Political Reform in Tonga

Responses to the Government’s Roadmap

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Catholic Institute of Sydney
2007
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Introduction

Andrew Murray SM

The four essays in this collection are the best of the final essays in the course unit, Social and Political Philosophy, in the Bachelor of Theology degree at Catholic Institute of Sydney during the second semester of 2006. The course began with a careful reading of Aristotle’s Politics and went on to a close reading of John Locke’s Second Treatise of Government together with other source documents of modern political development. In parallel, the students began a cooperative project of studying the geography, economy, culture, history, current events and constitution of Tonga, and the outcomes of this research were pooled.

The presupposition of the course was that Aristotle’s Politics offers a means of analysis of both political achievements and political possibilities that is broader and more open than what is usually offered by proponents of the modern state. The success of the European nation-state has masked the question of whether this form of constitution, often simply called ‘democracy’, and the kinds of economy and government that flow from it is the most suitable or even a possible form for every place, people and time. The question, however, is being increasingly asked in different parts of the world, including the Pacific.

An Aristotelian politic does not assume an abstract idea of constitution that can be imposed on any particular people. It rather sees political life emerging from natural communities of families, tribes and villages, so as to enable people to excel in a larger freer human environment. It assumes citizens who are capable of reason and of making decisions about what will be for them the best way of living. A form is educed from the political achievements and the material conditions in which the people live. Aristotle articulates four senses of what is best: the best in itself, which is a kind of ideal and in which only the virtuous rule; the best practicable, in which the participation of the different parts of the community are balanced according to their capabilities and deserts – the republic; the best that can be achieved within the limits of the prevailing material conditions such as geography, resources and temperament; the best that a particular people can achieve given the complexity of their own particular situation.¹

Events moved quickly in Tonga during 2006. Pressure had been building for some decades for reform of The Constitution of Tonga, established by King George Tupou I in 1875 and still substantially unchanged. It constituted Tonga as a monarchy in which the King exercises full executive power and in which nobles play a significant role. A National Committee for Political Reform (NCPR) was setup under the leadership of the Tu’ipelehake, the nephew of the King. The work of the Committee continued following his tragic death in the United States while canvassing the views of Tongans living there. Its report was presented to Tupou IV a month before the aged King’s death and the installation of his son, Tupou V. In due course, the Government responded with its Roadmap for Political Reform, a proposal of reforms that could be quickly put in place, building both on the NCPR Report and on changes that had already been trialled. A most unfortunate mix of circumstances led to a riot and the destruction of much of the business district of the capital, Nuku’alofa, when the Government hesitated to legislate immediate reforms at the end of the Parliamentary Session.

The topic of these essays, presented just after the riot, was changed by agreement during the course to meet the changing situation. It was, in the end, the following.

Building on your study of the geography, culture, economic possibilities, history, constitution and current tensions of Tonga, evaluate the Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform (19 October 2006) along Aristotelian principles, keeping in mind the limits imposed by the material conditions of Tongan life. It is permissible to propose changes to their Constitution that are not in the Roadmap or to suggest otherwise likely changes that Tongans may not be able to make because of their circumstances.

The students were all required to respond to the same topic but were allowed to respond from the point of view of the area that they had researched in the first part of the project. Sandra De Nardi had researched Tongan Culture; Roisin Lilley had kept track of current events in Tonga; Michael Pailthorpe had documented the history of Tonga; Andrew Curtin had examined the Constitution and its antecedents. Their essays follow in that order.

**Tonga: Participation, Tradition and Constitution**

**Sandra De Nardi**

...for many the best is perhaps impossible to attain; so the good lawgiver and the genuine statesman will have to bear in mind both the ‘absolutely best’ constitution and the ‘best in the circumstances’.  

*Aristotle, The Politics*

Every patriotic Tongan should be proud and grateful for this magnanimous yet momentous decision – one that in reality maintains intact in a peaceful, stable, and truly Tongan manner, the three pillars of our society, and ensures Tonga’s continuing stability and well-being.  

Prime Minister’s Statement, *Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform*

To Aristotle, the task of political science is to investigate the constitution of a state.  This paper will thus investigate what is the best constitution for Tonga, in its circumstances.  Three themes will be highlighted: firstly, participation and privilege; secondly, the constitution of Tonga, and related issues of authority and justice; and thirdly, the way of life in Tonga.  The role of tradition in Tonga will also be emphasised.  Lastly, in evaluating the *Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform (Roadmap)*, this paper will show that the current arrangements within Tonga, with its commitment to reform and change, are the best in the circumstances; best, that is, for the good of all the Tongan people: the king, nobles and commoners.

**Citizenship and Participation**

The issue of participation can be seen as central to evaluating the Government’s *Roadmap*.  According to Aristotle, a citizen is someone who is able to participate in a state.  Thus, for example, in the ideal democratic state, a citizen is someone who participates in ‘giving judgment and holding office’\(^2\).  The issue of participation is significant as participation of citizens contributes to the self sufficiency of a state.  \(^3\)  In Tonga, the participation of a citizen can be seen in several ways.\(^4\)  Firstly, the *Constitution of Tonga (1875)* provides for participation of citizens in voting (s.64) and jury duty (s.28).  Possible amendments to both these clauses could include the deletion of the literacy prerequisite in Section 64, and, the inclusion of women in Section 28, respectively, to allow for the participation of all citizens in these responsibilities.\(^5\)  On another level, participation can be inferred by representation in government, both as a citizen who is represented, and, as a citizen who represents.  Thus one sees that the Legislative Assembly includes nobles and commoners (s.56).  A significant proposal of the *Roadmap* is to increase the number of people’s representatives from nine to fourteen, therefore giving commoners a greater voice in deliberation and decision-making.  Hence it can be seen that there are already existing avenues, and suggested proposals for change, to allow for the participation of all Tongan citizens.

A second element of participation can be seen as privilege.  An Aristotelian citizen is someone who shares in the honour of a state, that is, someone who is able to partake of status, respect and, significantly, privilege.\(^6\)  One such privilege in Tonga may be argued to be ownership of land.\(^7\)  In Tonga all land vests in the Crown (s.104).  The king may, at his discretion, bestow estates to the nobility, who, in turn, lease land to their clansmen.

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\(^3\) Cf. *Politics*, III, i, 1275b13.


\(^5\) Notably both issues may pertain to the participation of women.  Note: the first Article of the *Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) provides that discrimination against women includes any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of sex.  The concept of discrimination includes discrimination that is indirect.  For the provisions of CEDAW see the United Nations website: www.un.org.  On the issue of gender, the CEDAW committee report of 1994 has noted higher levels of illiteracy among women than men.  An interesting point about gender in Tongan society is that women outrank men: see, Edward, Gifford.  *Tongan Society* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), 17-20.

\(^6\) Politics, III, v, 1278a34.  In this paper, citizenship is widened to incorporate those Tongans deemed nationals by the Tongan government; this is therefore not necessarily those who are actively participating in government, such as, for example, ‘statesmen’ or politicians (cf. III, v, 1277b33).

\(^7\) This may, however, be a widening of the scope of what Aristotle saw as ‘privilege’ or honour.  The writer, however, views equality in land distribution as something all citizens should be free to access.  For a discussion on the right to land see Chapter V in John, Locke.  *Second Treatise of Government*, edited by C. B. Macpherson (Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1980), 18 -30.
There may be legitimate socio-historical reasons for this, for example, the preservation of land. A difficulty, however, can arise: the continuation of such a practice may undermine the constitution and state. In particular, there may be seen an element of unfairness to a practice, that, prima facie, does not appear to be for just reason. Secondly, it may lead to the unhappiness of the citizens; an important factor, as the virtue of a citizen comprises the upkeep of a constitution and state. The unjust actions of a decision maker, such as the king, may, as a result, effectively undermine the constitution. Ultimately, the participation and privilege of all citizens is important to a state and its constitution.

The Tongan Constitution: the Constitution, authority and justice

In effect, the constitution of a state involves the ordering of the inhabitants of a state. Three constitutional issues will be explored that show this organisation within Tonga. Firstly, an overview of the constitutional arrangement itself will be provided. Secondly, the distribution of power within the constitution of Tonga, and, in particular, issues pertaining to the authority exercised by the king. Thirdly, comment will be made about general issues relating to justice. As a preliminary point, a constitution provides a state with its framework: although a constitution can be amended, it remains the basic element of continuity of a state. In this case, Tonga is a constitutional monarchy, where its government is comprised of a king, the Privy Council, Cabinet, the Legislative Assembly and the Judiciary. Under the existing Constitution, the king appoints the sixteen Cabinet members (cf. s.51). The Roadmap proposes a decrease in Cabinet members to fourteen, with two-thirds being appointed upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister. In addition, the current quota of people’s representatives is nine; under the Roadmap, this will increase to fourteen. With these examples, one can see, once again, a greater participation of citizens, especially commoners. One could also argue that these proposals will lead to a decrease in the authority of the king; or at least, a proposed process of collaboration with the Prime Minister that will ensure greater accountability in the exercise of authority.

Aristotle provides points for consideration in relation to the legitimate exercise of authority. Primarily, it is the common good of the citizens that is the primary aim of a just system of authority. A constitution, and the stability of a state itself, can therefore be preserved when officeholders act justly. In particular, Aristotle provides that the unjust actions of a king, and desire for profit, can lead to animosity within a state. Several examples can be shown where the behaviour of a Tongan king may be seen as unjust, thus strengthening the need for accountability in decision making. Firstly, the granting of passports to foreigners for money can be seen, on one level, as a desire for profit, and on another level, as unjust. The level of injustice may be shown by noting that certain native born Tongans are denied citizenship, as are certain children of diasporic Tongans. Another example is shown by the squandering of money in poor investments. A particular point made by Aristotle that could be noted here is that kingship may be preserved by moderation. Financial problems have been created, or exacerbated, by national schemes to

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8 The writer admits that she does not know of the reasons for this practice. The Attorney General’s report on Tonga provides that each adult male over the age of 16 is allocated 3 hectares of farmland. See Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Kingdom of Tonga Country Brief, http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/tonga/tonga_brief.html. Accessed 13 August 2006. The AG’s report also notes, ‘(t)he expectation, however, that every man could thus meet the subsistence needs of his family has, and still does, constrain wage growth in Tonga. This causes wage growth difficulties in Tonga.’ Note also that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proposes equal access to land, see Article 17; see www.un.org.


10 Cf. Politics, V, viii, 1308a3.

11 Politics, III, iv, 1276a24.

12 See the Constitution of Tonga (1875).
increase revenue, such as those schemes involved in the search for oil, consideration of Tonga as a nuclear waste disposal site, and, constructing an airport hotel and potential casino. Other generally unjust scenarios may be seen in the imprisonment of pro-democracy advocates and government confiscation of The Tongan Times. These examples not only show a possible unjust exercise of authority, but also indicate the need for greater accountability. Furthermore, in 2003 the government passed a bill to ‘Tonganise’ the Press, curtailing press freedom in order to protect the monarchy. The issue of use of tradition will be highlighted later in this paper; what is interesting in relation to this last example, however, is that the Constitution provides for a general freedom of the press (s.7). This freedom, although enshrined in the Constitution, may nevertheless be limited, not only by proposed laws, such as the law of 2003, but also by custom. Thus a difficulty may arise where a given freedom is curtailed by socialisation or by the use of tradition by those in authority to limit dialogue, participation and freedom. This reinforces the need for an attitude of justice in leadership, and, as emphasised above, accountability.

Justice and accountability are important to the organisation of a state and its exercise of authority. To Aristotle, to be managed well, a state must have virtue and justice. Justice can be viewed as an equal treatment of the citizens of Tonga. In this sense, justice is exemplified by section 4 of the Constitution which provides that all are equal before the law, and generally, by the enshrining of certain principles of justice in Part 1 of the Constitution, such as, the general declaration of freedom (s.1), freedom of worship (s.5) and provision for fair trials (s.14). To ensure greater protection of justice, and the separation of powers already noted in the Constitution, amendment to the Constitution may be made by the deletion of Section 93, in relation to giving legal opinions upon request. Elements of a just system, nevertheless, are already found within the Constitution and will contribute to the purpose and aim of a State, that is, what is best for Tonga.

The Life of the State: Economy, Geography and Education

There are other aspects to the life of a state that contribute to its purpose and aim: the best life for its people. Firstly, to lead the best life, a people should be prosperous. Prosperity in Tonga can be shown by its own natural resources, such as the production of vanilla, squash pumpkin, and the fishing industry; resources that can then be used within Tonga itself, for example, by subsistence farming, and also, exported overseas. The economy of Tonga is also characterised by dependence on foreign remittances. Tonga has a monetary sector, albeit predominantly owned by the nobility and royal family, such as, telecommunication and satellite services; and, small business operations, usually operated by immigrants, such as the Chinese. There are also plans to improve the economic situation for Tongans, such as finding further potential industry within fishing and forestry. Lastly, handicrafts, such as mats, provide revenue. The economy for this state, as it currently stands, is arguably sufficient. Furthermore, there is an ability of all citizens, including commoners, to have access to a good life provided by wealth, such as the purchasing of houses or cars, education, and travel. The self sufficiency of a state, however, can be seen in other aspects of its life. Thus other elements necessary for prosperity, such as health services, may, for example, need to be improved. Furthermore, church and family play a significant role in the life of a Tongan. A state which has a close relationship with the Church, and church officials in authority, will certainly play a role in the management of the state. There are also other religious influences, such as the influence of traditional Tongan religion, and the influence of the British Church, which are also found within the Constitution. These principles can also be compared with provisions found within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; see Articles 1, 18 and 10, respectively.

20 See Wikipedia, s.v. ‘Tonga’, for these examples.
21 Wikipedia, s.v. ‘Tonga’, where it is also noted that, a) is of February 2004, those papers denied licenses under the new act included the Taimi o Tonga (Tongan Times), the Kele’a & the Matangi Tonga, while those which were permitted licenses were uniformly church-based or pro-government. The bill was opposed in the form of a several-thousand-strong protest march in the capital, a call by the Tu’I Pelehake (a prince, nephew of the king and elected member of parliament) for Australia and other nations to pressure the Tongan government to democratize the electoral system, and a legal writ calling for a judicial investigation of the bill. The latter was supported by some 160 signatories, including seven of the nine elected ‘People’s Representatives’.
22 In spite of this, such freedom is qualified: nothing said or written in the press can contravene the law of slander or protection of the monarchy.
23 Various authors refer to the attitude of obedience to the king.
24 Politics, III, xii, 1283a16 and cf. I, xi, 1253a29.
25 Cf. Politics, III, ix, 1280a7. Aristotle actually notes that ‘justice is equality … for those that are equal’.
26 These principles can also be compared with provisions found within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; see Articles 1, 18 and 10, respectively.
28 For these examples Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Kingdom of Tonga Country Brief. See also Mike Evans, ‘The Island Economy’ in Persistence of the Gift: Tongan Tradition in Transnational Context (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001). Other information about the economy of Tonga can be found at www.matangitonga.to.
29 Wikipedia, sv. ‘Tonga’.
30 The Attorney General notes: ‘Tonga has a reasonable basic infrastructure with well-developed education services, but other social services work less well, including health.’ See Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Kingdom of Tonga Country Brief.
role in the life of a Tongan – a role that can contribute to happiness. Aristotle asserts that happiness is the aim of a state; and, a blessed and virtuous life, or rather, soundness within a person, can also be acquired through nature, habit and reason. This introduces another element important to the life of a state, that of education.

Education can be seen as a significant factor to the running of a state and its purpose, happiness. Notably, it is a lawgiver, or decision maker, that has the duty of providing education to his or her people. In Tonga, education is free and mandatory up until the age of 12 years. Tongan men and women are generally seen as well educated. Two issues arise in relation to Tongan education and proposals for reform. Firstly, James highlights the emergence of what he calls an ‘educated middle class’. An emerging group of educated professionals, that are commoners, may make more demands on the government, such as for participation and accountability. James, however, notes that the pro-democracy movement itself is not a middle class movement. Secondly, the education of a statesperson and king is essential. Simply stated, decision makers, if well educated, give good decisions. Education therefore can be seen to contribute to a well-ordered and well-lived state.

Further Constitutional issue: Tradition
A last point in evaluating the Roadmap, and its proposals for reform, will be made about tradition.

The Roadmap provides for reform and dialogue about issues that are relevant to the people of Tonga, what the Roadmap refers to as the ‘three pillars’ of Tongan society, that is, the king, nobles and commoners. Arguments for reform do not include the abolition of the social structure of king, noble and commoner. Nor, moreover, should reform remove these classes. What may be of concern, however, is the concentration of power in the hands of the monarch and the nobility. These issues appear to be attended to by the Roadmap, and significantly, these reforms are approved by the king. Furthermore, tradition itself is important to Tongan society. This can be seen both in custom and language. Tradition, however, may be used to uphold particular institutions or ways of doing things that may not necessarily be authentically ‘Tongan’: that is, tradition may be socially, and historically, constructed. Thus, for example, the myth of the Tui Tonga may lead to a continuation of the extensive authority of the king. Another point can be made about democratisation. The pro-democracy movement has advocated for political reform including greater representation in Parliament for commoners and better accountability in government. As stated above, there does not appear to be a desire to abolish the monarchy. Instead, concerns incorporate elements present in democratic systems such as social justice, equitable land distribution, equal opportunity for citizens and public welfare. The Roadmap gives an indication that these issues are being noted by the Tongan government. It will therefore be interesting how contemporary Tongans, and the government, map their tradition and custom in a context that is appropriate to their current arrangements.

Conclusion
In summing up, Aristotle provides that the state is an association intended to enable its citizens to live well and nobly. In evaluating the proposals made by the Government’s Roadmap this paper has

31 Politics, VII, xiii, 1332a38.
32 Politics, VIII, i, 1337a11.
37 Politics, III, xvi, 1287b25.
explored three themes: participation; the constitution of Tonga, and the way of life in Tonga. Generally, the arrangements within Tonga are seen as best in its circumstances. It is these arrangements that enable its citizens and inhabitants to live well. What strengthens this argument is the apparent commitment of the government to reform and change; a commitment that will hopefully allow a tradition to evolve that truly expresses what it is to be Tongan.
Political Reform in Tonga: Aristotelian Signposts

Roisin Lilley

For one who has been firmly grounded in the notion that Western-style democracy is the best and fairest way for political engagement, treading the choppy waters of the current social and political unrest in Tonga presents a considerable challenge. One has to risk letting go of the lifeline of previous conviction and plunge headlong into the waves of possibility that there are other, equally valid, and perhaps better, ways of sharing political power, more pertinent to the particular circumstances of a country such as Tonga, and more meaningful and fulfilling for the Tongan people. Active disengagement from entrenched political beliefs draws one inexorably towards the wisdom and flexibility of Aristotelian political thought.

For Aristotle, the purpose of political life is to enable a community not merely to live (this is the function of families and villages), but to live well. A country is not simply a collection of individuals, but a community founded on affection (philia) and with a common interest in managing its affairs in such a way that the people will enjoy the best life possible in their given set of circumstances. The aim of political life must be the good of all citizens and this can only be achieved if all participate in the best way they can. Moreover, the best constitution should allow the people to “rule and be ruled in turn.” How well this is achieved depends on the extent to which difference in individuals and groups is accommodated and thus the form of government (constitution) should be flexible, open to change, compromise, and even a combination of aspects of one constitution with those of another. Indeed, for Aristotle, a “mixed” constitution (polity) is the ideal form since it prevents degeneration into extreme forms of government such as tyranny. Finding a middle way reduces the chance of factions developing, and mitigates the likelihood of conflict brought about by extremes of wealth and poverty. All of this indicates that a particular constitution is not necessarily permanent, set in concrete; rather, it is the nature of a constitution to accommodate change as and when the country and people for whom it provides governance encounter change in their make-up or circumstances. If, on the other hand, a constitution is working well, then steps should be taken to preserve it.

These fundamental principles of the Aristotelian ‘way’ hold great promise for the creative political thinking required for successful resolution of the current tensions in Tonga. Notwithstanding the fact that the voices of pro-democracy supporters in Tonga have become increasingly voluble over the last two decades, against the backdrop of Aristotelian thought one cannot help but ask: Is Western-style democracy the best or even a possible way forward for the Tongan people? On the other hand, does the Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform provide an adequate middle way for Tongans to engage productively in political life, that is, to decide who should rule and to deliberate about what direction their future should take? This essay is an attempt to respond to these questions but first, it is essential to examine the current political situation in Tonga and to explore the issues that have been a catalyst for change to the status quo.

The Current Political Situation

The pro-democracy movement which developed in Tonga in the closing decades of the 20th century was initially a response to what was perceived as widespread corrupt practices and lack of accountability in the Government. With the Constitution of 1875, introduced by King George Tupou I, Tonga became, nominally at least, a constitutional monarchy. However, executive power was located firmly in the king and bolstered by the highly-privileged, noble elite accountable only to the king himself. Thus, with very little input from the people, it was, in effect, an absolute monarchy.

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44 See Robert Sokolowski, ‘The Human Person and Political Life’, in Christian Faith and Human Understanding (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), p 188: “In our public discussions of political life, we tend to think that there is one form of government that ought to be installed everywhere. We call it democracy, and we are impatient if we find places in which it has not been realized; we call such places undeveloped countries, implying that they are politically either childish or stunted.”

45 Aristotle, The Politics, III ix, 1280b29; IV i, 1288b21; IV i, 1288b21.

46 Politics, III vii, 1279a22; III xii, 1282b14; III xiii, 1283b35.

Contrary to what modern political thought would call ‘constitutional legitimacy’, whereby constitutions are grounded in the will of the people, the Constitution of Tonga was created by the monarch and ‘granted’ to the people. Certainly, the Constitution was a significant political step for its time and served to engender in the people a sense of independence and pride in the fact that they alone amongst the Pacific Islands had, almost solely by virtue of their status as a constitutional monarchy, avoided colonization. It also served to provide stability of government for over a century.

The accession of Tupou IV in 1967 initially consolidated the general Tongan view that the monarchy was sacred. Well-educated and forward-looking, he created a vision for Tonga based on education and economics. Resoundingly successful in the former, his forays into the latter often resulted in foolish investments and a waste of public monies. Notwithstanding the fact that he took positive steps to lead Tonga economically and socially into the modern age, questions inevitably emerged as to whether his business ventures were for the good of the people or to benefit himself and the royal family. However, traditional loyalty to the monarchy and affection for the king meant that the strongest criticism was reserved for the noble class whose increasingly westernized and lavish lifestyles only emphasised the belief that corruption was endemic at all levels of government. Moreover, the rise in the standard of living for the people in the form of education, welfare, medicine, material acquisitions and so on, was financed mainly through foreign aid and remittances from the Tongan Diaspora rather than by economic development. It was these which helped to offset the effects of an upsurge in the population, a growing trade deficit, a downturn in economic growth and a degradation of natural resources.

From the outset, Akilisi Pohiva was the most vigorous campaigner for pro-democratic reform. Initially concerned with moral issues, under his leadership the movement came to focus more on accountability. Throughout the 80s and 90s progress was slow, hampered by a lack of cohesion and a unified sense of direction as well as deliberate blocking campaigns by the Government, ranging from press censorship to libel suits and imprisonment for Pohiva and others. Not only was the Government above the electoral process insofar as it was appointed by the King, but it appeared also to be above the law and, as the Constitution stood, the people’s representatives had little power to influence policy-making.

The first real sense that the constitution itself might be flawed and that constitutional change would be necessary came in the Convention of 1992 organized by the pro-democracy movement. The real catalyst for change, however, emerged in the opening years of the 21st century when the people’s political consciousness was sufficiently raised to acknowledge that their form of government was neither legitimate nor just. The flashpoint for change was the monopoly of the country’s power generation and distribution by the Crown Prince’s company, Shoreline, alongside a growing discontent with the unfair wage structure in the Civil Service. Huge public marches and largely unheard appeals to the King in 2005, ostensibly to protest against these injustices but, in effect, a call for constitutional reform, clearly reflected the groundswell of unprecedented popular support for

49 Stephanie Lawson, Tradition Versus Democracy in the South Pacific: Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 93
50 That the monarch is sacred is enshrined in Article 41 of the Constitution.
52 The literacy rate in Tonga is 98% with a large number going on to tertiary education and beyond.
53 Fonua, ‘Tupou IV Led Tonga Toward a Modern Economy’. I.C. Campbell, Island Kingdom: Tonga Ancient and Modern, 2nd ed. (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2001), 261, states: ‘Before the end of the century, almost all Tongans had piped water and sanitary waste disposal, lived in houses of solid materials, and had ready access to modern medical and educational facilities, instant international communications and foreign travel.’
54 For examples of corrupt practices see I.C. Campbell, Island Kingdom: Tonga Ancient and Modern, 241.
55 I.C. Campbell, Island Kingdom: Tonga Ancient and Modern, 261. With regard to the depletion of natural resources, Campbell says that ‘conservation legislation was enacted but largely ignored, with little or no attempt at enforcement.’ Although as I.C. Campbell, Island Kingdom: Tonga Ancient and Modern, 244-245 points out, the reformists had no unified notion of what form change should take. Pohiva ‘favoured a fully-elected Parliament, with a ministry elected by and responsible to Parliament, in the orthodox Westminster style. Others were far more conservative, simply wanting greater popular input into government and to be able to hold ministers accountable for their actions.’
56 Graham Hassall, ‘Governance, Legitimacy and the Rule of Law in the South Pacific’, 65 says: ‘The quest for legitimacy and democracy is, then, linked to the quest for justice. People have an innate sense of injustice, in the sense that they know when they have been wronged, or harmed.’
the king to surrender power to a democratic government. The appointment of a commoner, Dr Feleti Sevele, as Prime Minister was a welcome gesture of appeasement, but it was the appointment of the National Committee for Political Reform (NCPR) under the chairmanship of the king’s nephew which signalled the Government’s recognition that the call for change could no longer be ignored and which offered the people an unprecedented opportunity to participate, in a real sense, in political life.

After months of consultation with Tongans at home and overseas, the NCPR report arrived just before the death of Tupou IV in September 2006. Not surprisingly perhaps, it was clear that the people wanted the structure of monarch, nobles and people to remain, with changes to the structure and administration of government. The report recommended that parliament should consist of 17 People’s Representatives (formerly 9) elected by the people, and 9 Nobles’ Representatives (no change) elected by the nobles themselves. The appointment of the Prime Minister from the 26 elected members by the king and the appointment of the Cabinet on the advice of the Prime Minister were intended to act as ‘a bridge between the elected parliament of the people and the Privy Council’. All of this indicates a shift in the balance of power towards the people at the expense of the nobles, but the king still retains considerable power and falls far short of a mere figurehead. Notwithstanding the cry for the king to surrender power to the people in the 2005 protests, the retention of a fairly powerful monarchy is probably more realistically reflective of Tonga as a traditional society. The fact remains, however, that successful government under a constitutional monarch will require substantial sharing of power between king and people. Whether monarchical power would be sufficiently reduced in the NCPR model to appease the democrats remains to be seen. However, given the findings of the NCPR, even they would be unlikely to demand a Western-style democracy as the way ahead for Tonga.

Is Modern Western Democracy the Way Forward for Tonga?

According to Aristotle, when the circumstances dictate a need for constitutional change it is essential to introduce ‘a system that the people will be easily persuaded to accept … starting from the system they actually have.’

It is important also to consider what constitution is suitable to what persons” and “what is the best in the circumstances.” There is an acknowledgement here that political life is about people acting fully as persons in deliberation, debate and decision-making. There is also recognition that no single form of Government will suit all countries and that the best constitutions will be fluid and dynamic enough to accommodate the inevitable changing circumstances of those who establish them. Furthermore, it is clear that a constitution is made for and by the people rather than the other way around.

From this perspective, it seems unlikely that a modern, Western-style democracy is the best way forward for Tonga at this time. When people are ready to participate more fully in political life, as Tongans clearly are, if a particular form of constitution is thrust upon them, it will not necessarily be successful. Just because Western democracy sets itself up as the definitive form of government to which others should aspire does not mean that it is the right way for Tonga. Moreover, grounded as it is in party politics and so often identified with the abstract and impersonal concepts of the modern state such as ‘the individual’, ‘the economy’, ‘free enterprise’ and so on, Western democracy undermines the reality that political life is about human persons, not abstractions. Modern democracy is not the way forward for Tonga, not simply, as some say, because its population is too small, its economy too weak and its resources too few for it to realistically compete in the global market-place. Neither is it because the people lack the higher level of education necessary to proceed towards democracy nor because political change would lead to violence, as others fear.

For this writer, democratization of Tonga along Western lines would be akin to moulding the people to a preconceived form of government which, with its concept of unity as universalism, conformity and uniformity, denies the ‘unity-in-diversity’ which

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60 According to Aristotle, ‘monarchies are preserved by tending towards greater moderation. The fewer those spheres of activity where a king’s power is sovereign, the longer the regime will inevitably survive undiminished.’ Politics, V xi, 1313a18. This was echoed by Pohiva when he declared that ‘the monarchy which surrenders power is bound to continue.’ Stephanie Lawson, Tradition Versus Democracy in the South Pacific, 105.

61 Politics, IV i, 1288b39.

62 Politics, IV i, 1288b21.

63 Stephanie Lawson, Tradition Versus Democracy in the South Pacific: Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa, 108.
more readily describes the ways in which Tongans are able to work together to forge the best future for all.\textsuperscript{64} All this is not to say that Tonga should not have democracy in some form. Robert Hughes points out that ‘in most of the world it is better to be democratic than not.’\textsuperscript{65} This is probably more so for countries such as Tonga whose economic and social viability depends to a great extent on official remittances from large liberal democracies.\textsuperscript{66} However, Hughes goes on to say: …it is still arguable that democracy is just one form of government which does not necessarily require precise implementation of particular models drawn from elsewhere.\textsuperscript{67} He further suggests that the make-up of South Pacific countries might lend itself more to what he calls ‘a communitarian concept of democracy’.\textsuperscript{68} This opinion is reiterated by Graham Hassall, who argues that ‘representative’ democracy (as opposed to ‘direct’) through political parties often means less representation since it is the parties rather than the people who determine policy.\textsuperscript{69}

The crossroads at which Tongans find themselves is perhaps a unique opportunity to work out what form of democracy will, in their present circumstances, best off them ‘legitimacy and accountability’, as Hassall puts it, since this gives the people ‘control over their leaders and the laws that bind them’. Such government carries authority and is more liable to govern justly.\textsuperscript{70} It is unlikely that Tonga will choose a party system, not least since attempts to formally establish a single, cohesive party to fight for reform have founded in the past.\textsuperscript{71} Furthermore, the NCPR report precludes such a system. Bearing in mind Aristotle’s advice that constitutional change should start from the system currently in practice, and the fact that neither the pro-democracy leaders nor the people themselves wanted the monarchy removed, it is fairly clear that democratic reform in Tonga will proceed in the context of some form of restructured constitutional monarchy as was indicated by the NCPR report. Following the announcement and parliamentary discussion on the recommendations made by the NCPR, the Government issued its response which it described as ‘a Roadmap for Political Reform’. According to the Prime Minister, it ‘provides for a fine balance between the three pillars of Tongan society - His Majesty the King, the Nobles and the People.’\textsuperscript{72} Whether the balance is fine enough to provide an adequate ‘middle way’ forward for Tonga is discussed next.

The Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform

A cursory glance at the Roadmap is sufficient to say that the Government’s proposals are constructed in the direction of the status quo. While making clever use of key phrases in the NCPR report, it takes the too-cautious step (delaying tactic?) of not voting on the report but instead proposing to establish a Tri-partite Committee to consider the way forward and report back in a year’s time, unlike the NCPR which recommended various phases of action and a definite time-frame in which to accomplish them. Furthermore, whereas the ‘fine balance’ mentioned above refers to the relationship between the king, nobles and people, the NCPR introduces a new Tongan concept of ‘Balanced Will’, that is, a balance which preserves the status quo while embarking on a more democratic way forward. Inherent in this approach is the idea of a fresh start grounded firmly in a common sense of purpose to forge the future together – a unity-in-diversity.

Regarding the practical application of the proposals, the Government suggests that the number of People’s Representatives be 14 (up 5 from the current system and down from the NCPR’s 17), retains the Nobles’ Representatives at 9 and maintains strong monarchical power in

\textsuperscript{64} Robert Hughes, ‘Legal Pluralism And The Problem Of Identity’, in Passage of Change: Law, Society and Governance in the Pacific, 343, says: ‘Taking identity as a unity-in-diversity means that we can in some more reasonable way, retain the sense that the state is an association of individual human beings.’
\textsuperscript{65} Robert Hughes, ‘Corruption’, in Passage of Change: Law, Society and Governance in the Pacific, 47. With regard to unity and difference, Aristotle says, ‘But obviously a state which becomes progressively more and more of a unity will cease to be a state at all. Plurality of numbers is natural in a state; the farther it moves from plurality towards unity, the less a state it becomes and the more a household, and the household in turn an individual.’ Politics, II ii, 1261a10.
\textsuperscript{67} Robert Hughes, ‘Corruption’, 47.
\textsuperscript{68} Robert Hughes, ‘Corruption’, 46-47.
\textsuperscript{70} Graham Hassall, ‘Governance, Legitimacy and the Rule of Law’, 65.
\textsuperscript{71} Stephanie Lawson, Tradition Versus Democracy in the South Pacific, 107. See also, I.C. Campbell, Island Kingdom: Tonga Ancient and Modern, 249 and 251.
Cabinet appointments. While this may be an improvement on the current structure, it dilutes the level of participation offered to the people by the NCPR report. Another difference between the two proposals is the Government’s intention to establish constituencies, something the NCPR avoids on the grounds that the focus of ministers should be the welfare of Tonga as a whole. Again, there is this sense that plurality and unity are not incompatible. From what has been said previously regarding over-representation, a constituency system risks disunity and less representative government.

As a way forward, the NCPR report surpasses the Government’s Roadmap. The NCPR makes it clear that its aim is for the Government ‘to proceed and amend legislation in order for a fully elected parliament for the people, by the people, to be established.’ On the other hand, the Government opts not to vote and the Prime Minister vaguely refers to the possibility of a referendum ‘later on’ if the people do not agree with its Roadmap. There is another important point that should not be overlooked: like the current Constitution, the Government’s Roadmap is described in terms of something that has been granted as a benevolent response by the king. On the other hand, the chairman of the NCPR, makes it clear that the only way ahead is for ‘the report to be read, understood, shared, before action is taken.’ There is also a real sense of recognition that the way ahead must accommodate both tradition and modernity: ‘We are trying to look at an appropriate reform… to a complex duality, the structure of society, which is in the nature of our own identity of who we are as Tongans.’

Conclusion
The NCPR report clearly outlines a better ‘middle way’ forward for Tonga at the present time than the Government’s Roadmap for reform. It begins with the present system yet clearly defines a way ahead which promises real opportunity for the people to fully participate in political life – ‘to rule and be ruled’. It also recognizes the principle of unity-in-diversity, reconciling differences and offering shared participation in the common purpose of forging the best future possible for Tonga at this watershed in the country’s history. Furthermore, it strives to blend the best of tradition with modernity. The Government, on the other hand, does not seem to have grasped the need to act swiftly to bring about political change. Earlier it was said that some feared that change would bring violence in its wake. It is more likely that inability or unwillingness to bring about constitutional reform would wreak havoc on the already troubled and choppy water that is Tonga today.

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Moderating Tongan Reform

Michael Pailthorpe

Keeping in mind differing geographical, historical, economic, constitutional, cultural facets and the current tensions of Tonga this essay will evaluate the Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform issued by the Prime Minister Feleti V. Sevele on 19 October 2006 in light of Aristotelian principles. It will show the divergences of the Roadmap from the Constitution of Tonga and what it offers. An assessment then will be made of Tongan political reform from an Aristotelian perspective highlighting reasons for reform and Aristotelian suggestions for a stable future.

The Roadmap for Political Reform is the Tongan government’s own response to the Parliament appointed National Committee for Political Reform’s (NCPR) proposals for political and constitutional reform handed to the parliament weeks earlier by Dr Sitiiveni Halapua chairman of the NCPR. The Tongan Legislative Assembly discussed the findings and suggestions of the NCPR report but then released their own statement on political reform. A month later pro-democracy demonstrators launched riots whilst parliament was in the last session for the year. This was due to tensions due to the government’s hesitation to actually instigate political reform.

Whereas the NCPR report included time frames and outlined phases for implementation, the Government’s statement gave no indication of when its proposed changes would actually take place. Dr Sitiiveni Halapua believes that the ‘rioters’ anger was fostered by the government producing its own ideas on political reform.

However, despite the Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform not implementing fully the NCPR report it does indicate a shift in power from the monarch to the people. What is also observable is that the monarch still has executive powers that keep the monarchical role from being merely ceremonial.

The proposal essentially gives the elected members of the Legislative Assembly the authority to appoint the Prime Minister and the majority of the members of Cabinet. At the same time it still provides an opportunity for the Monarch to continue to have a meaningful role in the governance of the country.

Also, the people elect two thirds of the Legislative Assembly compared to the current Constitution of Tonga:

> It is the King’s prerogative to appoint the ministers and they shall hold office during the King’s pleasure for such period as may be specified in their commissions.

The NCPR report removes the Monarch’s power to appoint whom he wishes. He could appoint only from the people’s elected representatives. What the Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform represents is the Aristotelian ‘mean’ or middle ground between the above constitutional powers of the Monarch and the NCPR report’s total removal of elective discretion from the monarch to the people.

We will now look into Aristotelian principles for further comment on the Tongan political situation. Central to the political thinking of Aristotle is the idea of justice, which is the only virtue in The Ethics to receive a whole book, which is dedicated to defining and understanding the differing senses of justice. For Aristotle, justice is not an absolute notion but rather depends upon the constitution, for ‘justice is not the same in every constitution’.

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76 Matangi Tonga Online, “Tonga steps forward with new road map for political reform”, 16.10.06, http://www.matangitonga.to/article/features/interviews/halapua_161006.shtml Accessed 17.10.06
79 Radio New Zealand, “Fires spread in Tonga as democracy supporters continue rampage”.
80 Sevele, Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform.
82 Matangi Tonga Online, “Tonga steps forward with new road map for political reform”.
Revolution or constitutional change is greatly influenced by perceptions of injustice and stability and longevity is achieved when justice is upheld:

The virtue of justice is a feature of the state; for justice is the arrangement of the political association, and a sense of justice decides what is just. 85

Many constitutions have come about because although everyone agrees on justice, i.e. proportionate equality, they go wrong in achieving it. 86

1992 marked the beginning of the Pro-Democracy Movement in Tonga, which also implied a desire from the people of Tonga for political changes. 87 It is important to discover what has led to this appeal for political reform. Tonga has been going through political, economical, cultural and even constitutional change during the last thirty five years, marked by the death of Queen Salote Tupou III in 1965 and by it becoming fully independent within the British Commonwealth by ceasing to be a British protectorate in 1970. 88 The late King Tupou IV has been described as a ‘radical modernist who has brought to the throne the seeds of political instability and change’. 89

In Politics V, Aristotle discusses what inclines people to revolution, be it gradual and incremental or sudden and radical. We will here cite passages from Aristotle and apply them to this period of Tonga life.

For those who are bent on equality resort to faction if they believe that though having less, they are yet the equals of those who have more. And so too do those who aim at inequality and excess, if they think through unequal, they do not have more, but equal or less. (These desires are sometimes just, sometimes not.) The lesser form factions in order to be equal, the equal in order to be greater. 90

It is important to explore what has contributed to feelings of inequality or to a sense of injustice within Tongan society, which would propel the people towards revolution. Since independence, there can be observed a strong commitment to traditional values and an anti-colonial rhetoric but there is also concern about where it might lead. And despite much of the rhetoric against colonialism from South Pacific political elites, these same elites have been said not only to lead a life style that mimics that of their former colonial rulers, but also to ‘exploit their own people, sometimes even worse than their colonial masters before them’. Another critic has noted the extent to which the ‘exaggerated mystique of custom’ has been manipulated in a clearly instrumental manner as a means of legitimising the aspirations and interests of ruling elites. He adds that many Pacific Islanders know this full well, and are not necessarily ‘blinded by their own symbolism and rhetoric’. But the people who suffer most from the ‘romantic approach’ to tradition are the ordinary people of the region. 91

These traditions are urged on the poor to maintain social stability; that is, in order to secure the privileges that [the elite] have gained, not so much as from their involvement in traditional activities, as from their privileged access to resources in the regional economy. 92

It has been this phenomenon that has influenced feelings and perceptions of equality or an unjust inequality with higher classes. There is now a noticeable but not extreme shift in constitutional thinking to remedy this, as the Government’s Roadmap states. ‘The Roadmap provides for a fine balance between the three pillars of Tongan society – His Majesty the King, the Nobles and the People – which the NCPR Report repeatedly cautions should not be discarded.’ 93

There also can be noticed in Tonga an increase in the quality education influenced by the Western education system, which heightens the critical faculties. Before this development, a highly authoritative socialisation process was in place. 94

The point that can be made here is that the desire for a monarchy lessens when a people become more equal in talent through education and virtue. Aristotle points out,

But nowadays kingships no longer arise, and such as do are more like a tyranny or a monarchy. For kingship is government by consent as well as sovereignty over more important affairs; the number of persons

86 Aristotle, Politics, V, 1 (1301a26), p. 296.
88 BBC NEWS, “Timeline: Tonga – a chronology of key events”.
90 Politics, V, 2 (1302a23), p. 300.
91 Lawson, Tradition versus Democracy, p. 4.
92 Lawson, Tradition versus Democracy, p. 5.
93 Sevele, Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform.
94 Lawson, Tradition versus Democracy, p. 7.
who are all on a similar level is large, and none of them stands out enough to measure up to the greatness and grandeur of the office. So for this reason men do not readily consent to be ruled by such people.\textsuperscript{95}

There are also more specific reasons that lead to constitutional change. Aristotle lists what he believes to be causes or purposes of revolution: ill-treatment, contempt, preponderance or disproportionate increase of a section of society, fear of punishment or retribution, the improper distribution of profit and honour (ultimately, a sense of injustice).\textsuperscript{96}

So it seems that every distinction leads to division. Perhaps the greatest division is between virtue and vice, after that the distinction between wealth and poverty, and the rest after that in varying degrees.\textsuperscript{97}

From the mid-1980s until the end of the century, reactions to perceptions of corruption and the misuse of power made the pro-democracy movement a defining feature of Tongan politics.\textsuperscript{98} In particular, pro-democracy leader and Member of Parliament, Akilisi Pohiva, continually spoke about accountability, and exposed corruption and incompetence. ‘The electorate heard again about passports, parliamentary allowances, mismanagement in Parliament and in government generally, corruption in high places, favouritism in licensing and contracts, and so on.’\textsuperscript{99} Pohiva became a hero and was compared to David against Goliath, which seems similar to the battle between democrats and oligarchs. When oligarchs, or the rich, ‘wrong the multitude, … any champion is good enough, particularly when the multitude happens to be led by someone from the oligarchy itself.’\textsuperscript{100}

At the official level, Pohiva exposed the ability of politicians and senior servants to manipulate their positions, to obtain supplementary, legal (or illegal, according to some of Pohiva’s allegations) payments for travel, daily allowances, use of vehicles and other privileges beyond the basic purpose for which things existed. Bribery to obtain land grants was widely acknowledged. Government and aid-funded scholarships for overseas study favoured candidates whose connections were better than their academic merits. Government contracts similarly attracted allegations of favouritism, and aid funds were allegedly channelled into private pockets by one means or another.\textsuperscript{101}

This led to many changes including a Public Complaints Office established in 1999. It was these perceptions of corruption that became a driving force for political reform in the pro-democracy campaign.\textsuperscript{102}

Aristotle also speaks about immediate causes for change, which can give insight into contemporary Tongan events.

That those who are responsible for the acquisition of power, whether they be private individuals or officials or tribes, or whatever aggregate or part you will, it is they who provoke faction. They may do so indirectly, as when the rest, jealous of the honour bestowed on them, start up the faction, but also directly, when they themselves are so preponderant that they are no longer content to remain on terms of equality with the rest.\textsuperscript{103}

Tonga experienced protests, in May 2005, when ‘10,000 people - a tenth of the resident population - took to the streets demanding democracy and public ownership of key assets.’\textsuperscript{104} The situation reached flashpoint when on 16 November 2006 riots broke out as a result of tensions over the slowness of the Tongan Government to implement reforms. The Government responded to the riots and held an emergency cabinet meeting to deal with the devastation. Much the business district of Nuku’alofa had been destroyed and eight people were found dead.\textsuperscript{105}

There has been new tension in Tonga as advocates of political change feel the government is not moving fast enough on recommendations made by a report on democracy. Tongan government held an urgent Cabinet meeting approving the people’s demands that 21 Tongan MPs will be appointed democratically by 2008. The government had proposed putting reform ideas to a subcommittee for it to consider next year, but the pro-democracy activists

\textsuperscript{95} Aristotle, The Politics, V, 5 (1312b42), p. 342.
\textsuperscript{96} Aristotle, The Politics, V, 3 (1302b5-1303b17), pp. 301-305.
\textsuperscript{97} Aristotle, The Politics, V, 3 (1303b10), p. 305.
\textsuperscript{99} Campbell, Island Kingdom, p. 249.
\textsuperscript{100} Politics, V, 6 (1305a38), p. 314.
\textsuperscript{101} Campbell, Island Kingdom, p. 241.
\textsuperscript{102} Campbell, Island Kingdom, p. 242.
\textsuperscript{103} Aristotle, The Politics, V, 4 (1304a33), pp. 308-309.
\textsuperscript{104} Radio New Zealand, “Fires spread in Tonga as democracy supporters continue rampage”.
want to ensure changes are in place for the next general election in 2008.\textsuperscript{106}

Democracy movement leader Akilisi Pohiva condemned the intervention of foreign forces as further proof of the unelected Tongan government’s failure to heed warnings of unrest, the ABC reported. Pohiva said the violence was a regrettable part of the process of democratic change sweeping the country. The democracy movement has called on George Tupou V, who assumed the throne after his father’s death in September, to dissolve parliament and appoint an interim administration before holding democratic elections. However, the first move by Tonga’s cabinet has been to establish a committee to assess the damage caused by the rioting and make reconstruction plans.\textsuperscript{107}

We now move further into evaluating the Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform. We have outlined what has contributed to the inclination for political reforms and have thus shown what needs to be done to preserve or make changes that endure. For as Aristotle says,

The first obvious point to make is that if indeed we do understand the causes of their destruction, then we understand also the causes of their preservation. For opposites are productive of opposites, and destruction is the opposite of preservation.\textsuperscript{108}

Key comments made by Aristotle serve as important suggestions for the Tongan political situation. Firstly, Aristotle claims that there is stability when those who hold office treat all peoples whether poor, rich, citizens, and non-citizens ‘justly’.\textsuperscript{109} Secondly, it is important ‘not to augment the power of any one man out of proportion; for men become corrupt and not everyone can master the intoxication of success’.\textsuperscript{110}

Thirdly, exceptional prosperity in one section of the state is to be guarded against; ‘an endeavour should be made either to merge the poor population with the rich or to augment the middle; this dissolves the factions that are due to the inequality.’\textsuperscript{111} And fourthly, that the rich should be treated with restraint and provision made for the poor.\textsuperscript{112}

Aristotle also adds that a ‘tremendous capability for the work involved in the office’ is needed as well as to follow ‘the principle of the middle way’.\textsuperscript{113} However, one of the most important statements Aristotle makes that can apply to the current situation in Tonga and its future is found in his advice on preservation of monarchies and safeguarding against tyrannies.

Kingships are preserved by tending towards greater moderation. The fewer those spheres of activity where a king’s power is sovereign, the longer the regime will inevitably survive undiminished. They themselves become less like masters, and more like their subjects in character, and therefore arouse less envy among them.\textsuperscript{114}

A distinctive feature of the Government’s Roadmap is its moderation. As aforementioned, the NCPR report shifted power away from the monarchy to the people. The Government’s Roadmap limits this by keeping a third of the Monarch’s current discretionary powers. However, it is important to keep in mind the above statement of Aristotle that there should be a moderate move away from absolute sovereignty to become more like the people. Also an understanding of Aristotle’s ‘middle constitution’ proves helpful as a constitutional target.

In all states there are three state-sections: the very well-off, the very badly off, and thirdly those in between. Since therefore it is agreed that moderation and a middle position are best, it is clear that, in the matter of the goods of fortune also, to own a middling amount is best of all.\textsuperscript{115}

For the very well-off ‘incline more to arrogance and crime on a large scale’ and the badly off ‘are more than averagely prone to wicked ways and petty crime’.\textsuperscript{116}

It is the middle citizens in a state who are the most secure: they neither covet, like the poor, the possessions of others, nor do others covet theirs as the poor covet those of the rich. So they live without risk, not scheming and not being schemed against.\textsuperscript{117}

Built upon an understanding of Tonga and with particular attention to the Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform an evaluation has now been given, based on Aristotelian principles, which have

\textsuperscript{106} Radio New Zealand, “Fires spread in Tonga as democracy supporters continue rampage”.


\textsuperscript{108} Politics, V, 8 (1307b26), p. 323.

\textsuperscript{109} Politics, V, 8 (1308a10), p. 324.

\textsuperscript{110} Politics, V, 8 (1308b10), p. 326.

\textsuperscript{111} Politics, V, 8 (1308b24), p. 326.

\textsuperscript{112} Politics, V, 8 (1309a14), pp. 327-328.

\textsuperscript{113} Politics, V, 9 (1309a33), pp. 329-330.

\textsuperscript{114} Politics, V, 11 (1313a19), p. 344.

\textsuperscript{115} Politics, IV, 11 (1295b1), p. 266.

\textsuperscript{116} Politics, IV, 11 (1295b8), p. 266.

\textsuperscript{117} Politics, IV, 11 (1295b28), p. 267.
helped us understand the reasons for the inclination towards change among the Tongan people. Aristotelian principles have helped us understand the changes and values that endure in a constitution, which can certainly serve the current political issues of Tonga. Especially in a time when Tonga’s political situation is uncertain, the principles of justice and of the middle way could contribute much to the constitutional development of Tonga, and hence to its future stability and well-being.
In his *Politics*, Aristotle distinguishes between four different senses of the “best” Constitution. There is a sense in which the best constitution is the constitution one would ‘pray for’ in utopian material conditions. Alternatively, the best constitution may mean the best constitution which might be achieved in the particular material circumstances obtaining in a real place. Again, the best constitution may be the existing constitution of that place because it is the constitution which has actually been achieved in those circumstances. Finally, the best constitution may refer to a form of government which is most practicable for most places.\(^{118}\) Although Aristotle stresses the significance of material circumstances in shaping the particular constitutions which are appropriate to them, the fourth sense in which he understands “best” is legitimate because he posits the political community as a community which arises according to nature and which, as a result, must be informed by anthropological considerations.\(^{119}\) Thus, all constitutions must achieve certain outcomes for the people in whatever the circumstances of a place may be. Moreover, it is possible to evaluate the extent to which a constitution achieves those outcomes in the particular material circumstances of the place for which it is adopted. These anthropological considerations provide the content for the criterion of “best” against which the proposed reforms to the Constitution of Tonga must be evaluated.

The political community is aimed at self-sufficiency and human flourishing.\(^ {120}\) Self-sufficiency refers not only to economic affairs but to all the external goods which are necessary for the flourishing of its members’ lives. The political community is made up of citizens who are formally defined as those people who participate in the deliberative and official or judicial life of the community.\(^ {121}\) The citizens’ proper claim to political power is their having the virtues which enable them to participate in the political life of the community.\(^ {122}\) It is, thus, the citizens’ “practical wisdom” which enables and entitles them to participate in political life.\(^ {123}\) This participation in political life promotes the moral and intellectual virtues which are necessary for such participation. Further, the virtues promoted by political participation are the highest goods of human flourishing.\(^ {124}\) Aristotelian anthropology thus regards participation in political life as necessary for the full human flourishing of every person. Moreover, the political life of the community should be so constituted that it serves to inculcate the moral and intellectual virtues necessary for participation into the people who live in that place. The “best” constitution must therefore function as a school of political virtue in which its citizens can flourish by acquiring the virtues necessary for participation in political life under that constitution through participating in the political life of the community. This means that the citizens will have to be educated in the spirit of the constitution to display goodwill towards the constitution, tremendous capability for the work of any offices they might hold and the kind of virtue and notion of justice which suits the particular constitution.\(^ {125}\) Thus, the proposed reforms to the Tongan Constitution must be evaluated on the extent to which they operate to promote appropriate political participation by the people of Tonga.

Of course, positing participation as an anthropological postulate does not mean that every citizen will participate in the political life of a particular community in the same way. Aristotle’s definition of justice as proportionate equality\(^ {126}\) means that, in the constitution of a community constructed as a *polity*, justice will be met by political structures which recognise the differing capabilities of different sections of the community\(^ {127}\) and so provide opportunities for participation which are appropriate for each of them. Aristotle argues that, in the “best” democracy, the important offices should be filled by the ‘best’ men whereas popular offices (like jury service) should be filled from the citizenry generally because this arrangement will not only


\(^{119}\) *Politics*, I, ii.

\(^{120}\) *Politics*, I, ii.

\(^{121}\) *Politics*, I, iii.

\(^{122}\) *Politics*, I, iii.

\(^{123}\) *Politics*, VII, ii-iii.

\(^{124}\) *Politics*, VII, i.

\(^{125}\) *Politics*, V, ix.

\(^{126}\) *Politics*, 1301a25.

\(^{127}\) *Politics*, IV, iii.
satisfy the sense of honour of the ριστοι and ensure the smooth running of the community but it will also provide appropriately for participation by the populace in ways which best utilise their particular skills such as scrutinising the performance of holders of higher offices.\footnote{128} This practical aspect of the analysis relates to the “capability” of citizens set out in V, ix. However, this analysis also relies, in principle, on the application of proportionate equality. Aristotle considers that it is just that those who are best suited to an office should fill it and, in an aristocracy, the criterion of suitability is having the appropriate political virtue. This is the third of the requirements for citizens set out in V, ix. Because the polity tempers the aristocratic participatory criterion of political virtue with the democratic principle of popular participation, and vice versa, on the just basis of proportionate equality, it is the most stable and most meritorious form of constitution.\footnote{129} Therefore, the proposed constitutional reforms must be assessed on the extent to which they would enable Tonga to function as a polity in her material circumstances.

Aristotle defines kingship as the rule by one person of outstanding political virtue over others who lack the ability to participate in political life for the common good.\footnote{130} Thus, in a community in which one man has outstanding political virtue (and the rest of the populace lacks the virtues necessary for participation in political life), it is just that he should be king.\footnote{131} On an historical analysis, Aristotle regards monarchy as a transitional constitution. However, monarchy may also be understood as a form of government which is transitional in principle because monarchical rule is, by nature, paternal\footnote{132} such that the king must properly educate his subjects for participation in political life. The political virtue which justifies the rule of a king is his ability to transform his community into a school of political virtue in which the populace tends to greater participation in political life as they acquire the virtues which fit them to do so and which then, in justice, demand their participation. Aristotle observes that a kingdom is preserved by the king’s moderation which promotes the greater political participation of the citizenry.\footnote{133} Thus, the constitution of the good kingdom tends towards that of a stable, mixed polity.\footnote{134} This process accords with Oakeshott’s definition of the form taken by political activity as the “amendment of existing arrangements by exploring and pursuing what is intimated in them”\footnote{135} since virtuous royal rule intimates the future participation of the populace. Notwithstanding its ill-advised immediate causes, the current rioting in Tonga indicates the success with which a people now clamouring to participate were politically educated: so successfully that it outpaced the ability of the Government to respond appropriately.

The Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform proposes that the Legislative Assembly consist of between twenty-three and twenty-eight members, nine of whom are to be elected from among the nobles by the nobles and fourteen of whom are to be elected from among the people by the people. There is provision for the King to appoint a further five members.\footnote{136} Pursuant to s. 60 of the Constitution, the Legislative Assembly consists of nine nobles, nine popular representatives and any number of royal appointees. This means that the King can always manipulate parliament. Under the proposed changes, however, the noble and appointed members together will not outnumber the popular representatives. Since voting for parliamentary representatives is the way in which most Tongans participate deliberatively in their constitution,\footnote{137} a change which renders the effect of their vote less nugatory represents an enhancement of their participation. Moreover, the economic life of Tonga is such that the subsistence farming in which most of the population is engaged yields a rich living without too intense a workload.\footnote{138} This, together with Tonga’s symposium culture centred around the drinking of kava,\footnote{139} means that the Tongans enjoy the kind of σχολϕ (contemplative leisure) which warrants their greater participation in political life.\footnote{140} Tonga is a perfect example of the Aristotelian agrarian democracy in which the citizens’ political discussions are anchored in authentic lived experience such that they can make a valuable deliberative contribution without flooding the assembly.

Further, the Roadmap proposes that the King will commission as Prime Minister a member of the Legislative Assembly who enjoys the confidence of that House. The King will then act on the Prime Minister’s advice in appointing the majority of the

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{128}{\textit{Politics,} 1318b27.}
\item \footnote{129}{\textit{Politics,} IV, ii.}
\item \footnote{130}{\textit{Politics,} III, vii.}
\item \footnote{131}{\textit{Politics,} 1314a29.}
\item \footnote{132}{\textit{Politics,} I, xii.}
\item \footnote{133}{\textit{Politics,} V, xi.}
\item \footnote{134}{\textit{Politics,} IV, ix.}
\item \footnote{135}{Michael Oakeshott, “Political Education,” in \textit{Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays} (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1991), 56-57.}
\item \footnote{137}{See Aristotle, \textit{Politics,} IV, xiv.}
\item \footnote{138}{www.tongaholiday.com/experience/about/economy.php}
\item \footnote{139}{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tonga}
\item \footnote{140}{See Aristotle, \textit{Politics,} VI, iv.}
\end{itemize}}
Cabinet. Since, under the proposed changes, at least half of the members of the Legislative Assembly will have been popularly elected, the constitutional significance of the people’s right to vote will enjoy an indirect influence over the exercise of executive power because the appointment of the Prime Minister will be determined by the composition of the House and the King will ordinarily act on the Prime Minister’s advice. Similarly, the Roadmap proposes that Ministers will ordinarily be commissioned from amongst the members of the Legislative Assembly. In this way, Ministers are not only responsible to parliament but also, at a general election, to the electorate which may choose not to return them. In this way the constitutional reforms attempt to balance greater popular participation by all Tongan citizens as electors with a parliamentary system which confers executive power only upon someone whom a majority of Tongan citizens have (indirectly) agreed shows the necessary political virtue for the office. This change reflects the Aristotelian principle of justice by common consent.

Although these proposed changes mean that the popular representatives will no longer be outnumbered in the Legislative Assembly by the noble and appointed members, the Human Rights and Democracy Movement had advocated a more radical model to prevent the popular vote from being swamped. This model would have assimilated Tonga’s parliament to the Westminster system by adopting of a second chamber in which members elected from among the nobles by the nobles would have sat as a house of review. The members of the Legislative Assembly would then all have been popularly elected. Legislation would have been initiated in the Legislative Assembly and the Prime Minister would have been commissioned from among the members of that house. The Role of the House of Nobles would have been to scrutinize and approve legislation initiated in the lower house in the same way as the House of Lords. While this proposal would have strengthened the significance of the popular vote while respecting the nobles’ political virtue of tauhi kakai through their role of scrutinizing legislation, it would not have reflected the Aristotelian principle of justice by common consent since it would have deprived the nobles of real deliberative participation in the constitution. Such a change also runs counter to Tongan culture which affords nobles a real political virtue of ‘looking after the people’, and so would have been regarded as unacceptable by much of the populace. The Roadmap represents a better solution by retaining a deliberative role for nobles which accords with Tongan culture while preventing them from unjustly swamping the popular element.

The Roadmap proposes that electors, noble and popular, be organized into constituencies to elect representatives who are also required to have been living in that constituency for a period of years. This represents a change from the previous opinion of the National Committee for Political Reform that the creation of constituencies would tend to discourage members from focussing on the interests of Tonga as a whole. However, the geographical separation of Tonga into communities on various islands, some of which have limited contact with Nuku’alofa, suggests that the adoption of constituencies offers the best means for ensuring the participation of all citizens in political life. The Governors of Ha’apai and Vava’u already function to communicate political information to and to facilitate political discussion amongst the people on their islands. In the same way, a member’s regular ‘surgery’ in the constituency would be a means of keeping isolated citizens closely connected with political affairs in Nuku’alofa. Similarly, a kind of federalism would obtain amongst the members who, in discussing the interests of their constituents in the House, would reach decisions in the interests of Tonga as a whole.

While the Roadmap envisages that the King will ordinarily act on the advice of the Prime Minister, the proposal retains a royal prerogative for the appointment of up to one-third of the members of the Cabinet including the two Governors. While the King cannot flood the Cabinet with appointees under this model, the retention of this prerogative reflects the Tongan understanding that the King should properly play a real role in governing. Although the Roadmap envisages that the King will act on advice, s. 68 of the Constitution assumes that the King exercises real discretion in assenting to legislation and no proposal specifically addresses this. The retention of some prerogatives respects the ‘Tongan way’ which would disincline many Tongans from ‘offending’ their King by stripping

141 See Aristotle, Politics, 1318a30.
144 See Aristotle, Politics, 1317b17.
145 Fonua, MPs Question NCPR Proposal, citing Halapua.
146 Fonua.
him of his powers. This would make the proposed reforms more palatable for traditionalists and for the King himself whose support is needed for any changes to be enacted constitutionally. In principle, the political virtue of the King which would justify the retention of these powers is partly based on the historical association of the monarch with the establishment and maintenance of constitutional government in Tonga and on the principle that Tonga is built on the “three pillars” of the monarch, the nobility and the people who must continue, appropriately, to interact. The Aristotelian account of kingship suggests that the historical interaction of these three pillars resulting in the movement for democratic reform establishes Tonga as a good school of political virtue.

149 Sevele, Government’s Roadmap.
Epilogue: Where to Now?

Andrew Murray

Pressure for constitutional change has been building in Tonga for several decades. In many ways, it came to a head during 2006. Change of political arrangements had begun under King Tupou IV in 2005, but only as acts untaken by the prerogative of the King. 2006, however, was marked by tragedy. The death of Prince Tu'ipelehake, the people’s prince, who had led a wide consultation directed at bringing about a rapid but orderly change, rocked to nation to the core. The death of Tupou IV was not unexpected because of his age and health, but came before the process of change that he had inaugurated was complete and, of course, ushered in a new King, Tupou V, who has yet to fully establish himself in rule. The riot on 6 November 2006, which destroyed much of the business district of Nuku'alofa, shocked many Tongans and in many ways paralysed the Government, which has since put its energies into finding ways to rebuild the city and also into bringing perpetrators of the riot to law.

There are serious reasons, however, why the disturbance should not be allowed to delay the process of legislated change. It is a matter largely of the minds and hearts of the people. Their hopes have long been for change, and the Report of the National Committee for Political Reform was what many thought should be put in place. The Government’s Roadmap for Political Reform was a reasonable response to the NCPR Report, though more limited in its proposals than the Report. The Cabinet’s proposal that a Tri-partite Committee be set up to see through the details of change would be a wise step in normal times, but in the current circumstances is likely to be seen only as a delaying tactic, especially since the process is expected to run till 2008 or 2010.

What appears to have happened is that Parliament was unable to agree on specific constitutional changes and that the Government delayed a vote in an effort to buy time to work towards a better outcome. This is now complicated by the Government’s response to the riot and its necessary preoccupation with rebuilding Nuku'alofa. Delay in reform is, however, a risky business. As one young Tongan said, ‘He [Sevele] and the government are still talking about what happened but I think, personally, that they should have done something in order to soften the hearts of the people because I’m sure they are still angry at the way they have been delayed with regard to the late Prince Tu’ipelehake’s report.’

Despite its strong family ties, there are now deep divisions in Tongan society. Positions range from those of radicals who espouse a flat democracy and who could easily turn to violence to those who wish to retain the status quo and their own privileges and who might well use force to do so. The majority of Tongans simply want a Tonga in which they can believe and a Government that is more clearly transparent and accountable in its dealings and that more surely listens to the wills and needs of the people. For those in authority, the imperative must be to bring that majority on side quickly by means of action that assures them that their hopes are being fulfilled. The alternative is increasing radicalisation and division.

The King is new and although with his ascension to the throne he immediately gained royal power and the instinctive loyalty of his people, it should not be forgotten that as Crown Prince he was very unpopular. In order to establish his authority as something flowing from the hearts of his people, he needs to show the virtue of King and to assure his people that he will act in their interests. As Aristotle says, ‘Kingships are preserved by tending towards greater moderation’. There is much that he could imitate in the life and rule of his Grandmother, Queen Salote, who also came to power in difficult circumstances.

Parliament has not done well in coming to action, and it is perhaps there that the divisions in Tongan society are being played out. The democrats may need to be less strident, and the nobles need to endorse change, because it is they who have most to lose. If Tonga can reform its institutions in a way consistent with its culture and history, the nobles will retain their honour. If, however, it is pushed to something more radical, they will gradually disappear. Parliament itself will maintain credibility only if it can wisely respond to new circumstances.

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150 Personal correspondence, 19 February 2007.
151 Aristotle, Politics V, 11, 1313a20, p. 344.
Appendix: The Government of Tonga’s Roadmap for Political Reform

[Introduction]

Over the past few weeks, the Legislative Assembly has been discussing the Report of the NCPR on the views of people about the political reform that Tonga might follow.

His Majesty’s Government has also been considering, over a period of time, the various options possible to move the political reform process forward in a positive way.

One possible way which Cabinet has suggested is for the House not to take a vote on the Report, as that would be counter-productive at this stage, but to establish a Parliamentary Tri-partite Committee to consider the various possible routes, strive for consensus as much as possible, and then report back to the House next year.

The following proposal is the gist of what His Majesty’s Cabinet is recommending as the roadmap for political reform which the Prime Minister proposed to the Assembly on Thursday 19 October 2006, taking into consideration some of those proposed by the Report of the NCPR.

On his very first trip to Ha’apai after his accession to the Throne, His Majesty King George V told his people there, in His Public Address on the evening of the 8th October 2006, that important changes were to take place in the interest of all of Tonga.

Before outlining what Government considers are the milestones that underpin the political roadmap that it believes Parliament and Tonga should follow, it is imperative that our minds are cast back to the beginning stages of the Political Reforms which His Late Majesty started back in 2004.

The Recent Political Reforms

On the 10th of November 2004, the then Hon Prime Minister, Prince ‘Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, announced that His Majesty King Taufa’ahau Tupou IV had accepted the beginning of changes to the political system of the Kingdom as follows:

(i) His Majesty has agreed to a recommendation from the Prime Minister for the appointment of four (4) additional Ministers from the elected members of the Legislative Assembly;
(ii) The new Ministers will be ‘Grace and Favour’ appointments, with tenure of office depending on their retention of their mandate from their respective electorate;
(iii) Two (2) of the new Ministers will be selected from the nine (9) elected noble members and two (2) from the nine (9) elected representatives of the People;
(iv) The four (4) new Ministers will increase the size of Cabinet to 16 and His Majesty the King has agreed to make the appointments after the election in February (March) 2005;
(v) His Majesty the King shall graciously accept the Prime Minister’s advice on the appointments.

This public announcement was applauded by the whole of Tonga. It was in part the recognition by His Majesty of the need for political and economic reform and a response by His Majesty and His Majesty’s Government to the call from the People’s Representatives and certain sections of the public for a more democratic form of government.

After the elections in March, the Hon Prime Minister moved to implement what His Majesty had voluntarily agreed to. On the 21 March 2005, the Prime Minister made his recommendations, and His Majesty made the appointments as Ministers of:

(i) Hon Tu’ivakano and Hon Nuku from the Nobles’ Elected Representatives; and
(ii) Dr Feleti V Sevle and Peau Haukinima from the People’s Elected Representatives.

Then in early 2006 His Majesty made a historical decision and appointed Dr Feleti V. Sevele as the next Prime Minister of the Kingdom on the 30th March 2006. This was a momentous decision in the history of the Kingdom, the first time ever that a Tongan commoner was appointed to the position of Prime Minister.

In addition to the historical appointment of the first commoner to the position of Prime Ministership, His Majesty gave the Prime Minister the privilege to nominate his own Cabinet.

This subsequently led the nomination by the Prime Minister and the appointments by His Majesty of three new Ministers in May 2006

(i) Mrs Alisi Taumoepeau (from the Civil Service)
(ii) Mr Fineasi Funaki (from the People’s Representative)
(iii) Mr Paul Karalus (from the Private Sector).
Again, exercising His Royal Prerogative on the advice of His Prime Minister, His Majesty made two further Ministerial appointments on 1st September 2006:

(i) Afu’alo Matoto
(ii) Lisiate ‘Akolo
They were His Late Majesty’s last appointments to Cabinet.

In short, His Late Majesty initiated political reforms which He recognized as being necessary for the future progress, prosperity and stability of His Kingdom.

But most significantly, as His Funeral Biography states (p.33): “This led Him to set a precedent, momentous in Tonga, of appointments to Cabinet based on the recommendations of a Prime Minister elected by the people. At that moment, the Sovereign voluntarily became bound by a new precedent whereby He shall in future act upon the advice of the Prime Minister.”

His Majesty, King George Tupou V fully supports these political reforms and wishes to see them continuing.

But in moving forward with these political reforms, we Tongans need a clear vision of the sort of society we want and the values we treasure and wish to pass on to all future generations.

‘It is also imperative that the three pillars of our society – the Monarchy, the Nobility and the People – as the Report repeatedly stresses must all play an integral part in the political reform processes.

**Government’s Proposed Roadmap**

It is His Majesty’s Cabinet’s wish that these proposals be added to those which the recommended Parliamentary Tri-partite Committee will base their ‘talatalanoa’.

There is a considerable amount of “mechanics and details” that ought to be sorted out in order to produce a consistent, logical and solid political mode that will withstand the test of time, just as our Existing Model, brilliantly and robustly founded by King George Tupou I on our Society’s Three Pillars, has stood the test of time over the past 131 years.

Here then are the major blocks of the roadmap for political reform that His Majesty’s Cabinet proposes:

**Legislative Assembly**

(i) That the size of the Assembly be no less than 23 and no more than 28.
(ii) That there be 9 Noble’s Representatives and 14 Peoples Representatives

(iii) That the 9 Nobles Representatives be elected by the Nobles in specified areal constituencies with the current district/island allocation being maintained.
(iv) There shall be 14 People’s Representatives elected by the people representing specific, clearly demarcated constituencies. These will be allocated as follows:

Tongatapu: 7 (as per existing 7 districts): Vahe Kolofo’ou, Kolomotu’a, Hihifo, Nukunuku, Vaini, Tatakomotonga, and Lapaha Vava’u: 3 (1 additional - demarcation to be decided)
Ha’apai: 2 (demarcation to be decided)
Niua: 1
‘Eua: 1

In addition, there shall be residential qualification for both, the candidates and the electors, say a minimum of two/three years’ residence in the area where they live and vote.

**Cabinet**

(i) That Cabinet should consist of 12 to 14 Members, inclusive of the 2 Governors.
(ii) That at least two-thirds (2/3) of Cabinet shall be from the Elected Members of the LA
(iii) That that 2/3 of the members of Cabinet be appointed by His Majesty on the advice of the Prime Minister.
(iv) That no by-elections to replace those elected members of the Assembly who are appointed Ministers are held.
(v) That His Majesty retains the right to independently appoint 1/3 of the Cabinet (inclusive of the 2 Governors) either from within the Assembly or outside of it.

**Prime Minister**

(i) That the PM shall be an elected member of the Legislative Assembly.
(ii) The PM should be appointed by His Majesty on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly.
(iii) That the Prime Minister shall by convention have the sole discretion to allocate portfolios.

**His Majesty The King**

(i) That His Majesty should retain the Prerogative to independently appoint 1/3 of the members of the Cabinet inclusive of the 2 Governors and be at liberty to appoint them from within the Assembly or outside of it.
(ii) That should His Majesty appoint the 1/3 of the members of Cabinet from within the Assembly then the size of the Assembly will be remain at 23. Should His Majesty appoint them from outside of the Assembly then the size of the Assembly will be around 28.
**Conclusion**

This roadmap provides for a fine balance between the three pillars of Tongan society – His Majesty the King, the Nobles and the People - which the NCPR Report repeatedly cautions should not be discarded.

It also caters for the section of the public that advocates the complete overhaul of our political structure on the one hand, and those that advocate the retention of the same structures that have provided for peace and stability for 131 years, on the other.

The proposal essentially gives the elected members of the Legislative Assembly the authority to appoint the Prime Minister and the majority of the members of Cabinet. At the same time it still provides an opportunity for the Monarch to continue to have a meaningful role in the governance of the country.

In totality it reflects the Monarch’s voluntary willingness to share his constitutional mandate to govern with the elected representatives of the Legislative Assembly.

Every patriotic Tongan should be proud and grateful for this magnanimous yet momentous decision – one that in reality maintains intact in a peaceful, stable, and truly-Tongan manner, the three pillars of our society, and ensures Tonga’s continuing stability and well-being.

Feleti V Sevele

**Prime Minister**

19 October 2006