
AN UNFORCED ERROR: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE SULEYMANIYAH HOOD INCIDENT

- 10.10.2025

AVİMs Note: *Professor Edward J. Erickson is a distinguished scholar specializing in the military history of both the United States and Türkiye, and has carried out considerable comparative research that includes the final period of the Ottoman State (Empire). Prof. Erickson is therefore well positioned to make critical assessments about current and past military assessments of interest to Türkiye and its neighboring regions. In the below article, he shares an intriguing and detailed first-hand account of the 2003 Hood Incident that has had a lasting negative impact on Türkiye-United States relations and provides his assessment of its significance in terms of military relations and history.*

Turkish Journal of War Studies (Volume 6, No. 2, 2025, p. 109-123)

Edward J. ERICKSON(*)

Abstract: One of the most significant events damaging Turkish - American relations in the 21st century was the Sulaymaniyah Hood Incident of July 4, 2003, which is widely recalled in Turkey today as the Hood Incident (Çuval Hadisesi). However, what happened that day is conspicuously absent from American histories of the war. According to a contemporary apologia from then-Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, the decision to apprehend the Turkish soldiers was made suddenly in view of time-sensitive and credible intelligence. In fact, nothing could be farther from the truth, and the full story of the incident has never been revealed. What actually happened that day was a deliberate sting operation organized by Jelal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), designed to embarrass the Turks and weaken their influence in northern Iraq. Colonel William C. Mayville Jr, commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade supported and participated in the planning and Major General Raymond T. Odierno, commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division, approved American participation. This is a first-person account of the decisions that led to an avoidable confrontation that escalated out of control which continues to afflict the Turkish - American strategic partnership today.

Keywords: Sulaymaniyah Hood Incident, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Turkish-American Relations, Raymond T. Odierno.

(*) *The Department of War Studies at the Marine Corps University (Virginia/United States), (Ret.) Professor*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52792/tws.1706102>

To directly access the article, please [click here](#)

Kaynak/Source: