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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Prime Minister

B G Cartledge Esq
10 Downing Street
London
SW1

Agree that arrangements for his visit should go ahead as planned?

Yes Mr.

14 May 1979

BGM
17/5

Dear Bryan

VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND BY PRINCESS ALEXANDRA

The Prime Minister would wish to be aware that preliminary planning is under way for a visit by Princess Alexandra to Northern Ireland on 29 June.

The purpose of the visit would be for Princess Alexandra to present the Queen's Badge (a new Red Cross award) to the Duchess of Abercorn, the President of the Northern Ireland Branch of the Red Cross; and to unveil the Royal Ulster Constabulary Book of Remembrance at the RUC Headquarters at Knock. The Red Cross presentation would take place at Hillsborough Castle in the morning and would provide the Princess with an opportunity to meet and talk informally with members of the Red Cross and representatives of the Service units and other charitable organisations with which she has connections. In the afternoon there would be a short ceremony followed by an informal garden party at which Princess Alexandra would be able to meet members of the RUC and their families.*

The proposed visit would be limited to Hillsborough Castle and Knock. All travel within Northern Ireland would be by helicopter of the Queen's Flight except for the visit to Knock for which road travel would be necessary to and from the nearest helicopter landing site at Stormont Castle.

If the Prime Minister agrees that the visit should take place it would be accepted, as in the case of all Royal Visits in the last two years, that it might be necessary, for security reasons, to cancel the visit at any time up to the last minute.

We need to keep the visit confidential until as short a time in advance as is feasible. We would aim to announce it two weeks in advance since it would be difficult to plan in secret without a risk of leakage after that. A review of the security situation would be made before any announcement was made.

My Secretary of State believes that this proposed short visit is desirable. It should present no great security or administrative

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difficulties. He would be grateful for the Prime Minister's approval to his proceeding with plans for the visit in consultation with St James's Palace on the basis of detailed arrangements to be made under his responsibility.

I am copying this to the Private Secretary to the Home Secretary*

~~~~~\*

*Yours sincerely*

*J G Pilling*

A J G PILLING

\*~\* Passages deleted and closed, 40 years,  
under FOI Exemption.

*Wayland*

*13 September 2011*

DT

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*Royal Family*



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

15 June 1979

Princess Alexandra's Visit  
to Northern Ireland

Thank you for your letter of 13 June about the announcement of Princess Alexandra's visit to Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister has seen your letter and is content that the announcement should be made today.

**B. G. CARTLEDGE**

J.G. Pilling, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

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*S. Khan*

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

GREAT GEORGE STREET,

LONDON SW1P 3AJ



B G Cartledge Esq  
No 10 Downing Street  
London SW1

*Prime Minister*

*Confidential?*

*Yes*

13 June 1979

*6/14/79*

*Dear Bryan,*

VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND BY PRINCESS ALEXANDRA

In my letter of 14 May I told you about the proposed visit to Northern Ireland by Princess Alexandra on 29 June.

2. The visit has been kept confidential but as it will become necessary very shortly to inform more people about the visit the risk of a 'leak' will grow. My Secretary of State believes that a public announcement about the visit should now be made - on Friday 15 June, two weeks before the visit takes place.

*Yours ever,*

*Joe*

J G PILLING

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

16 May 1979

VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND BY PRINCESS ALEXANDRA

Thank you for your letter of 14 May about Princess Alexandra's proposed visit to Northern Ireland on 29 June.

The Prime Minister has seen your letter and is content that arrangements for this visit should go ahead as planned.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Chilcot in the Home Office.

B. G. CARTLEDGE

J.G. Pilling, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'JG' or similar initials.

Royal Family

JS  
cc HO