

PRIME MINISTER

Notes for the Tonga meeting on Tuesday



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

MAF
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[Handwritten initials]

30 November 1979

Dear Michael,

Courtesy Call on the Prime Minister by the King and Queen of Tonga at 16.15 on 4 December

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As requested in your letter of 22 November I enclose briefing for the above call in the form of a background note on Tonga, a short defensive brief on aid, and personality notes on the King and Queen.

The King is a good conversationalist with an interest in European history. (We understand that he spoke at length to Herr Genscher, the German Foreign Minister, about Bismarck). He may mention to the Prime Minister the exchanges of Ministerial messages on the centenary (on 29 November) of the Anglo/Tongan Treaty of Friendship. I have written to you separately about this.

4 December was the birthday of King George Tupou I (1845-93) during whose reign civil wars which had been rife in the Tonga islands were finally checked and in whose name the Treaty of 1879 was signed. Although the birthday is no longer celebrated in Tonga as it used to be, it remains an important date in the Tongan calendar.

Yours ever
Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

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10 Downing Street
LONDON



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VISIT OF THE KING AND QUEEN OF TONGA: 1 - 6 DECEMBER 1979

TONGA: BACKGROUND BRIEF

1. The Kingdom of Tonga is formed from a group of islands to the North-east of New Zealand. It is a constitutional monarchy - the only one (apart from The Queen's Other Realms) in the South Pacific. On 29 November, 1879, the King of Tonga signed a Treaty of Friendship with the United Kingdom. In 1900, Tonga became a British Protected State, and in 1970 a fully independent member of the Commonwealth. She is associated with the EEC under the Lomé Convention. She is not a member of the United Nations, but belongs to Pacific regional associations such as the South Pacific Forum.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

2. The single-chamber Parliament comprises 8 Cabinet Ministers, 7 Nobles elected by the 33 Hereditary Nobles, and 7 commoners elected by universal adult suffrage. There are no political parties. Elections are held every three years.

4. The focus of power centres on the King. His brother is the Prime Minister and his eldest son is Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence. All Ministers hold office at the King's pleasure.

ECONOMY

5. Almost wholly agricultural (statistical annex attached).

FOREIGN POLICY

6. Except where the King scents the prospect of aid (as he did in Libya which he visited in February), Tonga's main interests lie in the South Pacific. Her only overseas mission is the High Commission in London. There are British and New Zealand High Commissioners resident in Nuku'alofa and a Taiwanese Chargé

/d'Affaires.

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d'Affaires. The Australian Government have announced that they will appoint a resident High Commissioner shortly.

RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN

7. The King has continued the Tongan royal tradition of maintaining close ties with Britain, where his mother, Queen Salote, is remembered from the time of the coronation of H M The Queen. Relations are very friendly and the only outstanding piece of unsettled business concerns a British financed road development project in Tonga (see separate brief).

8. Our direct interests in Tonga are small. Indirectly we have an interest in Tonga as a moderate influence in the Commonwealth and in the South Pacific (where she enjoys, because of her monarchy, a prestige out of proportion to her size).

BACKGROUND TO VISIT

9. In the past two months the King and Queen have paid State Visits to Australia and New Zealand (6 October - 5 November) and West Germany (18 - 27 November). After Germany they were due to visit Paris briefly (for lunch with President Giscard) and they will be paying a private visit to the Netherlands before coming to London.

10. In Hamburg the King launched a ship built for Tonga with German aid. In Bonn, where the King met President Carstens, Chancellor Schmidt and Herr Genscher, two new aid agreements worth £3m were signed: one for the construction of a Marine Training Centre and one for an inter-island ferry.

11. The Queen is giving a private lunch for Their Majesties at Buckingham Palace on 4 December.

12. Personality notes on the King and Queen are attached.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
29 November 1979

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VISIT BY THE KING AND QUEEN OF TONGA: 1-6 NOVEMBER 1979

BRITISH AID TO TONGA (DEFENSIVE)

Points to make

1. No new aid commitments involving signature of further bilateral agreements, such as the Tonga roads project, are being entered into pending completion of the current review of the UK Aid Programme for 1980/81 and beyond.

Background

[For use if necessary]

2. British capital aid is being provided under a £1m loan agreement signed in 1977. Two projects - assistance for the Tonga Development Bank and for electricity development - were approved last year. They are going ahead: cost £870,000.

3. Ministers told the Tonga Government last year that we were ready to approve a project for roads development costing £548,000 and that the loan would be increased accordingly. But such an increase has been overtaken by the review of the UK Aid Programme.

[Not to be disclosed]

4. The reduced 1980/81 UK Aid Programme is already substantially committed. "Near commitments" like the Tonga roads project will probably have to be examined case by case in the light of the outcome of the review.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
28 November 1979

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TONGA:

HIS MAJESTY KING TAUFU'AHAU TUPOU IV GCMG GCVO KBE

Born 4 July 1918, eldest son of Queen Salote. Succeeded to the Throne on her death in 1965.

Educated in Tonga and at Sydney University (BA LLB).

Minister for Health and Education 1943-50. Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Education and Works 1950-65. First Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific 1971-74.

Although Tonga is still run on semi-feudal lines, the King is proud of the constitutional advances he has granted. He has ambitious plans for Tonga's development, but they tend to be grandiose and economically unrealistic. He is greatly respected in Tonga and in the other South Pacific island states.

Widely travelled, he has been a frequent visitor to Britain (his two younger sons went to Leys School, Cambridge) and is very well disposed towards us. He is well known to our own Royal Family: The Queen visited Tonga in 1970 and during the Royal Jubilee tour in 1977.

A huge, slow-moving man (6' 4" and 26 stone), the King nevertheless has an alert and enquiring mind and great personal charm. He is well-read and talks easily on a wide variety of subjects.

Married 1947: 3 sons and 1 daughter. A devoted family man.

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TONGA:

HER MAJESTY QUEEN HALAEVALU MATA' AHO

Born 29 May 1926. Daughter of a Tongan noble.

Convent-educated in Tonga and Auckland.

She has accompanied the King on numerous State Visits, and has frequently visited Britain. Well disposed towards us.

Patron of the Tongan Red Cross and Girl Guides, and takes a lively interest in their activities. She is a successful market gardener and poultry breeder, a keen churchwoman and an excellent cook. Very musical.

Devoted to her children, particularly her only daughter Princess Pilolevu (wife of the First Secretary at the Tongan High Commission in London) and her grandchildren.

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TONGA: STATISTICS

Population and Land Area

(a) Land Area	699 km ²
(b) Population (1978)	93 thousand
(c) Population growth rate (1974-78)	1.5 % pa

2. Economic

(i) Gross National Product

	<u>1976</u>
(a) Total	30 US \$ m
(b) Growth rate	3.3 % pa
(c) Per capita	350 US \$ (1977 US \$ 370)

(ii)(a) Balance of Payments

US \$ Thousand

	<u>1974/75</u>	<u>1975/76</u>	<u>1976/77</u>	<u>1977/78</u>
Exports fob	8,482	4,669	4,442	6,722
Imports fob	-20,853	-16,724	-15,992	-16,369
Invisibles & Transfers (net)	12,752	9,979	9,478	9,043
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Current Account	381	-2,076	-2,072	-604
Capital Account	2,431	758	4,533	3,471
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Overall Balance	<u>2,812</u>	<u>-1,318</u>	<u>2,461</u>	<u>2,867</u>
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(b) <u>International Reserves</u> (US \$ Million)	11.6	12.0	9.8	7.1

Figures refer to fiscal year ending 30 June

(iii) Foreign Trade

(a) Main Exports

	<u>1978</u>
Copra	58.9 %
Bananas	3.6 %
Desiccated Coconut	14.6 %

(b) Main Export Markets

	<u>1978</u>
Netherlands	29.0 %
New Zealand	22.3 %
UK	21.3 %
FR Germany	10.8 %

(c) Major Imports

	<u>1978</u>
Manufactures	41.6 %
Foodstuffs	27.9 %
Petroleum and Petroleum Products	10.4 %

(d) Major Sources of Imports

	<u>1978</u>
New Zealand	37.2 %
Australia	28.1 %
Japan	6.7 %
UK	5.9 %

(e) UK Trade with Tonga

	<u>1978</u>
UK Exports to Tonga	£714,000
UK Imports from Tonga	£794,000



30 NOV 1979

