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OUR REF: BS/AF/FACO

THE RT HON R COOK M.P.
THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON
SW1A 2AH

30TH MARCH 1998

Dear Foreign Secretary,

RE: PIPER LANCE INQUIRY

I have been contacted by the wife of one of the victims who perished on the above aircraft when it went missing on its way to Malta from Tunis in December 1996.

An inquiry was set up and Mrs Booner travelled to Malta in a bid to ascertain what stage the inquiry had reached after the last sitting in August 1997. The inquiry, chaired by Dr Phillip Sciberras was set up to establish the facts surrounding the disappearance of the single engined plane piloted by Carmel Bartolo and carrying five other members as well as Desmond Booner. All six are missing. Desmond Booner has dual citizenship. He travelled on an Irish passport but was born and raised in Northern Ireland. Mrs Mandy Boomer, the wife of Desmond Booner, has been trying to obtain a copy of the tape recording of the conversation between the Tunisian air traffic control and the pilot of a Piper Lance plane which disappeared on its way to Djerba. Transport Ministry officials met with Mrs Booner and she learnt that the inquiry was stalled in August 1997 after Tunisian authorities failed to release the tape of the conversation between air traffic control and the pilot Bartolo. She also found out that the Tunisians are claiming that the reason why the tape was not released was because the Maltese government had yet to initiate the procedural steps requested by the Tunisians.

This is red tape and diplomacy at its worst. Mrs Booner and her five children want to, need to know and are entitled to know what happened on that fateful night. The agony for Mrs Booner, her children and the families of the other men on this flight has been going on too long. Common decency demands that everything should be done to bring this nightmare to an end. This can only be done when the inquiry publishes its findings.

I would be extremely grateful Minister, if you could put pressure on the Tunisian government to release the tape and black box data for analysis in order that we can find out what happened on this flight.

I thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Simpson

Brian Simpson. M.E.P.



Brian Simpson

Labour Member of
the European Parliament
for Cheshire East

Cheshire East European Office,
Gilbert Wakefield House,
67 Bewsey Street,
Warrington
Cheshire WA2 7JQ

Tel: (01925) 654074
Fax: (01925) 240799

NEWAD

*For draft reply from
Mr Fetherby
9/4 please.*

*WJF
2/4*

*cc. PS
PS Mr Fetherby
5/4*



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Tel: 00 322284 5293
Fax: 00 322284 9293

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British
High Commission
Malta

3 December 1998

Kelley Austin
Consular Division

*Detail Air Accident
Investigation Branch, Farnborough
passed to Consul Division by
phone. No further action.*

P.O. Box 506
7 St. Anne Street
Floriana, Malta G.C.
Telephone: 239134-7

By Fax: 00-44-171-238-4517

PA, please,

Dear Kelley,

MISSING PIPER AIRCRAFT

3/12/98

*cc: Alan Dacey - (P)
AMD.*

fax: 270 3386

1. You may be aware of the case of the missing Piper Lance aircraft and the loss of 6 people on board in 1995. I enclose a copy of an article in today's local newspaper. I have also just been informed by Tony Mangion of the Ministry of Transport here that the tape recordings of the conversation between the aircraft and Djerba air traffic control have now been received by the Maltese Authorities from the Tunisian Government. Technical experts from the Ministry will be examining the tapes to try and establish whether any clue is given as to the cause of the crash.

2. One of the points Mr. Mangion raised with me is that the Ministry are to decide where to send the tapes for more detailed analysis: either UK or France. He mentioned that they are considering sending them to the Civil Aviation Authority at Farnborough. I am not entirely sure which department he was talking about. However, I wonder whether it might be worth while you contacting Farnborough to establish whether they have the facilities to conduct detailed analysis of the tapes and if so roughly how long it would take. The Maltese would like to get this case settled as soon as possible as it is now three years since the aircraft disappeared.

3. I should be grateful if you could look into this for me and let me know what Farnborough say. In the meantime I will keep in contact with the Ministry of Transport and let you know if any further developments arise.

4. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours ever

Alex

A.S. Page

Vice Consul

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remains a mystery

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the "big" and "small" of the company's 1997 earnings, says a company spokesman. The firm's annual earnings were \$1.1 billion, or 11¢ a share, compared with \$1.0 billion, or 10¢ a share, in 1996. The firm's earnings were \$1.1 billion, or 11¢ a share, compared with \$1.0 billion, or 10¢ a share, in 1996. The firm's earnings were \$1.1 billion, or 11¢ a share, compared with \$1.0 billion, or 10¢ a share, in 1996.

1945, and a second edition, 1946. The first edition was published by the National Bureau of Standards, and the second edition by the National Bureau of Standards and the National Academy of Sciences. The book is a valuable reference work for anyone interested in the history of the United States, and it is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of the United States.

[illegible]

that relatives to come to terms with this hurried matter be for \$50 or 100 flying hours. The flight instructor, who was also a pilot, was not happy for several days after the Washington accidents at the time of the flight. The flight instructor, who was also a pilot, was not happy for several days after the Washington accidents at the time of the flight.

what happened on 11 September is very meaningful as a watershed from what was before and what is to come. It is a day that will be remembered as the day when the world changed. It is a day that will be remembered as the day when the world changed. It is a day that will be remembered as the day when the world changed.

into the blood stream. The results of the study have been published in the *Journal of Internal Medicine* (2001; 250: 103-111).

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Document Title: MICHAEL WILLIAMS: MISSING PIPER AIRCRAFT ENQUIRY
Document Date: 12/04/1998
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Year: 1998
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DOCUMENT ATTRIBUTES SECTION: END

SUBJECT: MICHAEL WILLIAMS: MISSING PIPER AIRCRAFT ENQUIRY

1. The Maltese Embassy in Tunis have told us that the Tunisian Embassy in Malta have at last passed the tape to the Maltese authorities (under cover of their Note No 172 dated 25 November 1998).

2. For Madrid: please inform the Irish Embassy.

BENNETT

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**CASA DE IRLANDA
IRELAND HOUSE**

MADRID



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14 April, 1998.

Mr. John Dew
Ministro
Embajada Británica
Madrid

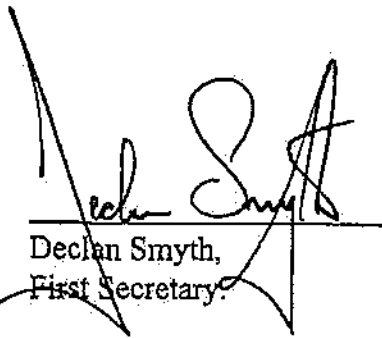
1 a fax
DAM / Tunisia
Mr. H. / NEWAY

2. per 1/1/98

Dear John

I attach recent correspondence between this Embassy, the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin and the Tunisian Embassy at Madrid concerning the disappearance of a small aircraft on a flight between Tunisia and Malta in December 1995. Those on board included a British citizen and a citizen of Ireland. I would be very grateful if you could arrange to have these papers transmitted to your colleagues in Tunis.

Yours sincerely,


Declan Smyth,
First Secretary

Handwritten: H - Boomer Case

CASA DE IRLANDA
IRELAND HOUSE

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Tel (91) 576 35 00
Fax (91) 435 16 77

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Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Irish Sea Fisheries Board
Pesca Marítima Irlandesa
Planta/Floor 3
Tel (91) 435 68 06
Fax (91) 575 80 82

FAX TRANSMISSION

TO: CONSULAR SECTION
FOR: DEREK FEELY
CC: JULIE CONNELL, EMBASSY ROME
FROM: DECLAN SMYTH
DATE: 7 APRIL 1998

No. of pages including this one: 3

SUBJECT: BOOMER CASE

MESSAGE: Derek - I am attaching a copy of the third person note received yesterday afternoon through the Embassy of Tunisia. This is the Tunisian Foreign Ministry's formal response to the aide memoire handed over by Ambassador Ryan to the Tunisian Deputy Foreign Minister during his recent visit to Tunis. In the Embassy's view this is an encouraging response to the concerns raised in our aide memoire. It states clearly that the Tunisian authorities have been, and continue to be, willing to assist the Maltese Inquiry. Specifically (and in written form) it removes any doubt concerning their willingness to hand over the TATC tapes to the Maltese, albeit that the request for this should be transmitted by means of the formal commission rogatoire process. It might therefore be judicious if we pressed the Maltese to expedite their consideration of the latter in order that the process might be set in train, thereby enabling the work of the Inquiry to conclude earlier than might otherwise be expected.

Regards.

República Tunecina
Embajada de Túnez
Madrid

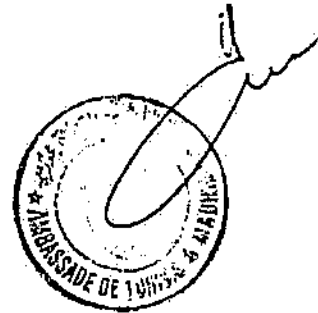
Ambassador - you will wish to
see (received today)
M/
6/4.

00200

La Embajada de la República Tunecina en Madrid saluda atentamente a la Embajada de Irlanda en Madrid y tiene el honor de hacerle llegar, adjunto, una nota verbal del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores relativa a la desaparición, el 3 de diciembre de 1997, del avión que realizaba el puente entre Djerba y Malta, con, entre otros, un pasajero irlandés a bordo.

La Embajada de la República Tunecina en Madrid aprovecha la ocasión para reiterar a la Embajada de Irlanda las seguridades de su más alta consideración.

Madrid, el 1º de abril de 1998



EMBAJADA DE IRLANDA
- MADRID -

REPUBLIQUE TUNISIENNE

~*~

Ministère des Affaires Etrangères

DGE/EC/2C

Le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères de la République Tunisienne présente ses compliments à l'Ambassade de la République d'Irlande à Madrid et, se référant à l'aide-mémoire remis par S.E.M. Richard Ryan, Ambassadeur de la République d'Irlande à Tunis avec résidence à Madrid, aux responsables du Département au cours de la visite qu'il a effectuée en Tunisie au mois de Février 1998 et ayant trait à la disparition le 3 Décembre 1995 d'un avion taxi alors qu'il effectuait une liaison entre Djerba et Malte avec, entre autres, un passager irlandais à bord, a l'honneur de Lui communiquer les précisions suivantes:

- Au cours d'une réunion tenue le 21 août 1997 entre les différents services tunisiens concernés, pour étudier la demande des autorités maltaises compétentes quant à l'écoute et la récupération de la bande des enregistrements entre l'avion maltais (9H-ABV) et la tour de contrôle de Djerba, il a été décidé de répondre favorablement à la demande maltaise à condition que cette demande soit établie sous forme de commission rogatoire internationale envoyée à l'autorité judiciaire tunisienne par la voie diplomatique.

- La transcription des communications air-sol a été adressée aux autorités de l'aviation civile maltaise le 5 décembre 1995.

- Des experts aéronautiques maltais ont procédé le 11 avril 1997 à l'écoute de ces communications à l'Aéroport de Djerba.

Le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères de la République Tunisienne saisit cette occasion pour renouveler à l'Ambassade de la République d'Irlande à Madrid l'assurance de sa haute considération.

**AMBASSADE DE LA REPUBLIQUE
D'IRLANDE
-MADRID-**



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INFO ROUTINE TUNIS

MISSING AIRCRAFT: MICHAEL WILLIAMS

FOR CONSULAR DIVISION AND SED

SUBJECT: MISSING AIRCRAFT: MICHAEL WILLIAMS

SUMMARY

1. Maltese request British help in search for missing plane and six passengers, including one British citizen.

DETAIL

2. A Maltese registered aircraft disappeared on its way from Tunisia to Malta on 3 December 1995. On board were five passengers and the pilot. One of the passengers, Michael Williams, was British, and another, Denis Boomer, has an Irish passport but his family live in Northern Ireland.

3. On 20 September 1996, Tunisian fishermen found what could be debris from a plane and a wallet containing the ID Card of the missing plane's pilot. The Maltese were informed of the find on 10 October, and have initiated a search in the area.

4. The MFA have made an official request for British help in conducting the search (copies sent by fax to SED and Consular Division). The request is a round robin and has been addressed also to the Italian and the American Embassies. They like us have passed on the request.

5. The request lacks precision and the Maltese have made the approaches a little prematurely. Col Vassallo of the Armed Forces of Malta who is our contact point in the team handling the response to the latest development has told us that the Tunisians are not clear on exactly where the debris came from. The fishermen had been trawling over a wide area. The Maltese are trying to establish with more precision what area might be involved. They would like a proper search with sonar equipment if there seems any possibility of locating the wreckage in this way.

6. The American Embassy think it possible that the sixth fleet might be willing to help. They detached a P3 aircraft from Sigonella in Sicily for the initial search for the aircraft and any survivors when it was first reported missing (as did the Italians). This help had been received with gratitude by the Maltese. (The sixth fleet absorb costs for this into the Defence Budget.) The Embassy think that they might agree to mount a search, if more information is available, as a training exercise.

7. In view of the British passenger on the flight we have an interest in trying to find out more about the loss of the aircraft. Any help would be well received. Is there anything the MOD could

uggest that they might do that might help in a search and location
f the lost aircraft?

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