

he later recounted:

"My eyes were covered with a cloth tied around my head. A cloth bag was then pulled over my head. ... I fell asleep. ... I therefore don't know how long the journey lasted."

Jerry M., age 56 at the time, probably sat at the controls of the plane chartered by the CIA. The trained airplane and helicopter pilot had been hired by Aero Contractors, a company that transferred prisoners around the world for US intelligence agencies. According to *****s from Eurocontrol, the European Organization for the Safety of Air Navigation, Jerry M. had taken off from Kabul at 8:51 a.m. that morning. Only hours after landing in Poland, at 7:16 p.m., he took off again, headed for Washington.

A large number of Polish and American intelligence operatives have since gone on record that the CIA maintained a prison in northeastern Poland. Independent of these sources, Polish government officials from the Justice and Defense Ministry have also reported that the Americans had a secret base near Szymany airport. And so began on March 7, 2003 one of the darkest chapters of recent American -- and European -- history.

Obama Under Pressure

It was apparently here, just under an hour's drive from Szymany airport, that Sheikh Mohammed was tortured, exactly 183 times with waterboarding -- an interrogation technique that simulates the sensation of drowning -- in March, 2003 alone. That averages out to eight times a day. And all of this happened right here in Europe.

Over six years later, these acts of torture are putting the new US president, Barack Obama, under intense pressure. On the one hand, he released four memos in which his predecessor George W. Bush had legalized such interrogation methods. On the other hand, he decided not to prosecute the torturers. And he initially neglected to launch investigations into these "special interrogation methods."

It is the decision that has earned Obama the harshest criticism during the first 100 days of his presidency. Democrats from the Senate and the House of Representatives announced last week that they would form a truth commission, essentially putting them at odds with their own president. Obama quickly realized that he had apparently underestimated the volatile nature of the issue. So he had US Attorney General Eric Holder announce that no one stood above the law. Holder promised that an investigation would be conducted to find out who in the White House and the Justice Department had declared these methods legal.

What the CIA did back then to prisoners in the Polish military airbase of Stare Kiejkuty, north of Szymany, had been authorized by the president. According to witnesses, Stare Kiejkuty housed a secret CIA prison for "high value detainees" -- for the most prominent prisoners of the war on terror.

There is now no doubt that the Gulfstream N379P landed at least five times at Szymany between February and July, 2003. Flight routes were manipulated and falsified for this purpose and, with the knowledge of the Polish government, the European aviation safety agency Eurocontrol was deliberately deceived.

The public prosecutor's office in Warsaw has the statement of a witness who described how people wearing handcuffs and blindfolds were led from the aircraft at Szymany. He said that this happened far away from the control tower. According to the witness, it was always the same individuals and the same civilian vehicles that stood waiting on the landing field.

If we are to believe the statements of Sheikh Mohammed, a large number of those present at the small airfield wore ski masks. This is what he told a delegation from the International Committee of the Red Cross that questioned him in the US military prison at Guantanamo, Cuba in late 2006:

"On arrival the transfer from the airport to the next place of detention took about one hour. I was transported sitting on the floor of a vehicle. I could see at one point that there was snow on the ground. Everybody was wearing black, with masks and army boots, like Planet-X people."

Just under an hour's drive corresponds roughly to the distance from Szymany to the Stare Kiejkuty military base, known as a training camp for Polish intelligence agents. The route there passes for two kilometers through a fenced-off military zone, past dense pine forests, then heads northeast for 20 minutes, and finally leads over an unpaved road alongside a lake. The entrance to the base is at the end of this road.

'I Was Never Threatened with Death'

Sheikh Mohammed said that they cut the clothes from his body, photographed him naked and threw him in a three-by-four-meter (10 x 13 ft) cell with wooden walls. That was when the hardest phase of the interrogating began, he claims. According to Sheikh Mohammed, one of his interrogators told him that they had received the green light from Washington to give him a "hard time":

"They never used the word 'torture' and never referred to 'physical pressure,' only to 'a hard time.' I was never threatened with death, in fact I was told that they would not allow me to die, but that I would be brought to the 'verge of death and back again.'"

He says he was questioned roughly eight hours a day. He spent the first month naked and standing, with his hands chained to the ceiling of the cell, even at night. They led them into another room for questioning, he says. That's where the bed stood that he says he was strapped to for waterboarding. The mastermind behind

the 9/11 attacks told members of the Red Cross that he eventually realized where he was being held:

"I think the country was Poland. I think this because on one occasion a water bottle was brought to me without the label removed. It had e-mail address ending in '.pl'. The central-heating system was an old-style one that I would expect only to see in countries of the former communist system."

Thereafter, the al-Qaida operative described how he was strapped to a special bed and submitted to waterboarding:

"Cold water from a bottle that had been kept in a fridge was then poured onto the cloth by one of the guards so that I could not breathe. This obviously could only be done for one or two minutes at a time. The cloth was then removed and the bed was put into a vertical position. The whole process was then repeated during about one hour. Injuries to my ankles and wrists also occurred during the waterboarding as I struggled in the panic of not being able to breathe."

Part 2: Investigations across Europe

For more than a year now, Warsaw public prosecutor Robert Majewski has been investigating former Polish Prime Minister Leszek Miller's government on allegations of abuse of office. At issue is whether sovereignty over Polish territory was relinquished, and whether former Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski and his left-leaning Social Democratic government gave the CIA free reign over sections of the Stare Kiejkuty military base for the agency's extraterritorial torture interrogations.

Majewski has questioned a large number of witnesses who worked in the former government, and this year his team even plans to fly to Guantanamo. "No European country is so sincerely and vigorously investigating former members of the government as is currently the case in Poland," says Wolfgang Kaleck from the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights in Berlin, which supports the investigations.

The public prosecutor's office has also launched a probe to determine whether the Polish intelligence agency made 20 of its agents available to the CIA, as was recently reported by the conservative Polish daily newspaper Rzeczpospolita. A former CIA official confirmed this information to SPIEGEL. There was reportedly a ***** issued by the intelligence agency that mentioned both the 20 Polish agents and the transfer of the military base to the Americans. Two members of a parliamentary investigative committee in Warsaw had an opportunity to view this ***** in late 2005, but it has since disappeared.

The Missing Piece of Evidence

Journalist Mariusz Kowalewski at Rzeczpospolita and two colleagues have been searching for months now for proof of the existence of a secret CIA base in Poland. The journalists have discovered flight record books from Szymany that had been declared lost, and based on refueling receipts and currency exchange rates, they have reconstructed flights and routes, and spoken with informants. Over the past few weeks, their newspaper and the television network TVP Info have revealed new details on an almost daily basis.

Kowalewski has collected a wide range of *****s on his white Apple laptop. He is convinced, though, that he only knows "a fraction of what actually happened." He is certain that there was a CIA base in the Masuria region, where high-ranking al-Qaida prisoners were brought. All that is missing is the final piece of evidence. There are rumors circulating that one of the most important interrogators of Sheikh Mohammed, an American named Deuce Martinez -- the man who didn't torture him, but rather had the task of gently coaxing information out of him -- was in Poland at the time. That is the proof that's still missing.

Similar conclusions were reached by the second investigative report on CIA kidnappings in Europe, which was submitted two years ago by the special investigator of the Council of Europe, Dick Marty. (Eds: The Council of Europe is an international organization and watchdog for human rights in a total of 47 states in the European region.) According to Marty's report, members of the former Polish military intelligence and counterintelligence agency, WSI, were given positions with the border police, customs and airport administration to safeguard the activities of the CIA. "The latest revelations in Poland fully corroborate my evidence, which is based on testimony by insiders and *****s that have been leaked to me," says the investigator today. Now, under the "dynamic force of the truth" that Obama has unleashed, Marty says that Europeans must finally reveal "which governments tolerated and supported the illegal practices of the CIA."

All that remains is the question of who in Poland at the time approved the collaboration with the CIA and gave the Americans unencumbered use of sections of Stare Kiejkuty.

"The order to give the CIA everything they needed came from the very top, from the president," a member of the Polish military intelligence agency told the Marty team in 2007. Kwasniewski denies this. He says that there was close intelligence corporation with the US, but no prisons on Polish soil. When asked to comment on the reports, former Prime Minister Miller said: "All of this is just another opportunity for me to say that I have nothing to say."

It's very possible that the debate on torture and responsibility which is currently being conducted in the US will soon also reach Europe. After all, Germany granted the US flyover rights and dropped its bid to extradite 13 CIA operatives in the case of Khalid el-Masri, a German citizen who claims he was abducted by the Americans. The Italian intelligence agency allegedly assisted the CIA with the kidnapping in Milan of the Islamic cleric Abu Omar. Britain's intelligence agency, MI6, reportedly delivered information directly to CIA agents who were conducting interrogations in Morocco. And there are also reports of a secret prison in Romania.

Investigations have been launched into these allegations in nearly all of these countries.

Jerry M., the pilot who flew Sheikh Mohammed from Kabul to Szymany in March, 2003, now lives in Birmingham, Alabama, in a brick house with white shutters and box trees planted in front of the door. Two stone lions guard the path that leads to the entrance. For two years, Jerry M. only had a post box address, like everyone else who flew CIA prisoners around the world: P.O. Box 22 99 43, code name Jerry Allen Bostick.

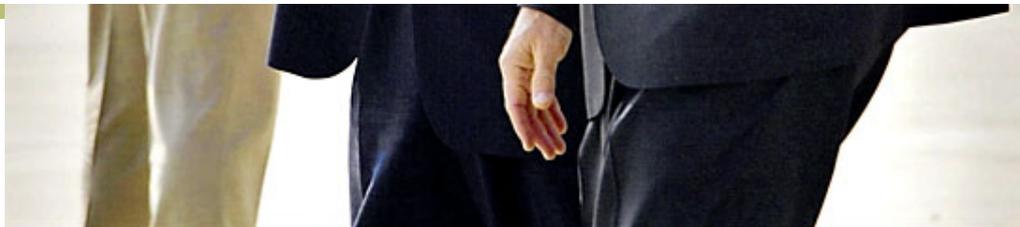
It appears the 62-year-old would rather deny all knowledge of this period in his life. When the SPIEGEL asked him over the phone if he had ever been to Poland, he said, "I have no idea what you're talking about. Really no idea." When he was asked if he had ever worked for a company named Aero Contractors, the line suddenly went dead. Jerry M. had hung up.



Poland's alleged secret prison.



The man described as the "brains" behind al-Qaida, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, claims he was submitted to waterboarding 183 times over a one-month period. New evidence suggests the interrogation took place in Poland.



**Former Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski (left) with former US President George W. Bush (right)
The Warsaw public prosecutor's office is now investigating Kwasniewski and former Prime Minister Leszek Miller
to see whether Poland gave the CIA free reign at the Stare Kiejkuty military base to carry out torture interrogations.**



A Boeing 737 takes off from the Spanish island of Mallorca. Authorities in Spain have investigated allegations that the CIA used the airport as a base for transporting terror subjects. Dick Marty, the special investigator for the Council of Europe released his second report into so-called "extraordinary renditions" in Europe. He says he found evidence that American secret prisons existed in Poland and Romania.



The control tower in Szymany, Poland. Journalist Mariusz Kowalweski with the newspaper Rzeczpospolita claims he is certain there was a CIA prison near the airport. The paper also reported that the Polish intelligence agency made 20 of its agents available to the CIA, something that a former CIA operative has confirmed to SPIEGEL.

إقتباس

#2 كضم موي ذنم

راي دل بيرغ



ديج وضع

تال كراش مولا
21



la hawla wala qwota ella bellah.
it's true what shaykh Osama said that the world is being divided into only 2 camps
or groups: the mu'mineen and the kuffar.
may Allah grant us the status of a mu'min in these tough times.

إقتباس

كتابة رد

« يلات لال عوضوملا | قباس لال عوضوملا »

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