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BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION  
KINGSTON

10 March 1994

The Rt Hon Douglas Hurd CB MP,  
Secretary of State for Foreign  
and Commonwealth Affairs,  
LONDON SW1.

Sir,

**JAMAICA: VISIT BY HM THE QUEEN AND HRH THE DUKE OF  
EDINBURGH, MARCH 1994**

1. Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh visited Jamaica from 1-3 March as part of a wider tour of the Caribbean and the Atlantic (three Realms, two Republics, three Dependent Territories). Her Majesty had been to Jamaica four times before: in 1953 during Her post-Coronation tour of the Commonwealth; in 1966 for the Commonwealth Games; in 1975 for CHOGM; and in 1983 for a straightforward bilateral visit (Mr Smallman's despatch of 21 February 1983).

### Preparations

2. The visit had been agreed between Buckingham Palace and the Governor-General, Sir Howard Cooke. Whilst the Governor-General had cleared his lines with the Prime Minister it was left to him and a small planning group to make all the arrangements, with some support from this High Commission, notably in the arrangements for HMY Britannia. It was a close call. The plan to restore part of King's House, the Governor-General's residence, in time for the visit only just came off. Workmen were still applying finishing touches and a great deal of cleaning up still remained to be done when I went to King's House the day before the visit. The repairs to roads to be travelled over by the Royal party went on right into the first day of the visit. Public buildings were repainted, garbage removed, parks spruced up, drains unblocked and trees cut back. Predictably, people living in areas that the Royal party were not going to were resentful that they did not benefit from the clean-up. The country has become cynical about the authorities only bothering to do their job when VIPs are visiting. In the event, the arrangements for the visit went fairly smoothly, though crowd control broke down at the National Heroes Park in Kingston during the civic ceremony on the first morning. It was therefore fitting that Her Majesty honoured the Governor-General with the Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order and that

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the Chief of Staff, JDF, and the Director of Protocol in the MFAFT, who carried the main responsibility for organising the visit, should have been made a Commander and a Lieutenant of the Order respectively. There were other awards.

3. The attitude of the two political parties in advance of the visit was instructive. The founder of the Jamaica Labour Party, Sir Alexander Bustamante, Jamaica's first Prime Minister on independence, was devoted to the Royal Family. This tradition has survived in his party, even though it is now formally committed to Jamaica becoming a Republic. Mr Edward Seaga, Leader of the JLP Opposition, was the one politician who told me beforehand that he was looking forward to the visit. A JLP Senator came to see me to seek advice over presenting HM The Queen with a copy of his newly published book on the history of the City of Kingston. It was a JLP spokesman who sought to clarify Her Majesty's constitutional position in a press article. We had to explain to even generally well-informed Jamaicans that Her Majesty was visiting their country as Queen of Jamaica and that since Jamaica was a Realm it was up to the Governor-General as Her representative, not I, to make the arrangements.

4. The governing PNP has never been comfortable with the Monarchy. Mr Michael Manley reminded me before the visit of his Republican credentials, although he has a very high regard for HM The Queen in person and for her role as Head of the Commonwealth (he was pleased to be presented to Her Majesty during the visit). His position has likewise influenced his party. I was struck by the fact that government Ministers took no interest at all in the preparations for the visit. The official information service left it until a fortnight beforehand to start promoting the visit in the media. It was not surprising, therefore, that many Jamaicans, preoccupied anyway with the daily struggle to make ends meet, were virtually unaware of the visit until it was taking place. They could hardly then be blamed for being indifferent to it, particularly as they knew from previous visits that Her Majesty was not in a position to do anything in practice for them.

5. Against this background, it was not unexpected that Her Majesty failed to receive as enthusiastic a welcome as in some other places on her tour, including the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. Nevertheless, as people realised that Her Majesty was on the island she once again captured the public imagination and proved to be a crowd puller (even though information about the programme remained sketchy). Obviously, this had something to do with her celebrity status and a liking for pomp and pageantry, but people were genuinely glad to see "Missis Queen" again. She is also much admired here for what She has achieved during Her long reign. People from all walks of life were pleased to see Her Majesty looking so well and they appreciated Her going

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ahead with the visit despite having broken Her wrist not long before leaving London. School children were to be seen everywhere, but office workers, factory workers and curious onlookers, nearly all of them women, turned out too. As in 1983, the welcome in Montego Bay, where the Governor-General, a Montegonian, took Her Majesty for the last day, was more enthusiastic than in Kingston. The press and live TV coverage was good, but news coverage on the government-owned TV channel was not. The visit attracted some interest on the influential radio phone-in programmes.

Programme

6. I am forwarding a copy of the programme of the visit to the Department. It was full and varied. In my view the highlight, because of its novelty, was the visit to the inner city area of Kingston. Her Majesty visited the Laws Street Trade Training Centre, which provides training in such basic skills as catering, baking and sewing, having been started partly with financial assistance from the British High Commission. She also visited the Holy Family Primary School next door. Meanwhile, HRH was visiting the Kingston Restoration Company's 'Teen' community centre in another deprived area. A carnival-like atmosphere prevailed in the inner city: members of the local community lined the streets waving flags and cheering and street bands were on hand. The interest that the Royal Visitors showed in inner-city problems and in youth development was much appreciated. A visit to a factory making T-shirts in the Montego Bay free zone gave them an insight into Jamaican industry. HRH was to have visited a banana estate but his trip had to be cancelled when the JDF helicopter to be used proved not to be up to Royal standards.

7. The Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies, where HRH Princess Alice was the University's first Chancellor and HRH the Princess Royal has been Patron of the University's Development and Endowment Appeal, was included in the programme this time. There Her Majesty saw the West Indies Distant Teaching Enterprise (UWIDITE), which links the three University campuses with university centres throughout the Caribbean via a telecommunications network, the MRC-funded Sickle Cell Unit and a new extension to the University Library. HRH inspected the Centre for Nuclear Sciences and the Biotechnology Centre. Several of these projects have been EC-funded. The Royal visitors and thousands of other people enjoyed a spectacular Trooping of the Colour of the Second Battalion of the Jamaica Regiment at the JDF's Up Park Camp.

8. The rest of the programme followed standard lines. In addressing Parliament, Her Majesty spoke of Jamaica not being immune to the problems of crime, drug abuse and high unemployment found elsewhere, but pointed to its "many attributes" to overcome them such as a "stable and

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democratic society, racial and religious tolerance and bountiful and beautiful land". She struck a topical note when she referred to Jamaican heroes from the world of cricket (a Jamaican cricketer, Jimmy Adams, had twice been made man-of-the-match after West Indies' victories over England in matches played the week before). Her Majesty's speech was prepared, of course, by the Jamaican government.

9. Her Majesty laid a wreath at the Cenotaph in National Heroes Park in Kingston at a well attended civic ceremony. Another, colourful civic welcome was held in the historic Sam Sharpe Square in Montego Bay. On both occasions the Royal visitors took the opportunity, as they did at other times, to go on a walkabout. Representatives of voluntary organisations, ex-servicemen's organisations and the media, as well as the diplomatic corps and members of this High Commission, were presented to Her Majesty and Prince Philip at a Morning Reception at King's House on the first day. HRH then distributed Duke of Edinburgh Awards to Gold Medal award winners. He and Her Majesty agreed, impromptu, to be photographed with the five Commonwealth representatives in Kingston. A State Banquet at King's House on the first evening and a return Dinner on HMY Britannia on the second evening followed by Receptions each time, the first for some 3,000 guests, gave the visitors the chance to meet community, religious, business and other leaders. The Governor-General held a Garden Party in Montego Bay and the Prime Minister, Mr Patterson, hosted a lunch there. Disappointment was however expressed that Her Majesty did not make speeches at the formal Dinners and the civic ceremonies (and that She did not express sympathy publicly for the families of five school children killed in a road accident on the first day of the visit, unfair though this criticism may seem).

10. It was rumoured that the visit might attract protests either against alleged British mistreatment of Jamaicans in recent months or against the cost of the visit (even though the use of HMY Britannia for accommodating the Royal party and of the Queen's Flight for the journey to Montego Bay saved the government money and the private sector is paying for the refurbishment of King's House) or against wretched living conditions. No such protests occurred. Small groups of Rastafarians mounted minor protests. The Governor-General invited Maroon leaders to be present during the visit in recognition of their ties with the Crown dating back to the Treaties of 1739. (The Maroons had earlier lobbied me to arrange an actual audience for them with Her Majesty.)

Political Significance

11. British spokesmen were reported here as suggesting that the Royal visit would enhance bilateral relations between Britain and Jamaica. Strictly speaking, the Queen of Jamaica could hardly be expected to achieve this

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objective. For practical purposes, however, Her Majesty is seen as 'our' Queen as opposed to Jamaica's Queen, and the visit undoubtedly generated much goodwill that will consolidate links between Britain and Jamaica. At the same time, it cannot be expected to lead to any softening of the official Jamaican attitude on a number of current controversial issues in the bilateral relationship. The visit was more significant in domestic political terms.

Prospects for a Republic

12. Her Majesty's visit took place against the background of a renewed debate about Jamaica becoming a Republic. The two political parties agreed on this step, in principle, as long ago as 1979, but nothing of consequence happened until a special Constitutional Commission reported in 1993 in favour of a Republic with a mainly ceremonial, non-elected President as Head of State. Agreement has still to be reached on the method of appointment of the President. The lengthy process of amending the Constitution to replace Her Majesty as Head of State, including the holding of a referendum, is still some way off being started. PNP Parliamentarians and those among the chattering classes opposed to the retention of the Monarchy have nonetheless been talking as if Jamaica were in a final, pre-Republic phase. They will admit that much still needs to be done to persuade public opinion that the issue of establishing a Republic is relevant to Jamaica's current needs and is not just another political diversion from more important economic and social issues.

13. Opinion polls in the past have shown Jamaicans to be fairly evenly divided between retaining the Monarchy and replacing it with a Republic. It did not seem to me therefore to be in the interest of the advocates of a Republic to have Her Majesty visit and thus highlight Jamaica's link with the British Crown. Some may see Her Majesty as an anachronism (a white, faraway figure who visits only infrequently), but many black Jamaicans have had a special affection for the British Crown ever since Queen Victoria abolished slavery. They have seen the Crown as a final court of appeal against their local leaders, which partly explains why the system of appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council persists to this day. The fact is that the Governor-General, nowadays a Monarchist, despite his background in the PNP, was obviously keen on the visit and the Prime Minister may have judged that it was harmless in terms of plans for a Republic. Certainly, when I touched on this point with him during the Visit he was quite confident that the change would be made within the life-time (still four years) of the present Parliament. He may however have miscalculated about letting Her Majesty come (or he may still have thought Her visit would be a useful distraction from the daily struggle for survival faced by most Jamaicans).

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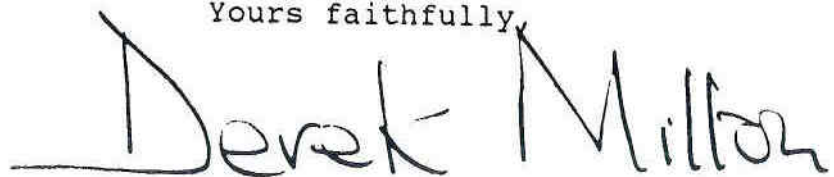
14. When the visit was over the Governor-General told British journalists that he thought it had set back the prospects for Jamaica becoming a Republic by some years. The press has been taking a similar line. I too would judge that the politicians' task in selling a Republic to the country may have been made more difficult. Moreover, the present consensus among the parties in favour of a Republic, which is essential if there is to be any hope of the change commanding general support, could be shattered by renewed confrontation on other issues, such as reform of the electoral system. Mr Patterson may want to go down in history as the man who made Jamaica a Republic, but I would not bet on that happening in the near future.

Last Visit ?

15. One of my predecessors, Mr Hennings, in his despatch of 1 April 1975 entitled "The Move to a Republic in Jamaica" said it was expected that Her Majesty's visit that year for CHOGM would probably be Her last as Queen of Jamaica. She has twice been to Jamaica since then. Now, nearly 19 years later, there is speculation whether Her Majesty has finally made Her last visit. One newspaper has observed that, given the move to a Republic, this may, indeed, be the case since Her Majesty and Prince Philip "visit independent countries only when invited". This statement reveals even deeper constitutional confusion, but it also ignores the fact that Her Majesty visits some Republics, including some outside the Commonwealth, at least as often as some of Her Realms. A cartoon showing a tearful Governor-General and a smiling Prime Minister and a smiling Leader of the Opposition saying goodbye to Her Majesty (in practice it was the Governor-General and the Deputy Prime Minister who were present for the departure) captioned "If it wasn't for Howard, I'd swear they were happy to see me go" probably caught the official mood. But even if a Republic is established ordinary Jamaicans will continue to be well-disposed towards Her Majesty and will welcome Her back.

16. I am sending copies of this despatch to the High Commissioners in Belmopan, Bridgetown, Georgetown and Nassau, and to the Governors of Anguilla, Bermuda and Grand Cayman.

I am, Sir,  
Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derek Milton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. The first name "Derek" is written with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the space. The second name "Milton" is written in a similar cursive style.

D F Milton

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