

America And Britain Asked Poland To Host Secret CIA Gulag

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Britain's collusion with the CIA rendition and black sites program has been [well documented](#). However, what seems to be emerging now is not so much a story of collusion but [full involvement](#).

The CIA operated an interrogation and short-term detention facility for suspected terrorists within a Polish intelligence training school with the explicit approval of British and US authorities, according to British and Polish intelligence officials familiar with the arrangements.

That sounds like more than just turning a blind eye and allowing CIA torture flights to use British airspace and territory. If this is true then it looks like Tony Blair will have more questions to evade. It would be interesting to hear his response to this:

“According to a confidential British intelligence memo shown to [RAW STORY](#), Prime Minister Tony Blair told Poland's then-Prime Minister Leszek Miller to keep the information secret, even from his own government.”

Hmm! So much for Tony's enthusiasm for open government. Not only does he mislead the British Government but he's telling leaders of other countries to behave as badly. And this news comes just weeks after the European Parliament [voted to approve](#) the [report conducted by MEPs](#) (.pdf) into the collusion of EU states in rendition and black sites. In that report, the UK was slammed for its lack of co-operation with the investigation as well as being second in the list of the ten countries accused of allowing stopovers (Germany came first). Back in January Margaret Beckett was [forced to admit](#) that the Government knew about the secret prisons used by the CIA.

So can we now expect another admission from Margaret Beckett, in which she tells us that Britain along with the USA, actively encouraged the Polish Prime Minister to use a Soviet-era compound and intelligence centre as a gulag for the CIA and to keep it secret from the Polish government? I doubt it somehow, but the question still needs to be asked. And whoever answers will have to be a bit more convincing than in [previous responses](#) because the Americans don't seem to be denying the story apart from protesting (a little too much I think) about how it does not conduct or condone torture.

US intelligence officials confirmed that the CIA had used the compound at Stare Kiejkuty in the past. Speaking generally about the agency's program, a former senior official said the CIA had never conducted unlawful interrogations.

“We never tortured anyone,” one former senior intelligence official said on condition of anonymity. “We sent them to countries that did torture, but not on this scale.”

Despite [denials by the Polish authorities](#) that the country is involved with the rendition program, the former head of Polish intelligence, Zbigniew Siemiatkowski, has gone on record as saying that the CIA had access to two internal zones at the Stare Kiejkuty training school. When the EU delegation went to Poland as part of their investigation, they reported that key government officials refused to meet with them after having previously agreed to do so. The delegation wanted to investigate both Szymany airport and the facility at Stare Kiejstuty. Mariola Przewlocka, the then airport manager at Szymany revealed that:

...whenever one of the suspected flights was scheduled to land, “orders were given directly by the regional border guards... emphasizing that the airport authorities should not approach the aircraft and that military staff and services alone” would handle landings.

“Money for the services was paid in cash, sometimes as much as four times the normal charge,” the former airport manager added. “Handling of the passengers aboard was carried out in a remote corner of the Szymany airstrip. People came in and out from four-wheel drive cars with shaded windows.”

The cars were seen traveling to and from the Stare Kiejkuty intelligence facility, where British and Polish intelligence officials say US agents conducted short-term interrogations before shuffling prisoners to other locations.

Sounds like a really legitimate operation doesn't it? And if Blair not only knew but also requested this, it begs the question: how much further was he involved in this program? Presumably he intends to obfuscate until he is out of Downing Street, but the questions are not going away and details continue to emerge. If the operation was as innocent as the Americans are insisting, why did they try to [silence the EU](#) over rendition flights? And why would the Bush administration [seek to prevent](#) suspected terrorists who have been abducted and 'interrogated' from revealing details of the “alternative interrogation methods” that were used on them?

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