

= Hood event =

The Hood event (Turkish : Çuval Olay?) was an incident on July 4 , 2003 following the 2003 invasion of Iraq where a group of Turkish military personnel operating in northern Iraq were captured , led away with hoods over their heads , and interrogated by the United States military . The soldiers were released after sixty hours , after Turkey protested to the United States .

Though neither side ever apologized , a US @-@ Turkish commission set up to investigate the incident later issued a joint statement of regret . In addition , US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld wrote a letter to the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan expressing sorrow over the incident . The Hood event damaged diplomatic relations between Turkey and the United States and marked a low point in US @-@ Turkish relations . While the incident received comparatively little coverage in the United States , it was a major event in Turkey , many of whose citizens saw it as a deliberate insult and nicknamed it " The Hood event " .

= = Background = =

Turkey had long viewed northern Iraq , with its large Kurdish population , as a possible national security threat . During the 1980s and 1990s , Turkey fought against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) , a separatist group operating mainly in southeastern Turkey . More than 30 @, @ 000 people were killed and millions more were displaced . During the war , the PKK established bases in Iraq and Syria .

Turkish fears intensified after Iraqi Kurdistan gained autonomy after the 1991 Gulf War . In 1996 , after a civil war had broken out there , Turkey deployed troops there to monitor a ceasefire between the two main Kurdish factions . In 1998 , Turkey was able to use military threats to force neighboring Syria to expel PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan . However , because of the United States , it was never able to move decisively against the Kurds in northern Iraq .

Under American protection , Iraqi Kurdistan had evolved into a successful semi @-@ autonomous region . US pressure helped lead to a peace deal in 1999 between the major Iraqi Kurdish factions , the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq . While both parties officially swore off independence , the Turkish government remained sufficiently concerned , and continued to keep troops in northern Iraq .

= = The Iraq War = =

By 2003 , many Turks had come to see American foreign policy in the region as a threat . Matters were not helped by the election in 2002 of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) . The election of the AKP led to an immediate increase in tensions with America , especially after the Parliament 's decision not to send any Turkish troops to Iraq further eroded US @-@ Turkish relations . 70 % of the parliament members were Justice and Development Party members .

On April 24 , 2003 , only two weeks after the fall of Baghdad , a dozen Turkish special forces were arrested in Da Quq (a tribal village 45 minutes north of Kirkuk) . According to Time , a weekly world news magazine , they were wearing civilian clothes and intended to infiltrate Iraq , lagging behind a humanitarian convoy , in order to destabilize the region to a level where Turkey could reasonably send its own peacekeeping force . However , they were intercepted by American forces , who claimed they had received prior knowledge of the group .

Colonel Bill Mayville , a U.S. brigade commander who was responsible for the region where this took place , accused the Turks of having links to the Iraqi Turkoman Front (ITF) , an ethnic @-@ Turkish militia . However , US forces made no effort to incarcerate the Turks , merely detaining them for a day , with food , security and comfort , and then escorting them back to the Iraqi @-@ Turkish border . In the following months , Turkey continued its policy of sending small groups of soldiers into Iraqi Kurdistan , ostensibly to search for PKK bases . According to The Economist , Turkey also began covertly arming the ITF as a lever against the Iraqi Kurds .

= = Raid on Al Sulaymaniyah = =

On July 4 , 2003 , soldiers from the United States Army 's 173d Airborne Brigade raided a safehouse in the Kurdish @-@ held Iraqi city of Sulaymaniyah . Seemingly acting on an intelligence tip that there were individuals in the safehouse plotting to assassinate the Iraqi @-@ Kurdish governor of the province of Kirkuk . The safehouse instead housed members of the Iraq 's Turkoman Front and Turkish Special Forces soldiers , including a colonel and two majors , whom they promptly arrested . Turkish sources refer to eleven soldiers commanded by a major . An unknown number of other individuals were also detained during the raid , although thirteen were later released . Apart from these , and the Turkish soldiers who were to be released after intense diplomatic activity , a British citizen named Michael Todd , who was by chance in town to seek his half @-@ Iraqi daughter , was also put in custody and kept for a fortnight under trying conditions .

= = Negotiations = =

The Turkish military immediately threatened retaliatory measures , including closing Turkish airspace to US military flights , stopping the use of the southern Incirlik Air Base and sending more troops into northern Iraq . A delegation of Turkish military and diplomatic officials immediately left for Sulaymaniyah on Saturday to discuss the matter with the Americans , but according to the Turks most of the American commanders were off celebrating Independence Day . Following direct protests by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdo?an to US Vice President Dick Cheney , as well as by Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül to US Secretary of State Colin Powell , the Turkish soldiers were released after sixty hours in captivity .

= = Aftermath = =

The Hood event made a much greater impact in Turkey than in the West , which by and large agreed with the U.S. government 's interpretation . While the story received comparatively little coverage outside of the Middle East , Turkish newspapers loudly condemned the raid , referring to U.S. forces with nicknames such as " Rambos " and " Ugly Americans " . On the last day of the incident , Hilmi Özkök , Chief of the General Staff (Turkey) , declared that the Hood event had caused a " crisis of confidence " between the US and Turkey .

The event periodically gets front coverage in the Turkish media , such as in the mass @-@ circulation daily Hürriyet , in keeping with new declarations made to the press by the involved parties and new details divulged . Most recently , the key witness in the Ergenekon investigation , Tuncay Güney , alleged that the event was the U.S. response to the discovery of documents about the clandestine Ergenekon network 's Iraq connection in the archives of Tariq Aziz .

The Hood event was the inspiration for the 2006 Turkish action film Valley of the Wolves Iraq . The film opens with the depiction of an almost identical incident , following afterwards a fictional story in which the Turkish protagonist seeks retaliation against the American Commander responsible for the incident .

= = Claims = =

Various municipal and government buildings were put on fire in Mosul and Kirkuk by Kurdish forces on 10 and 11 April 2003 . A Turkish daily newspaper reported that the Turkish Special Forces soldiers , who were captured by US Army and Peshmerga , had already filmed the deed records and sent the digital records to Turkey before the historical records were terminated . The newspaper also reported that the US party was , in fact , in search of those records , but they were unable to find them . However , Turkish Ministry of Public Works declared that the ministry archives holds historical deed records from the Ottoman era and there were no operations involved .

Retired Department of Intelligence Chief of General Staff of the Republic of Turkey , Korg . ?small Hakki Pekin , claims in his book named ? Dikkat Cemaat Ç?kabilir KOZM?K ODA ? that , after the

secret archives about Turkmens captured during the raid , local Turkmen leaders were assassinated or died in suspicious traffic accidents .