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Expert Comment: Princess Kate's Questionable Photo and Health Rumors Fracture Public Trust in British Monarchy

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

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DURHAM, N.H.—As Princess Catherine continues to recover from a mysterious stomach surgery, a badly edited photo of the future queen released on Mother’s Day has the public questioning any news, or lack of, coming from the royal palace. As speculation and rumors swirl, Nicoletta Gullace, associate professor of history at the University of New Hampshire and an expert on the royal family, is available to comment if these latest issues are just a bump in the road for the royal family or if there is reason for Britons to question their confidence in the palace and the future of the monarchy.

Gullace can be reached at nicoletta.gullace@unh.edu (mailto:nicoletta.gullace@unh.edu).

“The scrutiny around the poorly edited photo by major news services around the world, and now the public, shines a light on how absolutely essential this “commoner” has become to the fate of the monarchy,” said Gullace. “With King Charles undergoing cancer treatment and Princess Catherine recovering from surgery, Prince William is seemingly running the monarchy alone, without the experience of his father or the beauty and approachable demeanor of his wife, and it looks like things are beginning to teeter bit. The fact that Britons are so anxious about what’s happened to Kate also shows the degree to which an unstable monarchy and lack of public trust can precipitate an unstable public.”

Gullace, who is an expert in 20th century and modern British history, says the monarchy is already under a magnifying glass after the announcement of King Charles III unidentified cancer diagnosis. The lack of details around his treatment and condition, as well as Kate’s surgery and health issue, have rumors and conspiracy theories popping up on social media, in news outlets and in public conversations.

“The royal family has had their share of issues but what makes this one different is that Princess Catherine is one of the most well-loved royals,” said Gullace. “She is also active on social media which makes her more relatable, and in some sense accessible, to a wider audience around the world. Releasing a badly edited photo shatters the belief that she is honestly sharing bits of her world and could raise doubt around anything released from the royal family.”

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