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PS/PUS (L&B) - B

c.c. Mr Burns  
Mr Chesterton  
Mr Steele  
Mr Bell

- B  
- B  
- B

*Mr Jackson  
This may be of  
interest.  
J.M.*

PADRAIG O'MALLEY

My minute of 31 October, and Mr Bone's of 15 November, refer.

2. I undertook when we spoke this afternoon to let you have a note of the detailed questions which Mr O'Malley intends to ask PUS (Mr McLean, our CG in Boston, has just passed these on to me).

3. As I understand it, the background to these questions is the hypothesis that during the first and second hunger strikes there was a secret channel of communication between the Government - and in particular the FCO - and the leadership of the Republican movement via an intermediary known as "mountain climber". (I believe that this hypothesis is advanced in David Beresford's book "Ten Men Dead".) According to Mr McLean, O'Malley claims that he has been told by a number of sources that "mountain climber" did indeed exist, and he is therefore quite attached to - though not finally convinced of - this hypothesis.

4. Against that background, the specific questions which O'Malley wishes to put to PUS are as follows:

- i. Is it correct that on 18 December 1980 a Father Maher (?), a Redemptorist priest, carried certain documents into HMP Maze?

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- ii. At about the same time, just before the end of the first hunger strike, it has been suggested that "mountain climber" brought certain documents over from London and that these were the documents carried in by Father Maher. Is this correct? Did the NIO know about this FCO initiative?
  
- iii. During the second hunger strike, in June/July 1981, a number of meetings were held between Mr Alison (the then NIO Minister of State) and the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace. At the same time the ICJP had some meetings with senior republican figures, including Gerry Adams. Adams told them in confidence about "mountain climber" and indicated that a "good offer" had recently been received via this channel. At a meeting which the ICJP - Bishop Mahony, Father Crilly and Hugh Logue - had with Mr Alison in June 1981 they told the Minister what they knew of "mountain climber". Mr Alison seemed to know nothing about this channel or about the "good offer". However, a little while after this meeting Adams told the ICJP that "mountain climber" had become inoperative and the offer had lapsed. Mr O'Malley's question is whether the NIO was aware of "mountain climber" and the alleged offer?
  
- iv. In July 1981, "mountain climber" was reactivated and on 19 July he allegedly passed on a "better offer" which the republican leadership wanted to accept. However, the prisoners themselves refused to accept this offer without the promise of public assurances from the Government on certain points. These were not forthcoming and no compromise was therefore reached. O'Malley's question is, once again, whether the NIO was aware of these goings-on?

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5. Following our conversation this afternoon, I have confirmed to Mr McLean, who has now passed it on to Mr O'Malley, that PUS will be willing to see him in OAB at 11.45am on Wednesday 23 November. O'Malley is to let us have in advance a copy of his account of the 1986 conversation, and I shall pass this to you as soon as it arrives. O'Malley has also confirmed to Mr McLean that next week's conversation, like the 1986 one, will be on a strictly non-attributable basis. For completeness, I should also mention that Mr McLean has said that O'Malley is leaving Boston tomorrow and that while in Northern Ireland (ie 18-21 November) he will be staying with a Mr Lionel Shriver, whose telephone number is Belfast 668832.

(signed)

S J LEACH  
SIL DIVISION  
16 November 1988

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