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FC }  
16/6

1. Chris - I find this  
idea very attractive. It  
woudis superbly. May we have  
a word. mo

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1. MR WHITMORE
2. PRIME MINISTER

Frederick Forsyth, the author, came to see me this morning with the attached correspondence

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Essentially what he is proposing is as follows:

- a book written by him about the Falklands crisis from the British point of view, and most notably about the British Task Force, launched ideally on the first anniversary of the liberation of Port Stanley - ie, something between the publications which will be rushed out from now on and an official history;
- two strands to the story - one a narrative of the course of events; and the other, the story as seen through the eyes of 50 participants from Gurkha to galley boy, Cabinet Minister to kelper;
- a willingness for the manuscript to be vetted for secrets unwittingly revealed, provided this did not turn into censorship of comment.

He has come to me because he rightly sees one major problem if he is to do a serious job in a relatively short time:

- the need for access to and help notably from MoD in tracing a substantial number of participants (possibly 500) in order to select the final 50 through whose eyes the story would be told.

Mr Forsyth has not asked for an interview with you, though I am sure he would welcome one. Essentially, what he is seeking is that kind of blessing from you which would open doors and make the project feasible.

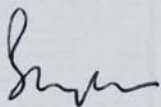
I would make 4 points:

- Mr Forsyth would write a gripping tale which would, as he says in the attached, be fair and patriotic; I trust him;
- he would command a world-wide readership (including a substantial one in South America);
- I should need to explore the extent of help that might be forthcoming, notably from the MoD; but from other parts of Government, assuming you saw merit in the idea;

- Mr Forsyth's project would inevitably become public and we should need to justify any help we gave him and our reasons for confining that degree of help to him (since the Government could not take on more work of the kind that would be involved in tracing participants and reading manuscript). I think we could justify this on the grounds that this is the first approach we have received.

I did mention to Mr Forsyth that, assuming his project did become feasible, he could find himself in difficulties if, God forbid, there was a further outbreak of hostilities over the next 12 months. He accepted that.

Bearing in mind Mr Forsyth's reputation, would you like to give his project a fair wind, permitting me to pursue with MoD in the first instance?



B. INGHAM  
16 June 1982

Prime Minister -

I am sure that Mr Forsyth would write a first-class narrative that would be a best seller. But the degree of official help and involvement he is seeking raises difficulties. Moreover, he is not the first in the field: Sir Philip Goodhart and Lord Chalfont have already offered their services.

Sir Robert Armstrong is responsible for advising you on this kind of thing. I suggest that you have a word with him when he comes to discuss business tomorrow morning. Agree?

AKL  
17/6