



## U.S. FORCES FIND SADDAM HUSSEIN HIDING IN A HOLE

December 15, 2003

*Thirty-eight weeks after the United States began hunting for Saddam Hussein, the deposed Iraqi dictator was finally found hiding in a hole last weekend.*

Some 600 American soldiers swept into a rural farm 10 miles south of Saddam's hometown of Tikrit Saturday, carrying out a mission aimed at capturing or killing the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

In the end, it was a soldier who used a spade to unearth the hidden entrance to an underground chamber of hard-packed dirt.

"He was just caught like a rat," Maj. Gen. Raymond Odierno, the commander of the Fourth Infantry Division, told reporters at his headquarters in Tikrit on Sunday. "He could have been hiding in a hundred different places, a thousand different places like this all around Iraq. It just takes finding the right person who will give you a good idea where he might be."

The head of ground forces in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, called the hideout a "spider hole" that had just enough space for a person to lie down inside of it.

Saddam surrendered without putting up a fight and admitted his identity. Troops also detained two other unidentified men. The raid also netted two AK-47s, a pistol, 750,000 U.S. dollars in \$100 denominations, and a white and orange taxi that officials believed Saddam used to travel around the area.

### **What's next for Saddam?**

After being removed from the farm, he was moved to an undisclosed location where he was examined by doctors and questioned by officials, where he has reportedly "been cooperative and is talkative."

Sanchez described Saddam as "a tired man, a man resigned to his fate."

A member of the Iraqi Governing Council said Saddam would be put on trial and face execution if convicted, though it could take months to begin the trial before a war crimes tribunal set up last week. U.S. officials have not said anything definite about the fate of Saddam.

The deposed leader is accused of human rights violations during his 30-year rule, including ordering the killing of thousands of Iraqi Kurds.

## **Reaction at home and abroad**

In a speech following the announcement of the capture, President Bush praised the operation and told the Iraqis that they "will not have to fear the rule of Saddam Hussein ever again."

U.S. allies during the Iraq war, such as Great Britain and Spain, were overjoyed by the news. British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who faced strong public opposition to his support of President Bush, said the action "removes the shadow that has been hanging over them for too long of the nightmare of a return to the Saddam regime."

European countries that did not support the war, such as France and Germany, offered congratulations. The office of French President Jacques Chirac released a statement calling the capture a "major event that should strongly contribute to democracy and stability in Iraq and allow the Iraqis to master their destiny."

In the Middle East, the government of Jordan said it hoped the capture would lead to new security for the Iraqi people.

"What the Jordanian government cares about is the safety and security of the Iraqi people and the restoration of political stability in that brotherly Arab nation," Asma Khader, a state minister and the government spokeswoman, told the Associated Press.

Iran, which fought a bloody battle against Saddam in the 1980s, welcomed the chance to try the fallen leader.

"Saddam should be prosecuted because of the crimes he has committed against the Iraqi and Iranian people," Vice President Mohammad Ali Abtahi said.

In Afghanistan, where 500 delegates of the loya jirga are meeting to debate a new constitution, officials said the capture would improve the security situation by dampening the morale and recruiting ability of anti-Western militant groups.

"What happens in Iraq is also something to do with the situation in Afghanistan. Since the war in Iraq, the terrorist organizations have tried to open a new front in Afghanistan, so any failure of terrorism in Iraq is going to affect the situation in Afghanistan," Afghan Interior Minister Ali Ahmad Jalali told the AP.

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