

Head of al-Qaida in Iraq still free

by UPI

BAGHDAD -- Abu Ayyub al-Masri, the head of al-Qaida in Iraq, hasn't been captured despite reports to that effect, a senior U.S. military official said Friday. Iraqi authorities had said Thursday that Masri had been captured in Mosul. U.S. military officials had expressed surprise and skepticism at the report, CNN said. Masri, also known as Abu Hamza al-Muhajer, took over the Iraqi al-Qaida offshoot in June 2006 after a U.S. missile strike killed his predecessor, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Since then, Iraqi officials have reported his death three times, his capture twice and a mortal wounding once, CNN said.

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