ANDROPOV, DID IT CONTAIN ANYTHING NEW OR INTERESTING OR ANYTHING YOU COULD GRASP?

MRS. THATCHER: I DID NOT FIND ANYTHING SURPRISING OR UNUSUAL OR UNKNOWN IN IT BUT I WILL OF COURSE BE REPLYING TO IT.

J. SIMPSON: AND CAN WE KNOW A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT THE TONE OF IT...

MRS. THATCHER: I DID NOT FIND ANYTHING SURPRISING IN EITHER THE TONE OR THE CONTENTS.

J. SIMPSON: BECAUSE THERE WERE SUGGESTIONS IT WAS FAIRLY STRONG IN ITS PHRASING ....

MRS. THATCHER: I SUPPOSE IT DEPENDS WHETHER YOU'RE EASILY SURPRISED OR NOT.

J. SIMPSON: AT TIMES OF STRESS BETWEEN THE SUPER POWERS IN THE PAST, BRITISH PRIME MINISTERS HAVE TENDED TO SEE THAT AS A TIME FOR THEM TO STEP IN AND DO A LITTLE BIT OF HONEST BROKERING, BEING CLOSE OBVIOUSLY TO THE AMERICANS, YOU DON'T OR HAVEN'T IN THE PAST, SEEMED TO FEEL THAT THAT WAS BRITAIN'S ROLE SO MUCH.

MRS. THATCHER: I THINK YOU'LL FIND THAT EUROPE AS A COMMUNITY, IS TAKING A BIGGER ROLE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INDEED WHAT IS CALLED A POLITICAL CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE, IT WORKS VERY WELL, IT IS VERY USEFUL AS YOU GET ISSUES EMERGING TO KNOW THAT ONCE A MONTH FOREIGN MINISTERS ARE MEETING, THAT EVERY THIRD MONTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT ARE MEETING AND ALSO YOU GET TO KNOW THEM VERY WELL, SO IF YOU WANT TO GET ON THE TELEPHONE AND AGREE A LINE YOU CAN DO SO, SO YOU WILL FIND THAT EUROPE ITSELF IS TAKING A STRONGER LINE, BUT OF COURSE THE MAIN THING IS TO KEEP EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES TOGETHER IN NATO AND WE'RE VERY VERY CONSCIOUS AND I THINK THE UNITED STATES HAS SOME THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND TROOPS ON THE FRONT LINE, ON THE IRON CURTAIN LINE, THAT IS REMARKABLE, SO FAR AWAY FROM HOME BECAUSE SHE RECOGNISES THAT AS HER FRONT LINE BUT SHE WAS VERY ANXIOUS NOT ONLY TO TAKE A BIGGER ROLE FROM OURSELVES BUT TO KEEP VERY MUCH BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC

J. SIMPSON: AND HAS PRESIDENT ANDROPOV'S LETTER WHICH YOU RECEIVED, DONE ANYTHING TO MAKE THE SITUATION EASIER OR PERHAPS MORE DIFFICULT?

MRS. THATCHER: NO, I THINK IT'S A GREAT PITY THAT THEY DISCONTINUED THE TALKS, THEY HAVE LEFT THE DOOR OPEN TO COME BACK BUT THERE WERE SOME DAYS STILL TO GO BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR AND I JUST THINK IT'S A TRAGEDY THAT THEY WALKED OUT, BUT HAVING WALKED OUT AND REFUSED TO GO TO THE ZERO OPTION, THEN THEY'RE NOT IN A POSITION TO CRITICISE US FOR DEPLOYING THE ANSWER TO WEAPONS WHICH THEY HAVE ALREADY DEPLOYED.

J. SIMPSON: AND THE LETTER PRESUMABLY DID CONTAIN CRITICISMS ALONG THOSE LINES?

MRS. THATCHER: YOU WOULD HAVE EXPECTED IT TOO.

J. SIMPSON: CAN WE TURN, PRIME MINISTER, FINALLY TO THE WHOLE QUESTION OF THE ECONOMIC DEBATE, THE WORLD ECONOMY, WAS THAT TOUCHED IN THE KIND OF WAY YOU LIKED, WOULD YOU REALLY HAVE PERHAPS PREFERRED NO KIND OF SERIOUS DISCUSSION ABOUT THE WHOLE SUBJECT?

MRS. THATCHER: OH YOU COULDN'T POSSIBLY COME TO A COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE, PARTICULARLY OF THIS LENGTH, WITHOUT HAVING A SERIOUS DISCUSSION ABOUT THE WORLD ECONOMY, YOU JUST COULDN'T, I MEAN EVERYONE'S AFFECTED BY IT, SOME PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED BY STILL STRUGGLING FROM THE INCREASED PRICE OF OIL, THEY HAVE TO EXPORT SO MUCH MORE TO PAY FOR THEIR OIL, OTHERS ARE AFFECTED BY UNEMPLOYMENT, WE'RE ALL AFFECTED BY IT AND SO WE HAD TO DISCUSS IT UNDER TWO HEADS: ONE, CAN WE GET GREATER INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION, WHICH YOU DO THROUGH THE IMF, THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION AND WORLD BANKS AND THROUGH GATT, AND.... THAT'S ONE ASPECT AND THAT DOES NOT ABSOLVE US FROM PUTTING OUR OWN HOUSE IN ORDER BECAUSE NO INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM WILL WORK UNLESS EACH OF OUR COUNTRIES ARE WORKING PROPERLY. BUT WE AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST TO TRY AND ADAPT THE EXISTING INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WHICH HAVE DONE A VERY GOOD JOB IN CHANGING TO MEET CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, RATHER THAN TO SET UP NEW ONES.

J. SIMPSON: SO IS IT FAIR TO ASSUME THAT BRITAIN WOULD REALL PREFER NOT TO SEE A NEW BRETTON WOODS STRUCTURE...?

MRS. THATCHER: I DON'T SEE.... I THINK THE TITLE TOWARDS A NEW BRETTON WOODS IS TOTALLY AND UTTERLY MISLEADING, BRETTON WOODS SET UP THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WE HAVE NOW, THEY'VE CHANGED AND ADAPTED, WE ALREADY HAVE THE INSTITUTIONS, THERE'S NOT MUCH POINT IN SETTING UP YET ANOTHER ONE, WITH YET ANOTHER GROUP OF OFFICIALS, YET ANOTHER CONFERENCE TO ATTEND. IF THERE'S ANYTHING NOT QUITE RIGHT WE SET UP A STUDY GROUP TO SEE WHAT'S NOT QUITE RIGHT AND THEN WE MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO HOW EXISTING INSTITUTIONS WILL CHANGE BUT YOU KNOW IN THE END IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE IMF, OR IDA, YOU'VE GOT TO REMEMBER THAT THOSE WHO LEND THE MONEY, THE DEPOSITORS AND THE LENDERS, HAVE GOT TO BE REASONABLY CERTAIN THAT THEY'RE GOING TO GET IT BACK AND DON'T FORGET SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THAT ARE ARISING NOW ARE BECAUSE TOO MUCH MONEY WAS LENT AND TOO MUCH MONEY WAS BORROWED, TOO QUICKLY AND THAT'S ONE OF THE PROBLEMS, IT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

J. SIMPSON: NEVERTHELESS WHEN YOU'RE TALKING TO COMMONWEALTH LEADERS YOU'RE TALKING TO THE HEADS OF SOME OF THE POOREST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD, AS WELL AS SOME OF THE RICHEST, IS IT REALLY REASONABLE TO TALK TO THOSE SORT OF PEOPLE AND SAY - PUT YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER - CAN THEY AFFORD TO?

MRS. THATCHER: WELL, FOR THEM - FOR THE POOREST COUNTRIES, THAT'S REALLY TO WHOM YOUR AID IS DIRECTED AND THEY DO USE THEIR AID VERY VERY WELL, TO PROVIDE POWER STATIONS, IRRIGATION SCHEMES, SOMETHING TO HELP THEM TO GET THEIR AGRICULTURE UP TO A BETTER STANDARD AND WE ... ONE OF THE BIG ONES, I THINK THE VICTORIA DAM, IN CEYLON, FOR WHICH WE GAVE ABOUT ... OVER FIVE YEARS ABOUT £100 MILLION, THAT'S A POWER STATION AND ALSO PROVIDES IRRIGATION FOR MANY MANY PEOPLE. NOW FOR THEM THE AID IS NEEDED AND WE DID TALK ABOUT THE NEXT ROUND OF AID.

J. SIMPSON: PRIME MINISTER THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING, NEW DELHI

INTERVIEW BY

THE PRIME MINISTER,  
THE RT HON MARGARET THATCHER FRS MP

TO

DAVID SPANNIER OF IRN

ON

TUESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 1983

Press Office,  
10 Downing Street,  
London, SW1.

01-930 4433

DAVID SPANIER: PRIME MINISTER, LET'S BEGIN WITH THE FACT THAT THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE HAS JUST ENDED AND A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF IT WAS SECURITY. YOU'VE JUST RECEIVED A LETTER FROM MR. ANDROPOV BUT YOU HAVEN'T REPLIED TO IT YET.

MRS. THATCHER: INDEED WE WILL REPLY WHEN WE RETURN, BUT OBVIOUSLY I HAVE READ AND INWARDLY DIGESTED THE CONTENT. WE SHALL DEPLOY CRUISE AND PERSHING. AS YOU KNOW WE'VE MADE THAT DECISION. IT WAS THE SOVIET UNION THAT CHOSE TO DISCONTINUE THE DISARMAMENT TALKS. WE DIDN'T WANT THEM TO DISCONTINUE, THEY WALKED OUT AND YOU KNOW WE HAD CONTINUOUS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THEM ALL THE TIME THEY WERE DEPLOYING SS20S AT THE RATE OF ONE A WEEK, SO THEY'RE NOT IN A POSITION TO CRITICISE US NOW AT THE END OF THAT TIME FOR DEPLOYING OUR ANSWER TO THAT. AFTER ALL WE HAVE TO HAVE SOMETHING TO DETER THEM AT ALL LEVELS.

D. SPANIER: DO YOU THINK AS FAR AS THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE IS CONCERNED THAT THE QUESTION OF SECURITY HAS MADE THE WORLD A SLIGHTLY SAFER PLACE?

MRS. THATCHER: ALL OF US UNDERSTOOD FIRST THAT ALTHOUGH WE WANT DISARMAMENT PASSIONATELY BECAUSE IT WOULD BE VERY NICE TO BE ABLE TO SPEND LESS ON WEAPONS OF WAR, THAT WE MUST NEVERTHELESS KEEP OUR SECURITY. THE PURPOSE FOR ARMAMENT IS ONLY TO KEEP YOUR SECURITY AND TO DETER OTHER PEOPLE FROM ATTACKING YOU. SO, YES, YOU WANT DISARMAMENT BUT IT MEANS THAT OTHER PEOPLE HAVE TO DISARM TO THE SAME EXTENT, OTHERWISE YOU DON'T KEEP YOUR SECURITY. NOW WE ALSO DISCUSSED ONE OTHER MATTER AND AGAIN WE MANAGED TO GET OUR OWN VIEW ACROSS, SO WE HAVE TO TRY TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS... REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, FOR SECURITY OF VERY SMALL STATES, THEY CAN'T DEFEND THEMSELVES AND WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO CONSIDER THIS IN MUCH MORE DETAIL THAN WE HAVE HITHERTO.

D. SPANIER: IT IS TRUE YOU GOT THE BRITISH POINT OF VIEW ACROSS ON GRENADA, VERY STRONGLY, BUT DO YOU FEEL A LITTLE BIT CONCERNED THAT AFTER ALL BRITISH POLICY HAS BEEN MUCH CRITICISED BOTH FROM THE AMERICAN SIDE AND FROM THE COMMONWEALTH SIDE, IN THE ATTITUDE WE TOOK TO THE INVASION OF GRENADA?

MRS. THATCHER: WE WOULD HAVE BEEN CRITICISED FROM BOTH SIDES, ACCORDING TO WHICH VIEW YOU TOOK. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT WE WERE ABLE TO PERSUADE EVERYONE HERE - LOOK, DON'T WASTE TIME DEBATING ABOUT THE PAST, JUST TAKE IT THAT GRENADA NOW HAS A CHANCE TO BE A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY ONCE AGAIN. THE COUNTRIES IN THE CARIBBEAN TEND TO BE DEMOCRATIC, THEY DON'T MAKE NATURAL DICTATORSHIPS, THEY'RE DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES. GRENADA WAS THE EXCEPTION. I'VE NEVER SAT AT A COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE WITH A DEMOCRATIC PRIME MINISTER OF GRENADA ALTHOUGH THIS IS MY THIRD. NOW LET'S JUST SAY WE'RE ALL BELIEVERS IN DEMOCRACY, LET'S DO SOMETHING WE CAN BETWEEN US TO HELP GRENADA COME TO DEMOCRACY

HEAD OF STATE AND HEAD OF GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO INVITE IN SOMEONE ELSE TO HELP THEM. AFTER ALL JULIUS NYERERE, SOON AFTER INDEPENDENCE IN TANZANIA, NOT LONG AFTER, INVITED WE BRITISH TO GO THERE BECAUSE HE HAD A MUTINY ON HIS HANDS. WE DID GO THERE, SORTED IT OUT AND HANDED IT BACK OVER TO HIM.

D. SPANIER: I THINK THAT ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT QUESTIONS AT THIS WHOLE CONFERENCE WAS THE FUTURE OF NAMIBIA. IS IT ONE OF THOSE ISSUES WHERE PERHAPS YOU HAVE SLIGHTLY MODIFIED YOUR VIEWS AND THAT YOU WERE BEFORE THE CONFERENCE SAYING THERE WAS SOME KIND OF A LINK OR AT LEAST A POLITICAL REALITY, IN THAT THE AMERICANS WANTED THE CUBANS TO LEAVE, WHEREAS NOW THE COMMUNIQUE DOES NOT REALLY SPECIFY THAT POINT, ON THE CONTRARY?

MRS. THATCHER: NO, WE'VE NEVER SAID AN ACTUAL LINKAGE, INDEED I THINK GEOFFREY HOWE'S SPEECH TO THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY, DEALT WITH IT ACCURATELY, BUT YOU HAVE TO RECOGNISE THAT THE AMERICANS HAVE NOW BACKED US AND MADE A LINK, SO ALTHOUGH ONE'S PARTNER DOES NOT RECOGNISE ONE, IT IS THERE AND IT WON'T GO AWAY.

D. SPANIER: FINALLY, PRIME MINISTER, IF YOU LOOK BACK AT THIS CONFERENCE AS A WHOLE, A GREAT MANY WORDS HAVE BEEN WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED ABOUT IT BUT NOT A LOT HAS CHANGED. WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT OUT OF IT YOURSELF?

MRS. THATCHER: IT'S ALWAYS USEFUL FOR 33 HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, PLUS OTHER GOVERNMENTS REPRESENTED BY THEIR CONSULS TO MEET TOGETHER AND TO DISCUSS THE GREAT ISSUES OF THE DAY AND THE SPECIFIC ISSUES. NOW WE DID BOTH, THE GREAT ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND WORLD ECONOMY AND THE SPECIAL ISSUES OF CYPRUS AND GRENADA AND NAMIBIA AND WE CAME TO AGREED RESULTS. . . . . IT WAS VERY VALUABLE FOR THE WHOLE CARIBBEAN TO HAVE THIS CONFERENCE AND ALSO FOR CYPRUS ON THIS SPECIFIC THING. IT WAS VALUABLE TO US ALL TO HEAR ONE ANOTHER'S VIEWPOINTS ON THE WORLD ECONOMY. OF COURSE EVERYONE WANTS MORE MONEY TOWARDS MORE GRANTS, MORE LOANS, YOU DO HAVE TO SIT DOWN AND EXPLAIN THAT YOU REALLY COULDN'T RUN A BANK . . . MERELY BY HAVING PEOPLE REPRESENTING THE OVERDRAFT SITTING ON THE BOARD, YOU KNOW, YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE SOME DEPOSITORY, IT'S COMMONSENSE BECAUSE IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL ENTHUSIASM AND PASSIONS RUN AWAY. ALL RIGHT, YOU RECOGNISE THAT WHEN WE'RE DEALING WITH THINGS LIKE POVERTY AND HOW IN THE WORLD THEY COULD GET SOME CAPITAL IN THEIR COUNTRY, HOW IN THE WORLD THEY CAN BUILD POWER STATIONS, ROADS, GET IRRIGATION, UNLESS THEY GET SOME AID AND . . . . (INTERFERENCE)

D. SPANIER: THANK YOU, PRIME MINISTER.



COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING, NEW DELHI

INTERVIEW BY

THE PRIME MINISTER,  
THE RT HON MARGARET THATCHER FRS MP

TO

MARTIN BROUGHTON OF BBC OVERSEAS SERVICES

ON

TUESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 1983

Press Office,  
10, Downing Street,  
London, SW1.

01-930 4433

16. MARTIN BROUGHTON

INTERVIEWER: YOUR HOPES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH, IN WHAT WAY SHOULD IT DEVELOP TO ENCOURAGE AND MAINTAIN THE INTEREST AND COMMITMENT OF ITS MEMBERS?

MRS. THATCHER: I THOUGHT WE'D JUST HAD A VERY INTERESTING CONFERENCE AND IT ITSELF REVEALED ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF THE COMMONWEALTH, THERE WE WERE, 33 HEADS OF GOVERNMENT FROM ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD, FROM THE PACIFIC, FROM SOUTH EAST ASIA, FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN, FROM EUROPE, FROM THE CARIBBEAN, DISCUSSING THINGS OF COMMON CONCERN, DISCUSSING THE SECURITY OF EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US, DISCUSSING THE WORLD ECONOMY, NOT ONLY WERE WE ABLE TO REACH AN AGREED COMMUNIQUE BUT I NOW KNOW HOW SOME OF THE HEADS OF AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS FEEL, ABOUT CERTAIN OF THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, ABOUT HOW OTHER VERY POOR COUNTRIES WANT MORE AID AND YOU JUST HAVE A VERY MUCH BETTER VIEW OF THE WORLD BECAUSE YOU'VE SEEN IT FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE AS WELL AS YOUR OWN.

INTERVIEWER: AS AN INSTITUTION THOUGH WHAT IS REQUIRED TO KEEP IT GOING, WHAT SORT OF ENTHUSIASM, WHAT DIRECTION?

MRS. THATCHER: OH, I THINK IT'S KEPT GOING BY FIRST THE FANTASTIC AMOUNT OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION WE HAVE, NOW THIS MORNING IT CAME OUT FROM MANY OF THE SMALLER STATES, THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY REALLY VALUE THE AID THEY GET BY WAY OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION, BY TRAINING TECHNICIANS, OR BY SENDING PEOPLE OUT TO TRAIN TECHNICIANS, BY HELPING THEM TO GO INTO THE TECHNICAL AGE, THAT'S ALL DONE THROUGH THE COMMONWEALTH, WE HAVE REGIONAL CONFERENCES THROUGH THE COMMONWEALTH AND REGIONAL MATTERS AND I THINK YOU'LL FIND THAT IT WILL CONTINUE BECAUSE IT IS SUCCESSFUL AND BECAUSE THE LEVEL OF DEBATE AND DISCUSSION IS SOME OF THE MOST DYNAMIC, AND IF I SAY 'EASY' DON'T MISUNDERSTAND ME, IT'S QUITE TOUGH SOMETIMES BUT WE ALL SPEAK IN ENGLISH AND WHEN YOU ALL SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE AND YOU SIMPLY DON'T HAVE TO HAVE MASSES OF TRANSLATORS THERE, YOU REALLY CAN HAVE AN ARGUMENT, I THINK ALL THIS IS VERY VALUABLE.

INTERVIEWER: AND YET SOME PEOPLE FEAR EVEN AFTER THIS LAST CONFERENCE, FEAR THAT SOME OF THE HEART IS GOING OUT OF THE COMMONWEALTH - IS THERE ANY SENSE OF THAT YOURSELF?

ARE STILL PEOPLE WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH WHO SEE IT AS A BRITISH CLUB THAT WE HAVE AN EXCESSIVE INFLUENCE, DOES IT MAKE IT DIFFICULT THEREFORE FOR US TO PLAY A FULL ROLE BECAUSE OF THAT?

MRS. THATCHER: NO, I DON'T THINK SO, OBVIOUSLY I HAVE TO PUT BOTH THE BRITISH AND THE WESTERN VIEW BECAUSE THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE THERE WHO ARE NON-ALIGNED, AND I THINK THAT WE MUST KEEP UP OUR OWN END AND YOU KNOW THE VIEW THAT I TAKE, WHICH IS THAT MANY NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES REALLY I THINK HAVE THE WEST TO THANK FOR UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES TO PURSUE THEIR OWN DESTINY, AFTER ALL THE SUBSIDY DOES NOT COME FROM THE WEST. I'D SAY YES, I DID HAVE TO PUT THE WESTERN VIEW AND PUT IT VERY FIRMLY, I DID HAVE TO PUT THE SOUND VIEW .. I WASN'T ALONE.... I WASN'T ALONE IN DOING THESE THINGS, TRUE THE ARGUMENT WAS SOUND BUT I COULDN'T HAVE GOT SOME OF THOSE THINGS INTO THE COMMUNIQUE UNLESS I'D BEEN HELPED BY SOME OTHERS BECAUSE THE ARGUMENTS WERE SOUND.

INTERVIEWER: YOU DON'T THINK THERE IS ANY LINGERING RESENTMENT ABOUT BRITAIN'S COLONIAL PAST, THERE STILL REMAINS IN THE COMMONWEALTH A SUSPICION THERE?

MRS. THATCHER: NO, I DON'T THINK THAT THERE'S ANY LINGERING RESENTMENT, RATHER I THINK THEY UNDERSTAND THAT IT'S THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD THAT WHAT WAS AN EMPIRE HAS REMAINED AS A FREE ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDLY PEOPLES, AND THAT WAS VERY MUCH THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THEY APPROACHED IT.

INTERVIEWER: BUT THE COMMONWEALTH IS GETTING BIGGER AND MORE DIVERSE IN MANY WAYS, IS THERE A DANGER THAT IT COULD BEGIN TO LOSE ITS DIRECTION, THAT IT COULD BECOME ALMOST A SMALL UNITED NATIONS BUT WITHOUT THE INFLUENCE OF THE SUPER POWERS WITH IN IT?

MRS. THATCHER: NO, WE'RE ABOUT ... WE HAVE 33 HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, WE'RE ABOUT 45/48 NOW AND MOST OF THE COUNTRIES WHO CAN COME TO INDEPENDENCE ARE ALREADY WELL ON THE WAY TO INDEPENDENCE OR THERE ARE CERTAIN REASONS WHY THEY'RE TREATED DIFFERENTLY, SO I THINK WE'RE PRETTY NEAR THE OUTSIDE MEMBERSHIP.

INTERVIEWER:

... I WANTED TO QUOTE A PASSAGE FROM YOUR SPEECH AT THE BEGINNING, WHERE YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT GREAT GOALS BEING ACHIEVED BY CLEAR AND UNSHAKEABLE A COMMITMENT TO WHAT'S RIGHT AND WHAT'S TRUE, AND IT WAS THE GUIDING TONE OF THE COMMONWEALTH, IS THERE A DANGER THERE EVEN WITH THAT SORT OF IDEAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OVEF-REACHING ITSELF AND BEING TOO AMBITIOUS?

MRS. THATCHER: NO, THAT WAS ... I THINK I ALSO QUOTED IN THAT SPEECH THE SINGAPORE DECLARATION ABOUT DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM AND JUSTICE, NOW I BELIEVE PASSIONATELY IN DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM AND JUSTICE AS YOU KNOW, SO DO MOST OF THE OTHERS THERE. BUT NOT EVERY SINGLE COUNTRY THERE IS A DEMOCRACY AND I THINK THAT WAS VERY NECESSARY TO REAFFIRM WHAT THE COMMONWEALTH STANDS FOR.

INTERVIEWER: IT MAY SEEM THAT MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN A LITTLE NEGATIVE ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH BUT I'M ASKING YOU DIRECTLY PERHAPS FINALLY, WHETHER YOU SEE ANY DANGERS IN ITS WAY, ANY OBSTACLES. THINGS THAT IT HA TO CROSS OR IT MAY OBVIOUSLY FAIL?

MRS. THATCHER: I NO, I HAVE BEEN TO THREE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCES NOW, THE REMARKABLE THING IS THAT WHEN WE SIT ROUND A TABLE TOGETHER FOR FIVE OR SIX DAYS AND WE HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER AND SEE ONE ANOTHER IN THE EVENING AND WE ALL TALK SEPARATELY AS WELL AS TOGETHER, THE REMARKABLE THING IS HOW SUCH DIVERGENCE OF PERSPECTIVES CAN BE TALKED THROUGH AND WE CAN AGREE ON COURSES OF ACTION TO TAKE, YOU SEE THIS TIME THERE WERE TWO THINGS ON WHICH WE HAD TO AGREE, OF COURSES OF ACTION: GRENADA AND CYPRUS, NOT JUST DECLARTIONS BUT COURSES OF ACTION. WE DID AGREE. THAT IS A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT.

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