

'Terror Leader' Is US Spin

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Terror mastermind Abu Mousab al-Zarqawi is a largely fictitious bogeyman invented to help an American propaganda war in Iraq, it was claimed last night.

Senior US military and intelligence officers admitted they have "overstated" the importance of the Jordanian-born al-Qaeda chief. Evidence has emerged that spin doctors also bombarded the "home audience" with exaggerated stories about al-Zarqawi, who is rumoured to have personally decapitated British hostage Ken Bigley in 2004.

At a meeting at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas Colonel Derek Harvey, a former military intelligence officer, said foreign rebels were "a very small part of the numbers". He said: "Our focus on al-Zarqawi has enlarged his caricature - made him more important than he really is. The long-term threat is not al-Zarqawi or religious extremists, but former regime types and their friends."

Al-Zarqawi - a former junkie jailed for trying to overthrow the Jordanian government - has received a death sentence and had a £15million bounty placed on his head by the US. He is said to have been behind the Fallujah uprising in 2004 and to be Osama bin Laden's representative in Iraq. The US claims he is at the head of a foreign force of insurgents and Britain still insists the rebellion is being led by foreign fighters.

But former SAS trooper Ben Griffin said recently: "I was there for months and I didn't come across any foreign fighters."

Source: Daily Mirror