



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Shrewsbury
not

This letter was mislaid
for a while. We have now
advised against Princess Margaret's
visit to Peking, and the
Princess has accepted that advice.

If you agree, I will
tell the FCO that you agree
that we should not pursue ~~for~~
the time being the idea of a
State visit by The Queen in 1989,
or visits by the Duke of Edinburgh
or Prince Charles and Princess Diana.

R.R.B.

11.11.

CONFIDENTIAL



ls
Royal family.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

12 November, 1982.

Royal Visits to China

I am sorry not to have given you an earlier reply to your letter of 25 October, addressed to John Coles, about plans for Royal Visits to China.

John Coles has already reported to you the Prime Minister's view that it would be better for Princess Margaret not to visit Peking in May 1983: this advice has been conveyed to the Princess, and I understand that she has accepted it. The Prime Minister also takes the view that we should not pursue for the time being the idea of a State Visit by The Queen in 1984, or visits by the Duke of Edinburgh or the Prince and Princess of Wales.

E. E. R. BUTLER

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Royal Family *Group*

File

8 November 1982

POSSIBLE VISIT OF
HRH PRINCESS MARGARET TO CHINA

There was some discussion of this question during the Prime Minister's visit to Paris at the end of last week. I conveyed to Sir Anthony Acland Mrs. Thatcher's view that, against the background of our current negotiations with China over Hong Kong, it was desirable that Princess Margaret should not visit China at this time.

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Pl. file



Sir Antony Acland KCMG KCVO
Permanent Under-Secretary of State

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

9 November 1982

Major the Lord Napier and Ettrick MVO
KENSINGTON PALACE

Dear Nigel -

with request if required

I am very sorry about the delay in answering your letter of 1 November about the possibility of Princess Margaret visiting China next year at the time of the Royal Ballet's Gala Performance in Peking, but as Julian Bullard explained in his letter of 20 August, the Prime Minister decided that our advice should await the outcome of her own discussions with the Chinese on the future of Hong Kong and other matters. We have considered the proposal against that background and also with the prospects for future discussions over Hong Kong in mind. It is difficult to know exactly how things will go but it is very possible that at the time of the proposed visit we could be at a difficult stage in our negotiations with the Chinese, with consequent strains in our relations and a hostile Chinese press. In any event, the Chinese would see a political signal in a visit by a senior member of the Royal Family and this might well not be, in the circumstances, the right message to send. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has therefore reluctantly concluded that he must advise against the visit. The Prime Minister, who is of course aware of the Royal Ballet's invitation to Princess Margaret and of Her Royal Highness' views, agrees.

I am sorry to have to write with this advice. I can only say that the matter has been very carefully considered. It is an unlucky chance that the visit would be likely to coincide with the development of these very difficult and delicate discussions.

Yours ever
Antony

Antony Acland

cc: The Rt Hon Sir Philip Moore KCB KCVO CMG

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
Bcc. A J Coles Esq

NOV 10 1982
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