

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2000 2008

1983

5th Year No. 255

© 1983, The Washington Post Company

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17,

Apologizes to France *U.S. Admits Sheltering Barbie*

By Thomas O'Toole
Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States has formally apologized to France for its close relationship to Gestapo leader Klaus Barbie, and officially admitted that the U.S. Army had hired and protected the Nazi accused of deporting and massacring thousands of French Jews and resistance fighters during the German occupation of France.

In a 218-page report released yesterday, the Justice Department laid out in detail with names and dates, the U.S. role in allowing

Barbie to live and travel as a free man for the last 33 years. It concluded that the U.S. Army was guilty of an "obstruction of justice and an unlawful act."

The U.S. Army's Counterintelligence Corps hired Barbie as a paid informer in 1947, kept him hidden in a safe house for four years and smuggled him out of the country to Bolivia rather than extradite him to France, according to the report. It said that the Army lied to the French, the State Department and the High Commissioner's Office of Germany when it

denied that Barbie worked for and was being concealed by the Army.

"Whether Barbie is guilty or innocent of the crimes with which he is charged will be decided by a French court," said Allan A. Ryan Jr., the former director of the Office of Special Investigations for the Justice Department, who has been investigating the U.S. role in the Barbie matter.

"Justice delayed is justice denied," Ryan said. "If we are faithful to that principle, we cannot pretend that it applies only within

See BARBIE, A20, Col. 1



KLAUS BARBIE

... a free man for the last 33

BARBIE, From A1

our borders and nowhere else. We have delayed justice in Lyons for the last 33 years."

Ryan said the Barbie cover-up involved half a dozen high-ranking Army CIC officers, including the late Brig. Gen. Robert Taylor, director of intelligence for the U.S. Army in Europe after the war. Ryan said that at least a dozen other CIC officers were involved in smuggling Barbie and his family out of Europe in 1951.

Half of the officers involved are dead, he said. The other half cannot be prosecuted because the statute of limitations has expired. Ryan described the officers' actions as an "obstruction of justice" that involved paying \$1,400 apiece for Barbie, his wife and two children to be smuggled out of the country.

"For whatever reasons the CIC arranged Barbie's escape, it was an unlawful act," Ryan said. "From what we know today, we believe the CIC refused to turn Barbie over to the French because they were embarrassed by the affair and felt they would have been compromised by his extradition, at least in part because Barbie was working against the French for the U.S. Army."

Ryan said the Army concealed Barbie's identity, paid him about \$100 a month and gave him coffee, cigarettes, food rations and safe housing in Augsburg in Bavaria for almost four years.

In return, Ryan said, the Army received information about postwar cooperation between French and Soviet intelligence; Soviet attempts to penetrate German political movements and the whereabouts and activities of hundreds of former Gestapo officers who could be used as informers.

The Justice Department said that Barbie's network of informers had penetrated both Soviet and French intelligence networks that in turn were attempting to penetrate U.S. intelligence in the U.S. zone.

Barbie was regarded as the "most reliable" informer that the CIC had in Germany after the war, the Justice Department report said.

One reason that the CIC did not

want to lose him to either France or Great Britain, "both of which wanted him," was that Barbie "knew more about how the CIC operated" than many members of the CIC. Thus, the Army could not afford to lose him to another country, even an ally such as France and Britain, the report said.

"CIC was convinced that the French Surete [Secret Police] had been thoroughly penetrated by Communist elements who wanted to kidnap Barbie, reveal his CIC connections and thus embarrass the U.S." As time went on and the French pressed their efforts to secure Barbie's extradition, the CIC became "even more desirous of protecting Barbie," the report said.

Curiously, the Surete in 1948 had interrogated Barbie in the same room with CIC agents about his knowledge of French collaborators who masked themselves as resistance fighters. But Surete did not inquire about Barbie's own role as head of the Gestapo in Lyons in 1944. It was only in 1949, after the French prosecuted a resistance leader named Rene Hardy for treason that they asked for Barbie's release so he could testify against Hardy.

The CIC's reaction was to "batten down the hatches," the report said. One CIC memo recently declassified by the Army said: Barbie will be interrogated "in the usual French manner and forced to not only reveal information pertaining to the Hardy case but also to reveal information pertaining to his activities with CIC and his connections in the French zone." These connections were Barbie's penetration of French intelligence.

The report said that the way the French interrogated Barbie suggested to the CIC that Barbie was not a war criminal, just a counter-intelligence member of the Gestapo doing his job rooting out resistance fighters.

The Hardy trial changed all that. Hardy's lawyer disclosed Barbie's role as the "Butcher of Lyons," and revealed that Barbie had used acetylene torches on prisoners' feet to get them to talk. The attorney demanded to know why the United States was protecting him.

Instead of extraditing Barbie to France, the report said, the Army decided to take Barbie further underground. Not only did the CIC deny to the French that it knew where Barbie was or whether he still worked for them, but it also told the same story to the State Department and the High Commissioner's Office for Germany, then headed by John McCloy. Meanwhile, the CIC continued to pay Barbie, provide him with a safe house and ask him to take on new assignments.

"The CIC knowingly misled HICOG [the high commissioner] and the State Department," Ryan said yesterday. "The CIC lied openly to the State Department at least twice that they no longer employed Barbie or even knew where he was."

Another CIC memo declassified in the Justice report explained why the CIC kept Barbie on its payroll after the pressure to extradite him began to grow:

"Since subject's [Barbie's] sole income is derived from CIC," a Jan. 27, 1950, memo said, "it is felt that to discontinue paying him would not only make him aware of his changed status but would also force him to seek employment elsewhere in the only trade which he knows, intelligence. The latter possibility must be avoided, lest this organization be further embarrassed by subject."

The answer to the CIC's dilemma, the Justice Department report revealed, came with the chance discovery that the CIC in Austria was using a Croatian priest named Father Krunoslav Draganovic to smuggle Soviet defectors out of Europe.

Draganovic was using his underground railroad, called "Ratline," as an escape service for Croatian nationalists fleeing Yugoslav leader Tito. Draganovic charged exorbitant prices to obtain passports from the International Red Cross and visas from South American countries.

Suddenly, Barbie's name was on Ratline's list. This occurred "with the help of a U.S. citizen who was chief of the eligibility office of the International Refugee Organization in Rome to secure documentation and transportation" for Barbie and his family to leave Europe for South America.

The Justice Department report that the CIA was under no illusions about Draganovic. Said one declassified CIA memo: "Draganovic is known and recorded as a fascist and war criminal and his contacts with South American diplomats of a similar class are not generally approved by U.S. State Department officials."

Barbie left on March 23, 1951, with his wife and two children. He traveled on a passport identifying him as Klaus Altmann aboard an Italian ship, "Corrientes," bound for Buenos Aires, Argentina. The family had entry visas for Bolivia, where they lived for the next 33 years until being extradited to France earlier this year.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes told reporters in Santa Barbara that the White House "is satisfied that the Department of Justice has done a thorough job of researching all available information regarding U.S. involvement with Barbie in reaching a conclusion that there was no interagency conspiracy to conceal Barbie from the French."

He said that the United States provided the French with a copy of the report, "and we've expressed our deep regrets over the action taken in Germany in 1950 to conceal Barbie from the French."



Associated Press

Allan A. Ryan: Protecting Barbie was "an obstruction of justice and an unlawful act."

'We Have Delayed Justice in Lyons'

This is the text of the memorandum to the attorney general from Allan A. Ryan Jr., special assistant to the assistant attorney general.

As the investigation of Klaus Barbie has shown, officers of the United States government were directly responsible for protecting a person wanted by the government of France on criminal charges and in arranging his escape from the law. As a direct result of that action, Klaus Barbie did not stand trial in France in 1950; he spent 33 years as a free man and a fugitive from justice, and the fact that he is awaiting trial today in France is due entirely to the persistence of the government of France and the cooperation of the present government of Bolivia.

It is true that the obstruction of efforts to apprehend and extradite Barbie were not condoned in any official sense by the United States government. But neither can this episode be considered as merely the unfortunate action of renegade officers. They were acting within the scope of their official duties. Their actions were taken not for personal gain, or to shield them personally from liability or discipline, but to protect what they considered to be the interests of the

United States Army and the United States government. Under these circumstances, whatever may be their personal culpability, the United States government cannot disclaim responsibility for their actions.

Whether Barbie is guilty or innocent of the crimes with which he is charged will be decided by a French court. But whatever the verdict, his appointment with justice is long overdue. It is a principle of democracy and the rule of law that justice delayed is justice denied. If we are to be faithful to that principle—and we should be faithful to it—we cannot pretend that it applies only within our borders and nowhere else. We have delayed justice in Lyons.

I therefore believe it appropriate, and I so recommend, that the United States government express to the government of France its regret for its responsibility in delaying the due process of law in the case of Klaus Barbie. We should also pledge to cooperate in any appropriate manner in the further investigation of the crimes for which Barbie will be tried in France.

This is a matter of decency, and of honor as well. It should be, I believe, the final chapter in the