

Despite diagnosis, Charles highly unlikely to abdicate

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USA TODAY

If cancer were to cause Britain’s King Charles III to abdicate the throne, the move would be wholly unexpected and virtually without precedent and would represent a push into uncharted waters.

Many royal experts are blunt in their skepticism. “It’ll happen 10 minutes after hell freezes over,” said Majesty magazine Managing Editor Joe Little.

Carolyn Harris, royals expert and history instructor at the University of Toronto School of Continuing Education, suggests only scandal would prompt the move: “In Britain, you don’t see peaceful abdications.”

What’s more, the powerful legacy of the late Queen Elizabeth II’s shining serve-unto-death example, and the complexity of engineering an abdication, also would prove obstacles for such a development.

But still, if the unthinkable were to happen, “King Charles III likely wouldn’t be seen often in public,” said Harris. He would focus on his health, and little more, she said.

The king would have to be severely incapacitated to decide to abdicate, considering “the examples of his mother and father to keep calm and carry on,” Harris said.

The only other British king to abdicate in recent memory is Edward VIII in 1936, who passed the throne to his brother George VI, Elizabeth’s father.

If Charles were to take this unexpected step, “another complication is that he is the king of 14 Commonwealth realms, and they’d all have to be on board with an abdication,” Harris said. “There’s a statute that says the United Kingdom can’t make changes to the monarchy without consulting all the countries, so you’d be looking at meetings with prime ministers of Canada, New Zealand and beyond before this could happen.”

Abdication is not nearly as uncommon in other monarchies, experts say. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark abdicated last month after back surgery



Britain’s King Charles III would have to be severely incapacitated to decide to abdicate, experts on the royal family said. His mother, Queen Elizabeth II, served until her death at age 96.
ADRIAN DENNIS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES FILE

complications; Emperor Akihito of Japan in 2019, for health reasons; and King Juan Carlos I of Spain in 2014, for personal reasons.

The other option facing Charles would be to pass his duties on to his eldest son through the Regency Act, which serves to protect the monarchy should the king or queen become truly incapacitated.

The provision harks back to the 18th-century Regency period and the so-called madness of King George III, who had acute porphyria, which brought on hallucinations, nausea and pain. His duties were assumed by his son, the prince regent, who ultimately became King George IV.

“It’s never been invoked in modern times, but should that happen, the Prince of Wales (William) would take over the major functions of his father,” Little said. “But honestly, depending on (Charles’) condition, it is just as easy for him to continue functioning as king but perhaps without the public appearances.

“Charles has waited so long to be king, considering how long his mother lived and ruled, and now this has befallen him (less than) two years into his reign,” Little said. “He’s stoic. He will carry on.”

COMMENTARY

Biden skipping interview is a missed opportunity

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PHOENIX – Say it ain’t so, Joe. President Joe Biden has declined a pre-Super Bowl interview for the second year in a row.

It’s supposedly part of a larger media strategy. Kind of like how counting votes is part of House Speaker Mike Johnson’s larger political strategy.

There was none of the Sturm und Drang of last year, at least, when the White House went back and forth with Fox Corp. over whether Biden would sit for an interview. That was a missed opportunity.

This year it’s just a dumb mistake. After the special counsel investigating Biden’s handling of classified documents described him Thursday as “a well-meaning, elderly man with a poor memory,” it’s more important than ever that he appear.

In 2023 the interview was scheduled to be with Fox Soul, a streaming platform aimed at Black audiences. Both sides blamed each other for the collapse. Because that’s how we do things now. No offense to Fox Soul, but streaming views there wouldn’t come anywhere close to the exposure Biden would have gotten on Fox, the network that broadcast the game.

This year, the game is on CBS. It isn’t clear who would have interviewed the president, but my money would have been on Norah O’Donnell, the anchor of “CBS Evening News.”

When your presumptive opponent is flitting back and forth from one courtroom to the next, facing various indictments, you have the chance to answer possibly challenging, but by no means gotcha, questions and you pass? In an election year?

For the record, here is the explanation: “We hope viewers enjoy watching what they tuned in for – the game,” White House communications director Ben LaBolt told CNN.

Biden is not the first president to skip a Super Bowl interview. Former President Donald Trump skipped one in 2018.

Last year’s Super Bowl, played in Glendale, Arizona, attracted 115.1 million viewers; it was the most-watched telecast in history. Of any kind, not just football.

With the prospect of Taylor Swift jetting in from Japan, you can bet your bottom dollar that this year’s numbers will be bigger, probably much bigger. No, nothing in the pregame show is going to approach that, but the pregame ratings will also be plenty big.

The presidential Super Bowl interview started in 2004, when Jim Nantz, the play-by-play announcer for the game talked with then-President George W. Bush. One of former President Barack Obama’s interviews was with Bill O’Reilly on Fox News.

And Biden is not the first president to skip a Super Bowl interview. Former President Donald Trump skipped one in 2018 with NBC, when he was mad at the network.

Guess who volunteered to take Biden’s place this year? Trump, who reacted with characteristic charm on his Truth Social network: “A great decision, he can’t put two sentences together. I WOULD BE HAPPY TO REPLACE HIM – would be ‘RATINGS GOLD!’”

It’s hard to imagine a better platform, at a better time, than a sit-down before the Super Bowl. Biden said during the election campaign he will hammer home the notion that Trump is a threat to democracy. How? What’s he going to do, type up a statement and nail it to a tree in the park?

This is a golden opportunity for Biden to get his message across. Why on earth isn’t he taking it?



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