

STOURTON: And what did you do once that had sunk in?

LEVY: I went up to my own office when it had sunk in. I phoned my wife, was the first thing I did and I said have you seen what's going on? And she was almost in tears. She said I'm watching it on television, I can't believe this is going on. It was just a feeling of total shock.

STOURTON: And presumably one that one imagines a fairly late night at the Foreign Office thereafter once it became apparent that this was a crisis that needed managing?

LEVY: I was actually called later that night and asked if I would make some phone calls the following day, and the main purpose of the phone calls were to speak to countries we wereThat was the main purpose for those

one calls.

STOURTON: But even at that very early stage, people were talking about a war on terrorism and a coalition but also anxious to secure support in the Arab world?

LEVY: From our point of view, it was for Arab countries that we were close to and these were the ones I dealt with and ministers dealt with others. For them to have an appreciation of where we were coming from and that this should not provoke, the world was not going to an anti-Muslim or anti-Islamic mode and they needed to get this message very loud and clear with immediacy.

STOURTON: What sort of response did you get?

LEVY: The response was one of relief that this message was being delivered, one that they obviously wholeheartedly endorsed and appreciated the message, and frankly a message that they very much wanted to hear

because this was precisely what they wanted the world to react to. This was a terrorist organisation, this was an outrageous situation and the world wasn't saying this is the whole of Islam, this is the whole of the Muslim world, but quite the reverse, that this is not a fight against Islam, not a fight against the Muslim world but this is to really isolate terrorist organisations and what they stand for.

STOURTON: Did you find any anxiety that the Americans were going to hit back very quickly because I think quite a lot of people during that first week went to bed at night thinking they might wake up and find there had been in an American strike by the morning.

LEVY: Not really. I mean I felt that there was going to be a measured situation. I felt that there was anger, frustration, a lack of comprehension of what had happened but I felt it was ver.20062aMs ellack rnoyr TD-0e was a te5.0 t-6Xri

LEVY:

Well I think it was a message from the Prime Minister to Arafat: I am receiving you in Downing Street; I want you to understand that we understand the plight of the Palestinian people. But we totally believe in the security of the state of Israel. We are against violence, we do not see terror as the way forward but we nevertheless believe that there should be and must be a Palestinian state living alongside the state of Israel, and you have to take back to your people the message that terror and violence is not going to secure that state but dialogue, working together, understanding each other's problems and issues has got to be the way forward. And the fact that we had lived with this in our Irish situation and with his own experience and commitment to that problem undoubtedly this was very much on his mind.

And from Arafat's point of view, it was the fact that he had ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~he~~ ~~hein~~

STOURTON: Can you tell me what the sort of items on the list you were underlining on that occasion were? What were the headlines?

LEVY: Well it would be very difficult for me to go into detail but the headlines always need to be an understanding of the Israeli position in terms of their

much account of Arab opinion, but also of the suicide bombings which began. Do you think that's an accurate picture of the way the Americans

years, trying to get an insight into their thinking. I don't think the methods are unconventional. I think it