



Image by ITN Source

CRITICAL MOMENT

SNAPSHOT OF A COMMUNICATIONS TURNING POINT
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It promised to be a moment for British Airways staff to treasure when Margaret Thatcher approached their stand at the Conservative Party conference. Certainly it became one BA would never forget. The year was 1997 and the world's favorite airline, the UK national carrier, had replaced the red, white and blue Union flags on its aircraft's tailfins with "world images" designed to represent the countries of BA's global network.

The former Prime Minister was unimpressed. "It's absolutely ghastly... we fly the British flag, not these awful things," she said, speaking with a conviction that was once fashionable

among politicians. In case anyone missed the point, she draped her handkerchief over the tail of the model jumbo painted in the new livery.

Television news captured and broadcast the moment to a fascinated nation. Newspapers printed screen shots with the joy that comes so naturally to journalists at the scene of corporate calamity. Never glad confident morning again: the jazzy designs seemed strangely diminished in the months that followed. In 2001 the airline returned to red, white and blue.

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