

Queen agrees to let Harry, Meghan move part time to Canada



FILE - In this Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2017 file photo, Britain's Prince William, left, and Prince Harry arrive for an event at the memorial garden in Kensington Palace, London. Britain's Queen Elizabeth II is set to hold face-to-face talks Monday, Jan. 13, 2020 with Prince Harry for the first time since he and his wife, Meghan, unveiled their controversial plan to walk away from royal roles — at a dramatic family summit meant to chart a future course for the couple. The meeting at the monarch's private Sandringham estate in eastern England will also include Harry's father Prince Charles and his brother Prince William. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth, File)



FILE - In this Tuesday, July 10, 2018 file photo Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, and from left, Meghan the Duchess of Sussex, Prince Harry, Prince William and Kate the Duchess of Cambridge watch a flypast of Royal Air Force aircraft pass over Buckingham Palace in London. In a stunning declaration, Britain's Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, said they are planning "to step back" as senior members of the royal family and "work to become financially independent." A statement issued by the couple Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020 also said they intend to "balance" their time between the U.K. and North America. (AP Photo/Matt Dunham, File)



FILE - In this file photo dated Sunday, Nov. 8, 2015, Britain's Prince William, right, Prince Harry, left, attend the Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the Cenotaph in London. Britain's Queen Elizabeth II is set to hold face-to-face talks Monday, Jan. 13, 2020 with Prince Harry for the first time since he and his wife, Meghan, unveiled their controversial plan to walk away from royal roles — at a dramatic family summit meant to chart a future course for the couple. The meeting at the monarch's private Sandringham estate in eastern England will also include Harry's father Prince Charles and his brother Prince William. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth, File)



FILE - In this March 5, 2019 file photo, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II is joined by Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, and at rear, from left, Kate, Duchess of Cambridge, Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, Prince William, Prince Harry and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex during a reception at Buckingham Palace, London to mark the 50th anniversary of the investiture of the Prince of Wales. In a statement issued on Monday, Jan. 13, 2020, Queen Elizabeth II says she has agreed to grant Prince Harry and Meghan their wish for a more independent life that will see them move part-time to Canada. (Dominic Lipinski/Pool via AP, File)



This is a handout photo issued on Monday, Jan. 13, 2020 by Buckingham Palace of a statement by Britain's Queen Elizabeth II on the future of Prince Harry and Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex. Queen Elizabeth II says she has agreed to grant Prince Harry and Meghan their wish for a more independent life that will see them move part-time to Canada. (Buckingham Palace via AP)



Media prepares in the early morning at the entrance of the castle in Sandringham, England, Monday, Jan. 13, 2020. Prince Harry and his wife Meghan have declared they will “work to become financially independent” as part of a surprise announcement saying they wish “to step back” as senior members of the royal family. (AP Photo/Frank Augstein)



FILE - In this Tuesday, July 10, 2018 file photo Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II, and Meghan the Duchess of Sussex and Prince Harry watch a flypast of Royal Air Force aircraft pass over Buckingham Palace in London. As part of a surprise announcement distancing themselves from the British royal family, Prince Harry and his wife Meghan declared they will “work to become financially independent” _ a move that has not been clearly spelled out and could be fraught with obstacles. (AP Photo/Matt Dunham, File)



The figures of Britain's Prince Harry and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, left, are moved from their original positions next to Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip and Prince William and Kate, Duchess of Cambridge, at Madame Tussauds in London, Thursday, Jan. 9, 2020. Madame Tussauds moved its figures of Prince Harry and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex from its Royal Family set to elsewhere in the attraction. (Victoria Jones/PA via AP)



Britain's Queen Elizabeth II arrives to attend a morning church service at St Mary Magdalene Church in Sandringham, England, Sunday, Jan. 12, 2020. Prince Harry and his wife Meghan have declared they will "work to become financially independent" as part of a surprise announcement saying they wish "to step back" as senior members of the royal family. (Joe Giddens/PA via AP)

SANDRINGHAM, England (AP) — Britain's pragmatic queen brokered a deal Monday to secure the future of the monarchy, charting a course for Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, that allows them to live part-time in Canada while still remaining firmly tied to the House of Windsor.

The decision followed a summit at Queen Elizabeth II's Sandringham estate in eastern England that sought to resolve the conundrum of what to do with royals who only want the job part-time. The British monarch said in a statement that the summit of senior royals was "constructive," and that it had been "agreed that there will be a period of transition" to sort things out during which Meghan and Harry will spend time in both Canada and the U.K.

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"My family and I are entirely supportive of Harry and Meghan's desire to create a new life as a young family," the queen said in a statement that offered a demonstrably soft tone. "Although we would have preferred them to remain full-time working members of the Royal Family, we respect and understand their wish to live a more independent life as a family while remaining a valued part of my family."

Royal statements are usually sticklers for protocol, but the queen referred to "my grandson and his family" and "Harry and Meghan" rather than using the couple's formal title, Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

The summit marked the first face-to-face talks with Harry since he and Meghan unveiled their controversial wish last week to step back from their royal roles, become financially independent and split their time between Britain and North America. The meeting reflected the queen's desire to contain the fallout from the independence announcement, which prompted hurt feelings among senior family members not told in advance of the decision.

But by midday Monday, the House of Windsor showed signs of pulling together. Princes William and Harry issued a joint statement slamming a newspaper report describing a severe strain in their relationship, calling the story offensive and potentially harmful.

Though the statement did not name the newspaper, the Times of London has a front-page story about the crisis in which a source alleged that Harry and Meghan had been pushed away by the "bullying attitude" from William. The joint statement insisted that the story was "false."

"For brothers who care so deeply about the issues surrounding mental health, the use of inflammatory language in this way is offensive and potentially harmful," the

statement said.

The queen said after Monday's meeting that these were "complex matters for my family to resolve, and there is some more work to be done, but I have asked for final decisions to be reached in the coming days."

One of the trickier questions that needs to be worked out is precisely what it means for a royal to be financially independent and what activities can be undertaken to make money. Other royals who have ventured into the world of commerce have found it complicated.

Sophie, the countess of Wessex, sought to keep her public relations firm going after her marriage to the queen's third son, Prince Edward, only to find herself embroiled in controversy when she was tricked by the "Fake Sheikh" — an undercover reporter offering a lucrative contract for her firm.

Sophie hinted that if the "sheik" paid for the firm's services he would get greater publicity because of her royal role. In the end, both Sophie and Edward, who ran a television company, gave up their businesses to become full-time royals in 2002.

Prince Andrew, who was a UK trade envoy, has faced heated questions about his relationship with the late convicted sex offender and financier, Jeffrey Epstein, whom Andrew has said was beneficial to making useful contacts. The queen's second son has relinquished royal duties and patronages after being accused by a woman who says she was an Epstein trafficking victim who slept with the prince.

Harry and Meghan also face questions about paying for security, which is currently taxpayer-funded. Home Secretary Priti Patel refused to comment, but said safety was a priority and added that "royal family themselves need some time and space for them to work through the current issues that they're dealing with."

Meghan, who is American, has longstanding ties to Canada, having lived in Toronto while filming the popular TV series, "Suits." On Friday, she returned to Canada, where the couple and 8-month-old Archie spent a six-week holiday break out of the public eye.

Bob Morris, the honorary senior research associate at University College London's Constitution Unit, said that the crux of the matter lies in the difference between being a celebrity and having royal status.

“Royal status sets you apart, it gives you a special role in our society,” he said. “It is very difficult for you to put the hat on and take it off. You cannot be half royal or royal part of the time. You can switch it off and on, and it seems to me the royal identity would always be the dominant one.”

Some of the challenges are enshrined in the law devised some 20 years ago after an inquiry that followed Sophie’s, brush with the fake sheik. The rules are aimed at ensuring working royals do not exploit their status to profit in business.

Under the guidelines, the royals must consult the most senior member of the royal household before taking on a business activity — a measure that would encroach on Harry and Meghan’s independence.

Last week’s statement by the couple, who are also known as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, pushed the issue out into the open and touched off a royal crisis. Tom Bradby, a TV journalist who is close to Harry and Meghan, warned in the Sunday Times that the royal family badly needed a peace deal to prevent “a protracted war” that could damage the monarchy.

“I have some idea of what might be aired in a full, no-holds-barred, sit-down interview (by Harry and Meghan) and I don’t think it would be pretty,” he wrote in the Sunday Times.

With much at stake, the queen’s decision safeguarded the peace — for now. Royal expert Penny Junor said it was vital for the stability of the royal family to keep Meghan and Harry happy.

“What is absolutely imperative, in my view, is that Harry and Meghan do not go away feeling angry and hurt and rejected, because an angry, hurt, rejected Harry and Meghan could cause absolute havoc for the royal family,” she said. “If they don’t care anymore, if they want to show them, if they want to get their own back, it could get very nasty. They could go completely rogue.”

Kirka and Lawless reported from London. Associated Press writer Helena Alves contributed to this report.

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