

Bounty on al-Qaida leader Masri lowered

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The bounty on al-Qaida in Iraq leader Abu Ayyub al-Masri is down from \$5 million to \$100,000 because he is no longer an effective leader, U.S. officials said. "The current assessment, based on a number of factors, shows that he is not as an effective leader of al Qaida in Iraq as he was last year," Central Command spokesman U.S. Navy Capt. Jamie Graybeal told CNN. Masri ascended to the al-Qaida in Iraq leadership following the June 2006 death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in a U.S. missile strike. The decreased bounty takes Masri off the U.S. State Department's list of wanted suspects and puts him on a Defense Department list of lower-ranking criminals. Claims circulated last week that U.S. officials captured Masri in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, but those reports turned out to be inaccurate.

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