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CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

Ref. A08840

28 June 1982

My dear Frank,

I mentioned to you recently Frederick Forsyth's proposal to the Prime Minister that he should write a book about the Falklands crisis and the British Task Force.

--- I enclose a copy of his letter to the Prime Minister and the memorandum enclosed with it. You will see that he would want access to 500 participants with "permission to talk", from whom 50 "from the highest to the lowest", would be selected as those through whose eyes the story would be seen.

The Prime Minister is attracted by the proposal. He would undoubtedly write a vivid and well-researched book, in the format and style familiar from his fictional works.

She is clear that he could have no access to official papers. His interviewees would no doubt find it difficult to avoid straying into secret areas; but they could be told that they must not reveal secret information, and he has said that he would be prepared to have his manuscript vetted for secrets unwittingly revealed.

He would have to be denied access to intelligence and to those engaged in intelligence gathering or assessment.

I have two concerns:

- (1) Would it be defensible to give Forsyth the sort of access he seeks, ahead of the official inquiry? Perhaps the answer to this is that he would be concerned primarily with the events following 2 April, rather than those leading up to it; but I think that he would be bound to want to include some kind of introduction covering Davidoff's trip to South Georgia and what followed that.

/ (2) If access

Sir Frank Cooper GCB CMG

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- (2) If access was given to Forsyth (on whatever conditions, should we have to be prepared to give similar access to any other bona fide author who sought it?

I should like to discuss this with you, and with Terry Lewin and Antony Acland to whom I am sending copies of this letter and the enclosures.

Yours ever
Robert

Jacques Joffe