

Eight out of Nine Countries Polled Oppose Death Penalty for Hussein. Only Americans Back Execution if Convicted

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In Baghdad, prosecutors began this week to cross-examine Saddam Hussein over his role in the execution of more than 100 Shiites in 1982. Charged with crimes against humanity, the deposed Iraqi president could be sentenced to death by hanging if the panel finds him guilty.

A multi-nation poll conducted by AP/Ipsos in February found little support for execution if Hussein is found guilty. In eight of the nine countries, supporters of a life sentence outnumbered those favoring the death penalty. Only in the United States did a majority say Hussein should be executed if he is convicted by the tribunal.

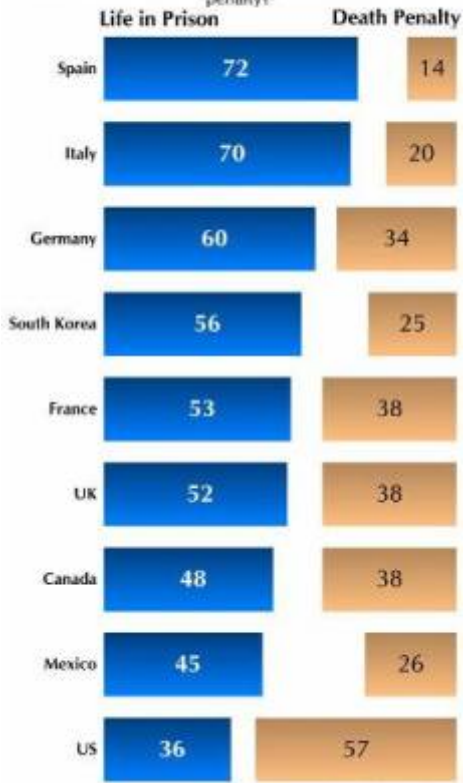
Sixty-one percent of Iraqis also believe that Hussein should be executed if found guilty by the tribunal, according to a Gallup poll conducted in May 2004. One in five said he should get a life sentence.

The largest majorities opposed to the death penalty were in Spain, Italy and Germany. Seventy-two percent of respondents in Spain said Hussein should get life, if convicted, while only 14 percent said he should get the death penalty. Similarly, 70 percent of Italians favored life in prison, with only 20 percent saying Hussein should be put to death. A clear majority of Germans, 60 percent, also said Hussein should get life while 34 percent said he should be executed.

Slightly smaller majorities favored life in prison in South Korea, France and Great Britain. Fifty-six percent of the South Koreans surveyed said Hussein should spend the rest of his life in jail, if convicted. Twenty-five percent said he should be executed and 17 percent were unsure. In France, 53 percent favored a life sentence as did 52 percent in Great Britain. In both countries, 38 percent said they supported a death sentence.

Sentencing Saddam

If Saddam Hussein is convicted in his trial, do you think he should be sentenced to life in prison, or to the death penalty?



AP/Ipsos 2/06

A plurality of respondents favored a life sentence for Hussein in Canada and Mexico. Forty-eight percent of Canadians said Hussein should get life, if convicted, while 38 percent said he should be executed. Mexicans also favored life in prison, but by a slightly smaller plurality. Forty-five percent of Mexicans said Hussein should get life, while twenty-six percent said he should be executed. Nearly a quarter, 23 percent, of the Mexicans surveyed were not sure what sentence the ex-Iraqi president should receive.

In the United States, a majority of 57 percent said Hussein should be put to death. Thirty-six percent said he should get a life sentence.