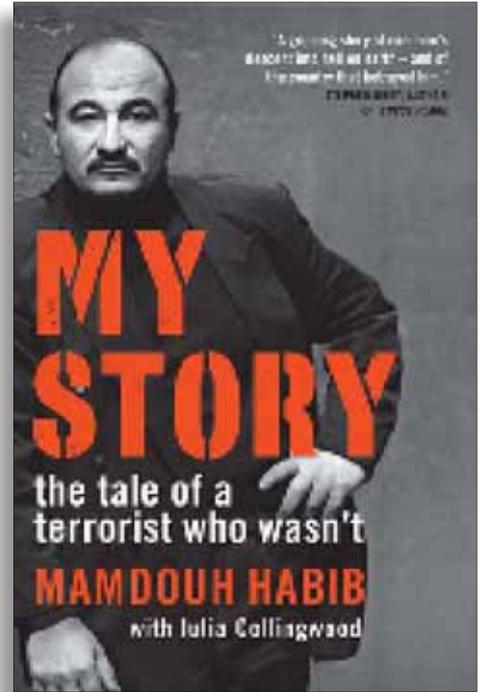


Australian citizen brutally tortured with full knowledge of Australian government

Mamdouh Habib is one of two Australians who was detained without charge in Guantanamo Bay. Born and raised in Egypt, he had immigrated to Australia in 1982 as a 27 year old, when he met and married his wife Maha and started a family. He had some success in business, but after the first World Trade Centre bombing in New York City in 1993, allegedly perpetrated by people who attended a protest at which Habib was present during a holiday in the US a few years earlier, Habib's life in Australia soured. He started to receive attention from ASIO, which tried to recruit him as an informer. When he refused, ASIO began a campaign of harassment and intimidation.

By the late 1990s Habib had lost his businesses and was surviving on Centrelink, his ongoing attention from ASIO made the Muslim community suspicious he was a spy, and he was depressed and on Prozac. As a father who tried to be a good Muslim, but not a fanatic, Habib was also concerned about the increase in the promotion and display of sex and drugs in the Australian culture. He decided to explore business opportunities in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, with a view to moving his family from Australia if he was successful. On 29 July 2001 Habib caught the evening Emirates flight to Dubai, en route to Lahore, Pakistan. His troubles began immediately, when ASIO agents accosted him during his stopover in Dubai. It set in train a series of events that culminated in brutal torture and false, unjust imprisonment; he didn't see his family again for almost four years.

Following are excerpts from Mamdouh Habib's 2008 book, "My story: the tale of a terrorist who wasn't", which recounts his abuse in first Pakistan and then Egypt, before his transfer to three years of hell in Guantanamo Bay.



Chapter Six: Taken to Egypt

This chapter starts with Habib being held captive by Pakistan's ISI, which captured him when he was trying to return to Australia amid the chaos caused by the 9/11 attack.

The next couple of weeks were some of the worst I was to experience. Twice during this time I believe I was taken to the Australian High Commission in Islamabad, to a consular official. Whether I met his official at the high commission or somewhere else became an issue in a court case in the Federal Court in early 2008... The government evidence was that I had never been taken to the high commission, but that I had been seen by an ASIO officer who used the name 'Paul Stokes'... I am certain I met an Australian diplomat in Pakistan ... I shall refer to the person I met by the name of Philip Parker.

After a couple of days in the new place, the Pakistanis said that they were taking me to the Australian High Commission... I was taken to a high-class building and up some steps. I was then taken into a room where a man of about 60, with grey hair, sat in a big lounge... He told me his name was Philip Parker. Straightaway I tried to tell him what had happened and that I was being held illegally. Now that I was talking to an Australian official, I really thought I would be helped... I told Parker that I was being badly treated by the Pakistanis, often beaten, and that the Pakistanis had never explained why I was being held. He was not at all interested, and refused to help me. He told me that I was no longer an Australian citizen, and that I would be sent to Egypt.

When I got back to my cell, I told Ibrahim [one of two Muslims from Germany imprisoned with Habib] about the visit. I was upset that the Australian High Commission

didn't want to do anything for me, even though I was an Australian citizen. In contrast, the German embassy did everything they could to get Ibrahim and Bekim out of Pakistani custody...

It was after the German had left that I was taken back to the Australian High Commission to see Philip Parker for a second time. This time there were three Americans with him: one old man who was in his sixties, and two women who did the questioning... During the interview I became angry with Parker for doing nothing to help me. I said I was an Australian citizen, but he told me again that I was no longer Australian, and that I had lost my citizenship. He told me that unless I cooperated with the Americans, I would be sent to Egypt. He said that the Americans were now in control...

The Pakistanis now increased the pressure on me. They wanted me to sign a confession that I had bombed the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad in 1995. I refused: the idea was crazy. So they made me stand on a large concrete roller that had an electric rod passing through it. My hand were tied above my head, so that I was strung up to a hook attached to the ceiling. Every time my feet touched the roller, I received an electric shock. I tried to remain on tiptoes, jumping up and down; but, as I jumped, the roller turned, forcing me to put my feet down to steady myself. I tried hanging by my arms but, after a few moments, it was impossible, and I was forced to put my feet down. The shocks were terrible. They made my body feel as if it was on fire, while my head was exploding with pain and pressure. Every nerve cell in my body was burning. I began to bleed through my nose, mouth, and ears. I urinated blood and felt a strange feeling like an ejaculation; I also defecated. It was horribly painful and humiliating...

Torture of innocents with full knowledge of Australian government

Next, I was seated, and a Pakistani official who spoke good English entered the room. Again, I was told to sign the confession and then I'd be allowed to go home. Again, I refused... I asked why I should sign something false for the Pakistanis. He told me that the Pakistanis knew I hadn't done the bombing, but they needed a justification for kidnapping me, imprisoning me, and torturing me—otherwise they would be in deep trouble, because I was an Australian citizen.

I now think that they wanted to extract a confession from me for the Americans, who would use my 'crime' of blowing up the Egyptian embassy as the excuse they needed to send me to Egypt. People were being sold to the Americans; so maybe, if I had confessed, the Pakistanis would have gotten more money for me. All the while the Australian government stood by and did nothing to stop this from happening.

I told the official that I would never sign the document. He got up and said that, if this was my decision, he couldn't help me. He left the room, and I never saw him again. Then they tortured me again. This time, it was even worse than the first time.

Habib then recounts his rendition to Egypt.

It was at night when they came for me. I was handcuffed, shackled and hooded... I was put into a large room with chairs, desks and some office lounge chairs... I started hurling abuse at the Pakistani... I then spat on him, which wasn't a good idea, because about ten Americans came into the room and laid into me. They were dressed in black T-shirts, grey pants and yellow boots... Eventually I lost consciousness. When I came to ... [t]he Americans left, and the Pakistanis picked me up and put me in a chair and handcuffed me... The Americans now returned wearing balaclavas, which struck me as stupid, as I'd already seen their faces, but then I realised they were now filming everything. They said that if there was any more trouble from me, they'd shoot me. My clothes were then cut off me, so that I stood naked. I was made to bend over, and something was inserted in my rectum—maybe an enema—and then they put a nappy and a grey tracksuit on me; I was only allowed to keep my shoes.

I believe that Philip Parker was there and saw everything that happened. He wore a balaclava but I recognised him by his clothes... To this day I have no doubt it was him. The old man from the second interview at the high commission was also there. They did nothing to help me. I was chained and wrapped up like a spring roll; my eyes and mouth were taped; a black bag was put over my head; and, finally, goggles with sticky tape over the eye pieces and earmuffs were placed over the top of the bag. I couldn't see or hear a thing... They picked me up, took me up some steps, and put me into a seat...

At last, we landed. It felt like the early morning. We had travelled the whole night. Suddenly everything became frantic. I had an impression that other people were boarding the plane... I was moved into a room and stripped, while all the time being constantly punched and kicked. I tried to shield myself from the kicks, but I couldn't see where they were coming from. Naked, except for the hood over my head, I was taken to another room. I was photographed, and then a doctor entered and checked me over. He listened to my heart. I heard him say in Egyptian, 'This man is incredibly tough; there's nothing wrong with him.'



A typical interrogation room showing the handcuffs and chain attached to the floor. (Richard Ross)

Habib's Egyptian interrogators gave him a choice: admit to being involved in terrorism and 9/11, for which they even promised he'd be paid, or rot there in jail for the rest of his life.

I said, 'I cannot lie. I've had nothing to do with terrorism'...

They then took me to another room where they tortured me relentlessly, stripping me naked and applying electric shocks everywhere on my body...

I had been very fit and strong, so I could fight back; but, after a while, because of the drugs and the torture, I lost my energy...

After the first interrogation with Suleiman, I believed the Egyptians weren't interested in where I had been; they only wanted me to confess to being a terrorist and having plotted terrorist attacks so they could sell the information to the United States and Australia. I decided then that I wouldn't answer questions or explain anything; but, as a consequence, I was badly tortured in Egypt. I was constantly beaten with a stick or a bar, kept naked except for pants, given electric shocks, and sexually assaulted with a rod. They did everything to me. I just thought, 'I'm going to die very soon.' In the beginning, it was very painful; but after receiving so much pain, I began to go numb and feel nothing...

One room was unbearably hot, full of buckets of very hot water that they threw over you. After this, you were then thrown into a freezing cold room... Sometimes, I was taken to a room that had concrete steps going down in the middle to a depth of a couple of metres. The first time I was taken to one of these rooms, there was water in it that came about halfway up, through which they passed an electric current. They kept pushing me towards the water. It was very frightening: I thought that if I touched the water, I would die...

After the electrified water, I was taken to another room, where I was forced to stand while water slowly rose around me until it came right up to my nose. I had

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This shocking scene is from the horrific Stanley Kubrick film *A Clockwork Orange*; Habib was subjected to precisely this treatment in Egypt.

to stand for hours and hours on my toes, trying not to drown... After this, they subjected me to electric shocks. They had an electric prod that they touched every part of my body with, including my testicles...

I longed to die. They hung me up by my feet, and beat me. Afterwards, because my feet were so swollen, they gave me cream for my feet and then took me back for another beating. They burnt me with cigarettes. They stripped me naked, and threatened me with dogs that were trained to attack me sexually. Or so they said—I have no idea if this was true or not. They placed a rod up my rectum. It was worse than hell, and very hard to describe and talk about...

At the beginning of the interrogation, the Egyptian asked me questions in Arabic about my life. I was aware that one of the Europeans was sitting in front of me. I could just see from under the blindfold his legs and lap. On his lap he had a folder, and on the cover of the folder was a picture of the Sydney Opera House... The man with the Opera House file never spoke, but I always thought he was from ASIO.

The questions were all about people I had known in Australia... (When I returned to Australia, each one of these people told me they had had trouble with ASIO.) I now think that these names were given to the interrogator by the Australians after ASIO and the Federal Police raided my home on 20 September 2001... (I have come to believe that this is how most 'terrorists' are arrested in Australia and in other countries. Names are gathered during interrogations, which lead to lots of people being arrested. The media then report that the police and intelligence agencies have stopped a planned terrorist attack and have arrested a number of suspects. Later, when no evidence can be found, and after a lot of expense and misery for the people arrested and their families, the suspects are released. Nothing more is then heard about the planned terrorist attack. This, I believe, is what happens to most people arrested for terrorist activities in Australia.)

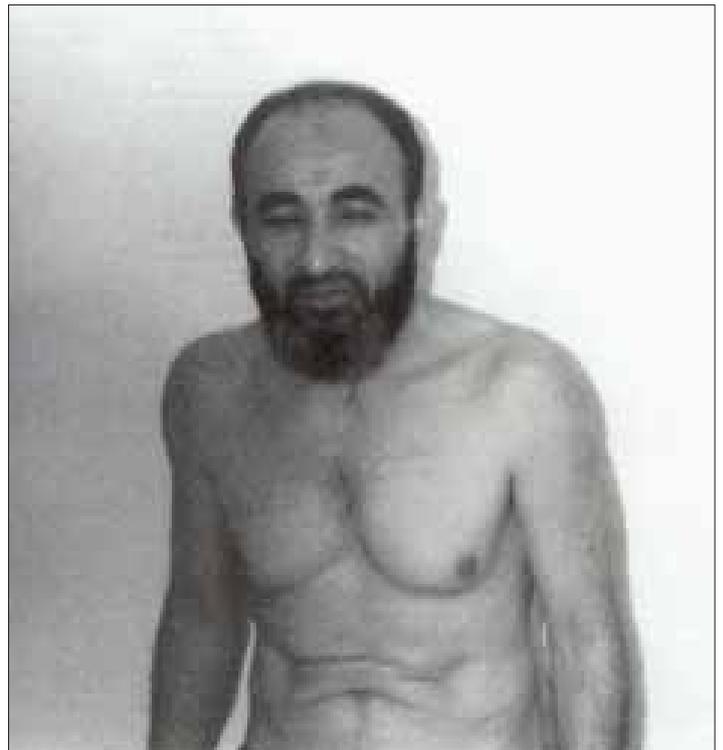
I was often astonished that they knew so much about my life in Australia... During one interrogation, I was shown a pamphlet that I had been given during Friday prayers in Sydney... This pamphlet, along with lots of other papers and documents, had been taken by the Australian Federal Police and ASIO when they raided my home on 20 September 2001. When I saw this I was convinced that the Australian government wanted to get rid of me.

I don't know when it was but, at one stage, they showed me a film, which they forced me to watch by keeping my

eyes open with clips. They had first injected me so that I felt very numb, and then they placed a very thick pair of glasses over my eyes. I was then forced to watch a film of my family being blown up and murdered. They played the film over and over again. I began to see it as if it was happening in front of me. By the time they dragged me away, I was convinced I no longer had a family. After this I lost it and went a bit crazy. I can't remember for how long, but I was in another world.

At this point, I had given up on life. I thought that my family had been raped and murdered, and that there was no point in continuing. I agreed to sign anything.

After signing, Habib reneged at a staged press conference held to announce his confession of guilt. He was then tortured more, until in April 2002 he was transferred to Guantanamo Bay, where he was detained until his release in January 2005. Although he was also abused and tortured at Guantanamo Bay, Habib states his mistreatment there does not compare with the horror he was subjected to in Egypt, with the full knowledge of ASIO. In 2011 an Egyptian official publicly confirmed Habib's claim he was tortured in Egypt in the presence of at least one Australian officer, whom he named. This confirmation came two months after the Australian government reached a confidential financial settlement with Habib. The 13 February Sydney Morning Herald reported that the Egyptian official's confirmation was the reason the government had finally settled. In April 2011 Mamdouh Habib was granted an Australian passport, and ASIO announced it no longer considered him a security risk.



Habib half-alive. Photo taken a few hours after arriving home.

The World Land Bridge

Peace on Earth, Good Will Towards All Men

Citizens Electoral Council International Conference

28-29 March 2015

Mantra Bell City 215 Bell St, Presaton VIC 3072

The global financial system is now careening towards a new, far greater breakdown than 2007-08, a reality which drives the escalating threat of thermonuclear world war between the desperate, collapsing trans-Atlantic powers and Russia and China. Under these existential conditions, nations face a choice: to remain with the policies and alliances that are driving the collapse and war danger, or to join with fellow nations to establish a new economic world order that can guarantee peace and security.

To secure this new economic order, the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) together with a growing number of collaborators, have forged ahead in the last two years with grand development projects, and agreements on the credit mechanisms to fund them. The trans-Atlantic powers view the BRICS developments with ill-disguised hostility, as a threat to their hegemony; nevertheless the BRICS invite the U.S. and Europeans to collaborate with them in economic development. For instance, China has an open invitation to the U.S. and its Pacific allies Australia, Japan and South Korea to join the Asian Infrastructure Development Bank (AIIB), but the U.S. is pressuring its allies not to participate.

In July 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping launched the New Silk Road Economic Belt, followed in October by the announcement of the Maritime Silk Road. In early 2014 Russia endorsed the Silk Road proposal and signed a series of extensive agreements to cooperate with China, to create a new economic architecture in the Asia-Pacific. The 16 July 2014 "Fortaleza Declaration" of the 6th BRICS Summit in Brazil, signed by nations representing half of the world's population, made history with the creation of the BRICS' New Development Bank and Currency Reserve Agreement, to allow nations to break free of the vice-grip of the current City of London/Wall Street-dominated financial system.

From these beginnings a stunning series of bilateral meetings, summits, and conferences has consolidated the collaboration between nations intent on this approach of peace through economic development, exemplified by BRICS allies Egypt building the New Suez Canal and Nicaragua constructing the Great Inter-Oceanic Canal. Such great projects will transform the world economy and demonstrate the power of sovereign nations to deliver on the economic development needs of their people, independent of the IMF and World Bank.

Now Greece is asserting its sovereignty, becoming the first European nation to boot out a puppet government run by the Troika of the IMF, EU and European Central Bank, and to push for economic justice through a national debt reorganisation, a Europe-wide debt conference and measures to fund economic reconstruction.

As Schiller Institute President Helga Zepp-LaRouche summed up the world situation in her introduction to the recently published EIR Special Report on the World Land-Bridge: "There are now two economic and financial systems built on completely different principles. One, the trans-Atlantic system, as an imperial structure, seeks constantly to extend the boundaries of its sphere of power through supranational structures which threaten the sovereignty of other nations," including the use of regime change, terrorism and war. On the other hand, "The newly arising system of the BRICS nations and the countries associated with them, bases itself upon entirely different principles. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi formulated it most expressively at the plenary session of the Brazil summit, 'BRICS is unique as an international institution. In the first instance, it unifies a group of nations, not on the basis of their existing prosperity or common identities, but rather their future potentials. The idea of the BRICS itself is thus already aligned with the future.'

For more than 25 years the Citizens Electoral Council has fought for Australia to adopt the very policies and principles now being championed by the BRICS. Australia must now choose: do we go down with the collapsing trans-Atlantic system, or, beginning with accepting China's offer to become a founding member of the AIIB, do we join the BRICS to ensure our future? We look forward to seeing you at this historic conference.

Call the CEC on 1800 636 432 for more information