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Royalty and Diplomatic
Protection Department

Metropolitan Police
Buckingham Palace
LONDON SW1A 1AA

Tel: [REDACTED]
or [REDACTED]

SECURITY OF HRH PRINCESS OF WALES

Meeting with Sir Robert Fellowes and Patrick Jephson dated 1 February 1994.

This was a pre-arranged meeting one month on from the Princess of Wales's decision not to have police protection. Patrick Jephson stated that notwithstanding the risks inherent in her actions HRH was determined to continue her private activities without the benefit of police protection. Robert Fellowes asked Patrick Jephson if he was in a position to assure him that in the event of anything untoward occurring to HRH to absolve both the Commissioner and the Home Secretary from blame and embarrassment which would undoubtedly arise. Patrick Jephson stated that the Princess was totally aware of the possible outcome of her decision but valued the freedom that such a decision had brought about and could not be persuaded to change her mind. Robert Fellowes then asked Patrick Jephson if she would be prepared to put that in writing in response to a letter from himself spelling out the position as he saw it, writing on behalf of HRH. He pointed out to Patrick Jephson that the Home Secretary would need to be satisfied that his office has been absolved of all responsibility in this matter because following that he would have no option, as the person having ultimate responsibility for the Queen's security, but to involve the Prime Minister and that ministerial advice would then be forthcoming to HM indicating that she would have to insist that protection was reinstated. Such ministerial advice would leave HM no option as to her course of action. Although she was minded not to insist on it at this time in the knowledge that a Principal who does not wish to be protected would leave police in the worst of all worlds. Patrick Jephson indicated that he thought that the necessary written response could be forthcoming given the circumstances. Robert Fellowes stated that he would send copies of the draft letter both to Patrick and myself for our views before sending the actual letter to HRH.

I used the meeting as the opportunity to raise the issue of HRH's overseas trips. I told Patrick that I had become aware that HRH intended to visit USA in the not too distant future. He confirmed that in fact such a visit was being planned towards the end of the month. I asked him what arrangements he anticipated would be made in relation to the visit. He stated that he had thought of notifying certain individuals over in the USA but that the emphasis was on the private nature of the visit. I pointed out to him that whilst it may be considered only a matter of routine bearing in mind the destination, nevertheless I felt that the GEN10 procedure for overseas visits should be firmly adhered to. Robert Fellowes supported me in this view and stated that he accepted every overseas visit (reminding Patrick that technically HRH had to seek HM's authority) should result in our Embassy in the relevant country being informed but the private nature of the visit being emphasised. I informed Patrick of the last