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FACSIMILE DOCUMENT LEADER

CONSULAR DIVISION
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

FAX NO 071 270 4134

PAGE 1 OF

DATE : 21 DECEMBER 1995

FROM : GENNY SMYTH

TELEPHONE NO : 071 270 4105

TO : BRIDGET BRIND, SED
DIANE PARTRIDGE, NENAD

CLASSIFICATION : U/C

CC: REBECCA AUSTIN, DICTD
NEIL KERNOHAN, TRIPOLI

PRECEDENCE : IMMEDIATE

Heather Drysdale

MALTA: MISSING AIRCRAFT

I ATTACH THE FOLLOWING FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

G Smyth

NFB 405/1

MINISTRY	
- 8 JAN 1996	
RY	

AMBASÁID NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON

17, GROSVENOR PLACE,
SW1X 7HR

Telephone: 0171-235 2171

Direct Line: 0171-201 2

Fax: 0171-245 6961

FROM: FAX 0171-823 1072

FAX/E-MAIL

Date: 21 December 1995

To: Peter Cross, Head of European Section, Department,
FCO, 0171-2704134

From: Paul Murray

Dear Mr Cross,

Further to my fax of yesterday, I am taking the liberty of forwarding a communication received yesterday from Dublin regarding the plane which disappeared between Tunisia and Malta on 3 December 1995.

I might give you a call later to discuss.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Paul Murray

Paul Murray
Counsellor

Miss Smyth (please speak).

Please fax to Malta airport.

and now

*that the political angles
seems to be sharpening, fax
to NEWS and SIDS and
SCTD.*

*CO
3/12.*

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CONSULAR SERVICES
72-76 ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN
DUBLIN 2
(FAX NO. 668.65.18)

DATE 19 DECEMBER, 1995

TO LONDON

FOR P. MURRAY

FROM J. LAWTON (Tel. 478.08.22 ext. 2370)

SUBJECT DESMOND BOOMER, MISSING

(P. H. J.)
Mr. Boomer's parents had a meeting with us this afternoon and elaborated on the contents of the letter. They said that Andrew Williams, who is due to return to Liverpool today, was also told by Dr. Scibeas (not Scribeas) that the aircraft was "on the ground in Tripoli" and that the pilot was suspected of having "piloted the assassination squad back to Libya" after the assassination of some weeks ago. We have undertaken to do our best to try to find out whether this report is true and whether their son is alive.

Mr. Cormac Boomer is a constituent of Dr. Joe Hendron M.P. and we understand that his daughter-in-law in Banbridge, a constituent of Mr. David Trimble M.P., has been in contact with the Foreign Office, but not necessarily to give them the details in Mr. Boomer's letter. Mary Lennon has also had contact with David Convery of the Foreign Office.
DEM

We think you should contact the Foreign Office at senior level - perhaps Alan Holmes who I see at meetings in Brussels - to let them know about the report that we have and its source and to see whether they have assessed its merits (checked Andrew Williams story direct with him or otherwise) and know anything definite about the whereabouts of the aircraft and the passengers. We and the Ambassador in Rome will wish to have some confirmation of the credibility of this information before deciding whether to approach the Maltese and/or Libyan authorities.

BASAD NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON

17, GROSVENOR PLACE.
SW1X 7HR

Telephone: 0171-235 2171

Direct Line: 0171-235 235 2475

Fax: 0171-245 6961

FROM: FAX 0171-823 1072

FAX/E-MAIL

Date: 20 December 1995

To: Peter Cross, Head of European Section, Department,
FCO, 0171-2704134

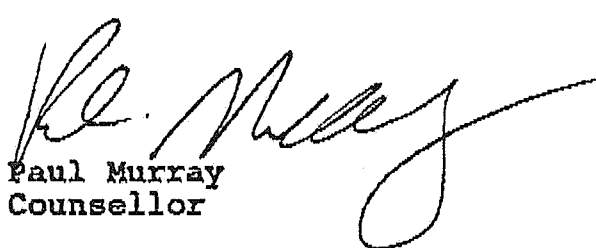
From: Paul Murray

Dear Mr Cross,

Attached, as promised, for your private information, is a copy of a letter sent to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin by Cormac Boomer, father of the Irish citizen who was a passenger on the plane which disappeared between Tunisia and Malta on 3 December 1995.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,


Paul Murray
Counsellor

Miss Lynch Please fax to Malta asking them to respect Mr Murray's request. - then back to me with all the pps.

He 21/12

36, Riverdale Park North,
Belfast BT11 9DL.
Telephone 616627.

18th December, 1995.

Mr. Sean O'Higgins, T.D.,
Head of Department,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
Dublin.

Dear Mr. O'Higgins,

Further to our telephone discussion at the home of Dr. Joe Hendron, M.P., on Sunday, 17th inst., I set out herewith the sequence of events as they unfolded from the moment we were first notified by a member of R.U.C. that our son Desmond was missing, this occurred on the afternoon of Sunday, 3rd inst., quote: We have been advised by your son's employers, Mapel Electrical Services, Darlington, (Mr. Bob Laurence, Phone 01325 282848 or 460604 that the plane on which our son was travelling from Djerba to Malta was missing - overdue for four hours and there was cause for concern, this information had been conveyed to my daughter-in-law at her home in Banbridge, Co. Down.

Upon receipt of this news I queried it's accuracy as my son was not due home on leave until Wednesday, 13th December. I contacted your Consulate office where the duty officer confirmed that it was reported that a light aircraft was reported missing on such a flight and that one of the passengers was an Irish citizen, this information was displayed on R.T.E. Airtel on the Sunday, Monday and Tuesday of last week.

I visited my daughter-in-law on Sunday evening and she confirmed that Desmond had contacted her from Djerba airport on Saturday evening around seven o'clock, saying the flight was put off until Sunday morning due to bad weather conditions. This was a brief conversation and the first indication she had that he was on his way home, earlier than expected.

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Monday 4th. I contacted the Consulate office at 10 a.m. and spoke to Miss Niamh Ryan who queried details of my son's birth etc., and subsequently confirmed that my son's name was on the passenger list, she also read to me from a fax she had received, details of the nature and extent of the search, this procedure was to become a regular feature of our twice daily contact in the days that followed, as always each day ended with reports that nothing, no wreckage, no survivors were found and the search would resume at first light. During this period I was also in contact with Mr. Laurence of Mapel Electrics, his response I found to be off-hand and less than informative given the serious nature of the problem we were facing, he did not volunteer any information re the incident and although given my phone number and promising to keep me informed he never contacted me, it was I who always contacted him and the response was always the same, negative.

Thursday 7th. Report from Miss Ryan in Dublin, search on-going, nothing found, American and French Navel vessels and aircraft have joined the search, Libyan government had given permission to enter and search her natural waters, nothing found, search co-ordinators in Malta reported concerned that no trace of wreckage, survivors or plane have been found. Miss Ryan supplied the name and phone number of the company who owned the aircraft, I spoke to Mr. Carmel Bartolo, son of the missing pilot, phone number 00356 466579 or 460838, during a twenty minute discussion Mr. Bartolo was in a very distressed state, his father was an experienced flyer of 20 years plus experience who would not put passengers or plane at risk in bad weather or indeed any other circumstances. During our discussions, Mr. Bartolo, who is himself an experienced pilot, made the following statement on three separate occasions, quote: Mr. Boomer, I just cannot accept that the plane came down in water and nothing floated from it to the surface, it was fully equipped with life raft, jackets, and even the seating is designed to float in the event of a crash.

-3-

Friday 8th. Miss Ryan reports p.m. the search by military and navel personell and equipment was scaled down and called off, nothing found, civilian search to continue over the week-end, organised and co-ordinated by Mr. Carnel Bartolo.

Monday 11th. P.M. Report from Miss Ryan. The civilian search continued over the week-end using a large number of private aircraft, some with trained observers on board, nothing found, search called off. Will keep you informed of any developments.

Today and in the days that followed I made numerous phone calls to Mr. Bartolo, jumior, phone endlessly engaged.

Thursday 14th. No change, nothing to report, unable to make contact with Maltese Government Department. No response from Mapel Electrical Services.

Friday 15th. I was contacted by a Mr. Jeff Williams, phone 0151 476 1790, Mr. Williams is the brother of the missing British man on the plane, Michael Williams. It would appear Michael Williams is a naturalised Maltese citizen, having lived in Malta for nearly twenty years, where he has his business and financial interests. Mr. Williams is divorced with a son who is a serving Royal Navy Officer (Andrew) (here Mr. Jeff Williams requested that his nephew's name and occupation be not referred to for reasons which I hope will become apparent). Upon receipt of information of his father's disappearance, Andrew who is currently on leave travelled to Malta where, using his rank and family involvement he has been making persistent enquiries in government departments regarding the loss of the plane, nature and extent of the search and general background leading up to the incident. It would appear that on Tuesday 12th Andrew Williams was taken to a government building and into the office of a Dr. Phillip Scribeas whom I have been given to understand was the co-ordinator of the military/navel search operation, when seated in the office Dr. Scribeas instructed his staff to leave the room and closed the door, he then made the following statement: I feel you have a right to know your father's plane did not come down in water, it is on land and we know where it is. Question, how do you know where it is,

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Answer: Our surveillance systems monitored it's distress beacon for seven hours after it's reported disappearance, now let me make it clear if you repeat this conversation to anyone outside this room I will deny that I ever made such a statement, excuse me, end of meeting. Dr. Scribeas has apparently disappeared from government building and is reported to be in Tunisia investigating the circumstances surrounding the loss of the plane at sea. (Official Maltese Government position.) In subsequent conversations with his uncle, Mr. Williams requested that his name be not referred to as the source of our Malta contact which I know you will respect.

Other factors which have been fed to me over the weekend via Mr. Williams are:

- (a) That the incident of the supposed loss of the plane is related to a political assassination of a Libyan diplomat in Malta some time ago, my son informed me when he was home six weeks ago that there was a general feeling of apprehension and unrest amongst migrant workers in the oil fields, that movement out of Libya would be severely restricted etc. Perhaps this explains my son's decision to leave early. It would appear to have been common currency in Maltese government and stock market circles during the first days of the disappearance that in fact the plane was hijacked to Libya to secure Maltese hostages to force the Maltese government to return documentation and brief case missing from the time of the assassination of the Libyan Diplomat.
- (b) Other comments which have been given to me indicate that Libyan government funds have been, prior to the loss of the plane, steadily withdrawn at a rate referred to as flood proportions.
- (c) That the pilot was under investigation by the Maltese Authorities for reasons which I cannot consign to paper.
- (d) The plane, a Piper 32, did not have the range to make the journey Djerba to Malta.
- (e) That the Maltese government air traffic control when advised by Tunisian air traffic control that the plane was about to take off, requested by Fax to hold it's departure,

-5-

the plane took off five minutes after the fax arrived.

(f) The twenty minute delay, according to Mr. Bartolo, junior, when I spoke to him, the plane would have been only twenty two minutes into it's flight and still some twelve miles inside Tunisian air space and natural water when she was reported to have disappeared from Tunisian Radar monitor, supposedly in a storm, not confirmed by weather reports.

(g) Why did Tunisian Air Traffic Control wait for twenty minutes to ask Malta if they had observed the disappearance of a plane in Tunisian jurisdiction.

(h) What is the significance of two reports of sightings of six survivors in life raft sighted in Tunisian water (subsequently denied officially) and a vessel which reportedly gave it's name and that of it's captain when it advised it had picked up six survivors. Investigations carried out indicate that although the comments were heard on search radio channels no such vessel or captain exists on any register of shipping. Items A/H give credence to the comment that the situation is both dangerous and messy, nevertheless I was advised as late as the evening of Sunday 17th inst., they are the subjects of public discussion in Malta at government and street level. Speaking on behalf of all the families of those missing our main concern is to establish that they are safe and well and in no imminent danger.

Mr. Williams suggests that his brother's American Express Card details should be checked out to see if it has surfaced and is being used, I understand Mr. Williams always used this method of payment when travelling outside of Malta, it is suggested his last payment would have been at the Djerba Hotel on the morning of Sunday 3rd December, 1995.

Boomer Boomer
18 December 1995

NFB 405/1

DEPT OF STATE

- 8 JAN 1996



(64)

British
Interests Section
Tripoli

Italian Embassy
Sharia Uahran 1
P.O. Box 4206
Tripoli

Telephone: 31191
Telex: 20296 BRITEMB LY
Facsimile: 45753

TO: FCO

DATED: 11/12/95

RESTRICTED

FOR: CONSULAR DPT

RFI: NENAD <
PUSD(VC)
DI(ROW)A2d

SUBJECT: AIRCRAFT CRASH - PIPER LANCE - EN ROUTE TO MALTA

1. Snippets of information or rather rumour, are still coming in.
2. The Netherlands Cd'A told me that the Canadian Embassy in Tunis - whose interest is in the dual national pilot, had informed him that the aircraft had instrument problems.
3. The Candian story is that the aircraft suffered a lightning strike on the inbound (Malta to Djerba) flight. The pilot is then alleged to have taken off "without the control tower's permission".
4. A resident British businessman, who was on the inbound flight could not confirm the lightning strike, but then, I am not sure that he would have noticed such a thing. If I remember my physics correctly, the effect of a strike by lightning on an ac is not the same as one by a SAM 7.
5. However, the same businessman called to see me and said that he had been reliably (!) informed that the Maltese authorities were saying that the aircraft actually crashed 12 miles inside the Libyan border, ie in completely the opposite direction to its intended flight path.
6. This improbable (in my opinion) story is justified by the allegation that a navaid satellite (unidentified) has picked up distress signals from Libyan territory. These, according to the businessman came from a life jacket. I have heard no other reports of this theory/rumour, and report it as is.

(D.J. Hawkes)

FACSIMILE DOCUMENT-LEADER

CONSULAR DIVISION

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

FAX NUMBER: 0171-2704134

PAGE 1 OF 2

FROM: Jem Convery

TO : Josephine Abela, Malta
cc : James Dunlop, News Dept
Bridget Brind, SED
Diane Partridge, NENAD
Rebecca Austin, DICTD

(63)

NFB 405/1	
REC'D REGISTRY	
20 DEC 1995	
SK	TR
DATE: 18 Dec 1995	
TELEPHONE: 001 270 4125	

*Consular Dept will keep
us informed.
per 12/12*

Dear Josephine

MALTA: MISSING AIRCRAFT

1. Further to our earlier conversation. I have spoken to Mrs Wray, sister in law of Des Boomer the Irish passenger on the aircraft. The Williams and Boomer families are now in touch with each other and have heard unsubstantiated rumours about some form of "Libyan conspiracy", and have not discounted the possibility that the passengers were taken hostage by the Libyans. I explained that I have received no information supporting this claim, and was not aware of any rumours. Mrs Wray said the family were considering calling the press for the usual reasons.
2. I followed the source of the rumours by calling Mr Geoff Williams, he says that Andrew Williams (son of Michael) is in Malta and is far from satisfied with the current investigations. He also says that Andrew Williams has information that he won't pass over the phone (!) Hence the concern from families in the UK. I spoke with Andrew in Malta (00 356 372 307). It is clear that he feels that he is being kept in the dark on certain issues:
 - a) The ship, Gonfulut, had given a report to the Djerba coast guard, stating that 6 people were spotted in a dinghy, and this report was later withdrawn.
 - b) He feels there should have been some visible wreckage in the area if a plane hit the water in a force seven gale.
 - c) The families of the Maltese passengers say that they would normally receive a phone call from Djerba giving estimated arrival time in Malta. And they had received no phone calls on the day of the incident.
 - d) The passengers would normally stay in a certain hotel before leaving for Malta, and did not on this occasion.

On point (b) he conceded that the entire aircraft could have sunk. Point (c and d) he agreed that this may have been due to

the fact that the passengers may have been waiting for an improvement in the poor weather, and may not have had time to make a phonecall. They could have easily arranged alternative accommodation on this occasion.

When pressed about the rumours of Libyan involvement he was vague, but said he had heard rumours from a Libyan businessman and would not give his name. I explained that if this gentleman had information he should pass it to the investigating authorities.

Andrew had arranged to speak to Mr Schabhari or Schabaraz (officer conducting investigation) the meeting was postponed, as this man was in Tunisia. Andrew feels that this is another factor which contributes to his conspiracy theory.

3. In essence, it would appear that Andrew Williams has not been informed of developments, and has no idea how the investigations are progressing. Can we do anything to put him in touch with the authorities? I know Heather gave him some names and numbers when they first arrived in Malta.

The families in the UK wish to know:

a) Whether the authorities are investigating the possibility of foul play, more particularly, Libyan involvement.

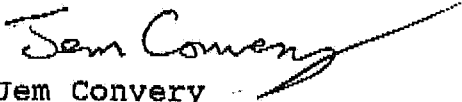
or

b) Are they merely investigating on the basis of a missing aircraft.

c) When will the official inquiry re-convene.

d) What form will the official inquiry take.

I would be grateful for any information or comments you have, so that I can provide some facts to the families and hopefully limit the growing damage and distress caused by unsubstantiated rumour. Will the authorities keep the families informed, or can we offer to pass on developments to them.


Jem Convery

MALTA: MISSING AIRCRAFT

MISSING PASSENGERS: MICHAEL WILLIAMS AND DESMOND BOOMER.

POINTS TO MAKE

- Consular Division in touch with the family of Michael Williams, a British national.
- Mr Desmond Boomer was travelling on an Irish Passport at the time of his disappearance. As family live in Northern Ireland and are constituents of Mr David Trimble MP, Consular Division agreed to pass on information to the family.

BACKGROUND

In the early hours of 3 December a small aircraft carrying 6 passengers from Djerba (Tunisia) to Malta, went missing in foul weather. A joint operation was mounted which involved search teams from Malta, Tunisia, Italy and the United States. There is no trace of the aircraft. On the 10 December the search was called off.

Families in the UK have now heard unsubstantiated rumours of "foul play", and believe there is a Libyan involvement. We have no reports to support these rumours.

Consular staff in Malta trying to discover whether the Maltese authorities are investigating the possibility of Libyan involvement. They are also trying to discover when the official inquiry will re-convene and what form it will take.

Jem Convery
Jem Convery
18/12/95

270 4125 CL617