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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 November 1979

Bennie Penrite

Dear Michael,

Visit of the King and Queen of Tonga

King Taufa'ahua Tupou IV (son of the late Queen Salote) and Queen Halaevalu Mata'aho of Tonga, who passed through London last week en route to a State Visit to the Federal Republic of Germany, followed by a visit to France, are due to return here from 1-6 December. The main purpose of their visit will be to see their youngest son, who is at the University of East Anglia, and their only daughter, the wife of the First Secretary at the Tongan High Commission in London.

The King and Queen make fairly frequent private visits to London. They were last here in February this year, when they were entertained to tea by the Queen Mother. The Queen has now invited them to a private lunch at Buckingham Palace on 4 December.

Tonga is made up of a group of Islands to the north of New Zealand, with a population of nearly 100,000. Despite its small size, Tonga's ancient monarchy, and the King's own substantial presence, invest him with great prestige in the surrounding Pacific Island states as well as in Tonga itself. Although Tonga has a parliamentary form of government, in practice the focus of power still centres on the King (whose Prime Minister is his youngest brother). The King has continued the Tongan royal tradition of maintaining close ties with Britain (even more than with his New Zealand and Australian neighbours) and he is very well disposed towards us. The centenary of the 1879 Anglo/Tongan Treaty of Friendship falls on 29 November this year. Although this Treaty has been superseded by later treaties, which have themselves fallen away except for an article providing for perpetual peace and friendship between Britain and Tonga, the Treaty illustrates the long-standing links between our two countries.

To the best of our knowledge, the King has not been received by a British Prime Minister since Mr Heath gave a dinner for him in 1972. The King told Lord Trefgarne last week that he hoped to meet the Prime Minister when he returned to London.

Although our direct interests in Tonga are small, it is, of course, a member of the Commonwealth, and one with which we have had links of over a century. The Prime Minister will, I know, be

/very busy

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very busy between 3 and 5 December. If, nevertheless, she has time to do so, Lord Carrington would consider it useful for her to invite the King and Queen to make a courtesy call; Lord Carrington does not consider that the Prime Minister need offer them a meal during this private visit.

yours ever
Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

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10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Would you like to offer the
King tea on Thursday, 4 December.

This will be free if you make

your statement about Dublin
on Monday 3 December?

Yes and And

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TONGA
B/F 30-11

22 November 1979

Visit of the King and Queen of Tonga

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 20 November on this subject. She would be happy to offer the King and Queen tea on Tuesday 4 December at 1615. This invitation will have to be subject to the proviso that it may be cancelled if the Prime Minister is for any reason unable to make a statement about the European Council on Monday 3 December.

I should be grateful if you could let me have briefing for the call by close of play on Friday 30 November.

MO'DBA

R.M.J. Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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