

9/9  
X3

Confidential filing

Frederick FORSYTH'S proposed book  
on the Falklands.

ARGENTINA

JUNE 1982.

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
<del>2A-7-82</del> 4-8-82							
<p>PREM 19/611</p>							



Argentina

24 A74

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

CHIEF WHIP

Thank you for your minute about the book on the Falklands campaign which Magnus Linklater and Paul Eddy are writing.

I have shown this to the Prime Minister who has noted your warning about their activities.

hwh.

4 August 1982

AW

Copy to Sir Peter Amory  
TV Japan.

From Minister

To note.

HW

3viii



Government Chief Whip

12 Downing Street, London SW1

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Mr C Whitmore

Humphrey Atkins has been to see me because he has been in touch with two journalists, Magnus Linklater and Paul Eddy who work for the Sunday Times Insight team.

Apparently they are writing a book on the Falklands campaign and its background which is due to be published at the end of August. I gather that considerable resources have been put into this publication. Apparently they have concentrated their research outside the United Kingdom especially in the United States and Argentina. Humphrey Atkins told them that he was unable to tell them anything but said that their book would not be worth much if its researches were primarily based outside the UK. I gather that this has caused them to change their plan of campaign to a certain extent and they are likely to do a good deal of sniffing around Whitehall in the near future.

*Sen. A. A. A.*  
*H. Chief Whip*

August 1982

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10 DOWNING STREET

File AH  
ccs FCO  
MOD  
Mr Ingham

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

FREDERICK FORSYTH'S PROPOSED BOOK ABOUT THE FALKLANDS

The Prime Minister had a word with you last Friday about your minute A09044 of 19 July 1982 about the book about the Falklands which Mr Frederick Forsyth would like to write. Since then I have been waiting to hear whether the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary or the Secretary of State for Defence wished to have a meeting with the Prime Minister, as you had suggested they might, to discuss your minute. I have now heard that neither of them thinks that a meeting is necessary.

When she saw you, the Prime Minister said that she believed that we should help Mr Forsyth to write his book but only on the conditions set out in your minute. In particular she agreed that those whom Mr Forsyth interviewed should be instructed not to disclose confidential information about Ministerial discussions, the content of advice given to Ministers and diplomatic discussions in New York. She strongly endorsed the view of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that in dealing with Mr Forsyth, they should confine themselves strictly to facts which were already public knowledge. She did not intend to see Mr Forsyth herself: nor did she think other Ministers or you should give him an interview.

She also agreed that the help to be given to Mr Forsyth could not be exclusive. Other would-be authors of books about the Falklands had let us know of their wish to write such books before Mr Forsyth had done. Sir Philip Goodhart, for example, had told her several weeks ago that he wanted to write a history of the Falklands episode. He would have to be given the same facilities as Mr Forsyth, if he wanted them. Even if the help given was not exclusive, she thought it would be reasonable to ask that part of the proceeds of books written with such assistance should be given to the South Atlantic Fund.

You said that you would now proceed accordingly with Mr Forsyth. A major difficulty would be identifying the five hundred participants in the Falklands episode from whom Mr Forsyth wished to select fifty for interviews in depth. It would be necessary to agree on the instructions to be given to these people.

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- 2 -

I understand that although the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary agrees, as does the Defence Secretary, that we should respond to Mr Forsyth's approach on the basis set out in your minute, he is concerned about the burden of work on his department which giving help to Mr Forsyth on the proposed scale is going to create. Sir Antony Acland will be pursuing this point and a number of others with you directly.

I am sending copies of this minute to Mr Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Mr Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

*AW.*

29 July 1982

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Press Secretary*

The Whitford 20vii

Such as I would like to help I cannot recommend Ministers to give Dr. Forsyth exclusive access on specified terms - ie those in 13 (2). plus a significant proportion of the proceeds of the book to the South Atlantic Fund.

I believe this would be extremely difficult to justify and would set the Sunday Times and others against the Government.

It would be necessary to instruct Officials / military on the lines of 13 (2) (ii) and (iii) whatever access he was given. And we should seek to achieve an understanding on the lines of 13 (2) (i)

with whoever sought our help.

Thus to me the question is whether, in helping Mr. Forsyth to the extent of identifying 50 to be featured as story tellers, we are prepared to go as far, in terms of effort, in helping others.

There can be no question of anticipating or getting wires crossed with Franks. Thus in practice there are substantial limits on the extent to which any of the 50 identified can assist.

We might be clear about this at the outset even if Mr D / Mr etc are prepared to help in identifying people to help with the story

John 20/7

**CONFIDENTIAL**

*Philip Goodhead  
wrote to me first. He  
should have written  
Jacobites if he  
wants them.*

*Prime Minister.*

Ref. A09044

*This is far from easy.  
Will you like to discuss with Mr Pye  
and N Nott, as suggested below?*

PRIME MINISTER

*Mr B I do not intend to  
give any interviews, not*  
Frederick Forsyth's Proposed Book about the Falklands

*AKL  
20 vii  
attached*

You will remember that Frederick Forsyth wrote to you on 15th June about his proposal that he should write a book on the Falklands crisis with particular emphasis on the Task Force.

2. I have since had an opportunity of discussing the project with Mr. Forsyth in some detail. What he has in mind is a chronological narrative of the "hundred days" of the crisis, from the day when Davidoff and his men landed in South Georgia to the day when General Menendez surrendered in Port Stanley. It would be a day-by-day account, with straight narrative interleaved with descriptions of "what it felt like to be there", which would follow through the actions, reactions and feelings of those involved at every level: in No. 10, the Cabinet, the Ministry of Defence, and the Task Force from commanders to privates, ratings and pilots. He would hope for help in ensuring that the narrative was comprehensive and accurate. The other element in the story would be based on interviews in some depth with 50 participants at home and in the fighting, selected as the people through whose eyes the events would be described. It would not be an instant journalistic account; nor would it be an official history, though he would want it to be as accurate as possible. It would, however, require official co-operation, and he would be willing to submit the manuscript for scrutiny from the point of view of official secrets.

3. Mr. Forsyth does not envisage an account which also covers the Argentine side of the affair. It would be as seen from the British side. No doubt Mr. Forsyth is well aware of the potentialities of what he has in mind as a best-selling book; but he would also like, from patriotic motives, to put on record the competence and gallantry of those involved in the operation. He thinks that the book would take eight months to write, and four months to publish. If he were able to start in September, the book would be in the shops and on the bookstalls in September 1983. He is perfectly well aware of the possible political significance of that date.

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4. The book would not be an official history. Nor would he want it to be, or to be described as, an "authorised" account: he would not wish to be thought to have accepted the limitations on his freedom to write what he wanted which might be implied by that. The responsibility for the book would be his, and he would write it; but he would be assisted by four researchers. He would need official help, in three ways:

- ✓ (1) having prepared his narrative, he would like to be able to check it for accuracy;
- ✓ (2) he would want us to select and locate 500 participants from all levels in the affair; all would be "screened" by him or his researchers, and they would select 50 of those screened, for interview in depth;
- ✓ (3) he would want those interviewed to be given assurances that they could speak freely, without getting into trouble with higher authority.

In exchange for that help, he would be prepared for his manuscript to be scrutinised for breaches of secrecy and security, so long as excisions were solely for genuine secrets unwittingly revealed and not for grumbles and candid comments.

5. I have also discussed Mr. Forsyth's proposals with the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. We all agree that they have considerable attractions. There are two main areas of difficulty. The first is whether the Government could justify giving Mr. Forsyth the privileged access he wanted, and refusing it to other bona fide applicants for similar access. If we refused access to other applicants, there could be Parliamentary and public criticism of giving Mr. Forsyth preferential access and enabling him and his publishers to make a lot of money. If we did not withhold access from other bona fide applicants, we could in theory be involved in a considerable diversion of effort into satisfying the approaches made. The second difficulty relates to the Franks Committee. Although Mr. Forsyth would intend to concentrate on the Falklands campaign - i. e. the sequence of events from 2nd April onwards - he would want briefly to cover the run-up to the crisis, and this would involve questioning officials and others about matters into which the Franks Committee will be enquiring.

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6. As to the first difficulty, the flood of books about the Falklands crisis has already begun. Both the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have been approached by the Sunday Times to provide the Insight team with a detailed account of the events between the Argentine invasion on 2nd April and the departure of the Task Force on 5th April for a book which the team is preparing to bring out in six weeks' time. Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins are known to be writing an account of the affair for publication in six months' time - the Christmas market, perhaps. Max Hastings will obviously be writing an "I was there" book about the Task Force and the repossession; Simon Jenkins will be writing about the London end, on which (as has been evident from articles in The Economist) he is already fairly well informed. He has been making inquiries about seeing people. There will no doubt be similar approaches from others. The Ministry of Defence propose to deal with approaches made to them by offering applicants short interviews with two or three selected officials who would be authorised to disclose operational details of movements of ships, aircraft and troops which are already in the public domain, or which can be made public without prejudicing security. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office have a more difficult problem, in that questions to them are likely to relate to politically sensitive matters such as Ministerial discussions and the content of advice given to Ministers. They therefore propose to be more restrictive in meeting requests for information, and to confine themselves strictly to facts which are already public knowledge. *Agreed.*

7. There would be no difficulty in offering Mr. Forsyth whatever help and information is given to others. But that falls far short of what he would be asking for; and his ability to do the sort of book he proposes depends on his getting it.

8. He said at first that he would want the help given to him, in the selection, location and encouragement of participants, to be exclusive. When I said that I thought that it might be difficult for Ministers to justify exclusive privileges, he said that perhaps he would not need to insist on that; what he would be engaged on would be a special kind of account (on the analogy of The Longest Day by Cornelius Ryan); not many people would want to do that kind of account; and, once he had established a head start, it would not be worth anyone's while to

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compete. He would have to talk to his publishers, to see if they were prepared to run the risk of not asking for exclusive privileged access. They may be less prepared to do so given the publicity which Mr. Forsyth's proposal has now received, apparently as a result of a leak from the Ministry of Defence (see extract from yesterday's Sunday Times).

9. There remains the question whether the Government would also be prepared to run the risk. Information about the facilities made available to Mr. Forsyth would become public; the Government would have to make public, perhaps in a reply to a Parliamentary Question, the nature of the help given to Mr. Forsyth and the conditions under which it had been given, including the fact that similar help would be given to other authors on similar conditions if they applied. Other authors might think that Mr. Forsyth had a head start and that it was not worth trying to compete; but some might think that, if they moved fast, they could do a rush job and beat Mr. Forsyth to the bookstalls. In that case we should have to provide them with whatever assistance we had given to Mr. Forsyth.

10. The alternative - which Mr. Forsyth and his publishers would no doubt prefer - would be to make the help given to him in the selection, location and encouragement of participants unique to him; or to make the conditions such that in effect only he would want it. Apart from asking him to submit his script for security scrutiny, I think that it might be necessary to ask him and his publishers to make a significant proportion of the proceeds of sales of the book over to the South Atlantic Fund. I did not try this idea out on Mr. Forsyth, and I have no idea what he or his publishers would think of it: they could hardly be expected to be enthusiastic. We should not need to seek such an undertaking if the help given was not to be exclusive to Mr. Forsyth.

11. The second problem is the overlap with the Franks Committee. Mr. Forsyth will want to start his book with an account of the events leading up to the Argentine invasion, starting from Davidoff's arrival on South Georgia. But I think that he would be prepared not to interview people about the events of that period until after the Franks Committee had reported; or at least until the Committee had finished taking evidence.

-4-

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12. Mr. Forsyth made it clear to me that his intention was that his narrative should cover events in Whitehall and Westminster, and events at the United Nations in New York, as well as events in the South Atlantic. I think that we could allow those who participated in events in the South Atlantic to talk reasonably freely, provided that they kept off sensitive questions of intelligence and possibly of details of weapon performance. Discussions in 10 Downing Street and elsewhere in Whitehall and events in New York seem to me to present much greater difficulty. Clearly Mr. Forsyth could make use of anything published at the time; but I think that we should have to tell those whom he interviewed that they could not give him or his researchers confidential information about the contents of Ministerial discussions or of Sir Anthony Parsons's private discussions with the United Nations Secretary General and others in New York; and we should have to tell Mr. Forsyth that such instructions had been given.

*We cannot reveal this.*

*Agreed not*

13. The questions to be decided are:

1. Are Ministers prepared to authorise the giving of help to Mr. Forsyth on the basis he seeks it (paragraph 4(1), (2) and (3)) subject to certain conditions?
  - 2. Should those conditions include:
    - (i) an undertaking by Mr. Forsyth to submit his script for scrutiny and to accept excisions on grounds of breach of secrecy and security;
    - (ii) an instruction to those interviewed not to disclose information about intelligence matters, or sensitive details of weapon performance;
    - (iii) an instruction to those interviewed not to disclose confidential information about contents of Ministerial discussions in Whitehall and Westminster or of diplomatic discussions in New York.
  - 3. Should the help be non-exclusive?
  - 4. Are Ministers prepared to allow exclusive help to be given, under certain conditions (e.g. that a significant proportion of the proceeds of the book will be given to the South Atlantic Fund)?

*It would be reasonable to ask for something because it would help us.*

14. I am sending copies of this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence, with whom you may like to discuss the matter before any further approach is made to Mr. Forsyth.

*RA*

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

19th July, 1982

# Atticus

STEPHEN PILE

## Will Forsyth go to war?

FREDERICK FORSYTH has been discussing the definitive book of the Falklands War with Number 10. Might this explain the difficulties that other writers attempting the subject have encountered at the Ministry of Defence?

When the war ended last month, the author of the Dogs of War and the Day of the Jackal, met his friend Bernard Ingham, who is Margaret Thatcher's chief press secretary.

The main topic of discussion was the idea of applying Forsyth's proven skills as a thriller writer to an account of the South Atlantic conflict.

"I am not a military writer

as such, but this was a rare war with a beginning, middle and end, like a good adventure story. At some point there will be the ultimate academic history, but after the raft of paperbacks there is room somewhere in the middle for a book which does the war from start to finish without going into individual details."

Ingham next wrote to Mrs Thatcher, who is a Forsyth fan and once complimented him on his books.

She clearly liked the idea because the MoD even started talking about money. Shouldn't Whitehall have a 50 per cent cut of the royalties, they asked.

Certainly, Forsyth is not writing anything else at the moment and would be free to start immediately. However, he is worried about his independence in this venture and has gone to Majorca for two weeks to think about it.

"It is certainly interesting enough, but I have a gritty notion of my own independence. I don't want a ministerial imprimatur."

Meanwhile in London his agent was pursuing her course. Diana Baring, of Curtis Brown, said: "He has no intention to write about the Falklands. I have just talked to him and he has not even thought of it." Forsyth really should tell her what's happening.

All this has obviously led to some confusion in the Ministry of Defence. The growing feeling there is that Freddie Forsyth is entirely unsuitable. What is more, the instruction from Number 10 has been interpreted in some quarters as meaning that no other writers should be given information.

Lamenting this development, Ingham said: "You know how messages get screwed up from HQ to the front, and vice versa."



Forsyth: pondering

■ And now for the story that Max Hastings missed. Why does Port Stanley have the cheapest television sets in the world?

When the Argentinians arrived they immediately set about broadcasting propaganda and Tom y Jerry, the dubbed drama of two Hispanic and potentially violent mice. To this end they offered the locals cheap hire-purchase TV sets, upon which they had paid only one instalment when they were liberated by Hastings and others.

And so the Falklanders have the cheapest sets in the world, but gained at the greatest price possible.

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Ref. A09044

PRIME MINISTER

Frederick Forsyth's Proposed Book about the Falklands

You will remember that Frederick Forsyth wrote to you on 15th June about his proposal that he should write a book on the Falklands crisis with particular emphasis on the Task Force.

2. I have since had an opportunity of discussing the project with Mr. Forsyth in some detail. What he has in mind is a chronological narrative of the "hundred days" of the crisis, from the day when Davidoff and his men landed in South Georgia to the day when General Menendez surrendered in Port Stanley. It would be a day-by-day account, with straight narrative interleaved with descriptions of "what it felt like to be there", which would follow through the actions, reactions and feelings of those involved at every level: in No. 10, the Cabinet, the Ministry of Defence, and the Task Force from commanders to privates, ratings and pilots. He would hope for help in ensuring that the narrative was comprehensive and accurate. The other element in the story would be based on interviews in some depth with 50 participants at home and in the fighting, selected as the people through whose eyes the events would be described. It would not be an instant journalistic account; nor would it be an official history, though he would want it to be as accurate as possible. It would, however, require official co-operation, and he would be willing to submit the manuscript for scrutiny from the point of view of official secrets.

3. Mr. Forsyth does not envisage an account which also covers the Argentine side of the affair. It would be as seen from the British side. No doubt Mr. Forsyth is well aware of the potentialities of what he has in mind as a best-selling book; but he would also like, from patriotic motives, to put on record the competence and gallantry of those involved in the operation. He thinks that the book would take eight months to write, and four months to publish. If he were able to start in September, the book would be in the shops and on the bookstalls in September 1983. He is perfectly well aware of the possible political significance of that date.

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- (1) having prepared his narrative, he would like to be able to check it for accuracy;
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In exchange for that help, he would be prepared for his manuscript to be scrutinised for breaches of secrecy and security, so long as excisions were solely for genuine secrets unwittingly revealed and not for grumbles and candid comments.

5. I have also discussed Mr. Forsyth's proposals with the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. We all agree that they have considerable attractions. There are two main areas of difficulty. The first is whether the Government could justify giving Mr. Forsyth the privileged access he wanted, and refusing it to other bona fide applicants for similar access. If we refused access to other applicants, there could be Parliamentary and public criticism of giving Mr. Forsyth preferential access and enabling him and his publishers to make a lot of money. If we did not withhold access from other bona fide applicants, we could in theory be involved in a considerable diversion of effort into satisfying the approaches made. The second difficulty relates to the Franks Committee. Although Mr. Forsyth would intend to concentrate on the Falklands campaign - i. e. the sequence of events from 2nd April onwards - he would want briefly to cover the run-up to the crisis, and this would involve questioning officials and others about matters into which the Franks Committee will be enquiring.

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9. There remains the question whether the Government would also be prepared to run the risk. Information about the facilities made available to Mr. Forsyth would become public; the Government would have to make public, perhaps in a reply to a Parliamentary Question, the nature of the help given to Mr. Forsyth and the conditions under which it had been given, including the fact that similar help would be given to other authors on similar conditions if they applied. Other authors might think that Mr. Forsyth had a head start and that it was not worth trying to compete; but some might think that, if they moved fast, they could do a rush job and beat Mr. Forsyth to the bookstalls. In that case we should have to provide them with whatever assistance we had given to Mr. Forsyth.

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12. Mr. Forsyth made it clear to me that his intention was that his narrative should cover events in Whitehall and Westminster, and events at the United Nations in New York, as well as events in the South Atlantic. I think that we could allow those who participated in events in the South Atlantic to talk reasonably freely, provided that they kept off sensitive questions of intelligence and possibly of details of weapon performance. Discussions in 10 Downing Street and elsewhere in Whitehall and events in New York seem to me to present much greater difficulty. Clearly Mr. Forsyth could make use of anything published at the time; but I think that we should have to tell those whom he interviewed that they could not give him or his researchers confidential information about the contents of Ministerial discussions or of Sir Anthony Parsons's private discussions with the United Nations Secretary General and others in New York; and we should have to tell Mr. Forsyth that such instructions had been given.

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14. I am sending copies of this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence, with whom you may like to discuss the matter before any further approach is made to Mr. Forsyth.

**ROBERT ARMSTRONG**

**ROBERT ARMSTRONG**

19th July, 1982

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**CONFIDENTIAL**

AA }  
FC }

16/6

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

FOLE  
43 M

1. MR WHITMORE
2. PRIME MINISTER

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

PL10  
40M

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.

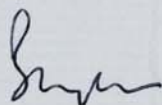
I would make 4 points:

- 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

LAKENHEATH LODGE  
TILFORD  
FARNHAM  
SURREY GU10 2EB



15th June 1982

Dear Prime Minister,

Amid the tidal wave of congratulations that must now be flowing in to you, and to which I add my own, I am aware of how exceptionally busy you must be. I will therefore keep this extremely brief.

I believe a book could and should be written about the Falklands Crisis and most notably about the British Task Force. I believe it should be a good book, the right book; for those who died down there, for those who survived, and for this country. I believe it should have not simply national but global appeal and a worldwide reception. I believe I can write it.

I ask you to glance at the attached memorandum so see if, in your view, the ideas expounded therein merit consideration and further discussion with your advisers.

Yours sincerely,

*Frederick Forsyth.*

MEMORANDUM FOR A PROPOSED BOOK ABOUT THE  
FALKLANDS CRISIS.

Proposal. To write a book about the Falklands Crisis from start to finish and most notably about the British Task Force and those who served in it.

Timing. It should ideally be launched not a day beyond one year from the raising of the Union Flag above Port Stanley on June 14th 1982. Such a task would involve hard, intensive research, numerous interviews, meticulous collation of research and brisk writing, all of which I believe I could deliver. Also a titanic effort by the publishers, which I believe I could arrange.

Rivals. In the wake of yesterday's victory a blizzard of books will be undertaken and many will appear. Some will be skimpy, rushed, inaccurate as writers and publishers race to beat each other to the bookshops. In years to come there will no doubt be the official history, heavy with notes, appendices and references. What I have in mind is something between those two.

Type. The book proposed would have two themes, intermingled to carry the reader along the narrative of a story in parts so gripping as to defy all creative fiction. One theme would be the straight narrative of what happened from start to finish. The other would be the story as seen through the eyes of fifty participants, from the highest to the humblest.

(One might here recall 'The Longest Day' and 'A Bridge Too Far' by Cornelius Ryan; and 'Is Paris Burning' and 'Oh Jerusalem' by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre. The difference is that in all these works the story as it appeared to the participants on all sides is described; my proposed book

would not include the Argentine version of events. Apart from any other factor, there simply is not the time.)

The first strand or theme would tell the reader what happened; the second would describe through the words of the participants what it felt like. It should describe the anger and the shock, the excitement and the tension, the fear and the sorrow, the ~~d~~espair and the grief, the skill and the courage, the discipline and the misery, the comradeship and the exhaustion, the cold and the boredom, the burden of responsibility and the elation of victory.

It should bring the reader from the Cabinet Office to the Admiral's planning room, to the boggy foxhole and the blazing deck. It should take the reader ~~from~~ the cockpit of a Harrier in a dogfight to the towers of Manhattan; from the galley of Sir Tristram to the computers of Northwood; from the embassy in Washington to the last wild charge of the Paras into the machine guns of Goose Green. It should show the reader the lonely frogman slipping through the kelp, and the fearful wife shopping for her toddlers in Portsmouth, and the nurses tending the wounded on the Hecla; it should describe the dimmed Vulcan cockpit high above an unseen ocean and the Sea King swinging in the black smoke above Bluff Cove. In short, it should be a panorama.

Problems. There are two principal ones. The first is that of time. If such a book were to be ready in time its preparation would have to involve some element of official cooperation in two areas. One is that of access; to select fifty participants would probably involve selection interviews with ten times that number. These participants will soon be

scattered; to fresh units, fresh ships, fresh squadrons and different hospitals. Without access the research would take years. The second area is that of permission to talk. If every officer and man had to clear his interview through the appropriate channels, again the research would take years.

The second problem is that of repetitiveness. If other writers have culled every anecdote, every interview, every incident, every exploit and every impression long before the proposed book could emerge, it would finally appear to be simply a mish-mash of pieces culled from the preceding twenty paperbacks.

Requirements. I do not believe the book proposed above should be designated as the 'official' work, because at the mention of that word junior ranks will never talk frankly or openly. They will smell the presence of senior 'brass' and remain scrupulously polite and unyielding. On the other hand, I do believe I can get the participants to talk about their experiences and their feelings, frankly albeit privately, if I can show that it has been cleared 'on the nod' and there will be no sanction against any person. What is needed is permission at the highest level to have access to the people who were involved, from the highest to the lowest. For this, it would be understood the manuscript would be submitted for scrutiny, so long only as excisions were solely for genuine secrets unwittingly revealed and not for grumbles and candid comments.

Summation. I believe the proposed book should and could be gripping but not sensationalist, accurate but not ponderous,



fair but not servile, patriotic but not shrill. In short, I believe it should 'tell it the way it was.'

Frederick Forsyth  
Tilford,  
Surrey.

15th June 1982