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Pakistan denies bin Laden capture rumor

Saturday, February 28, 2004

By [Andante](#)

Hmmm. [U.S., Pakistani officials deny report of bin Laden capture](#)

The state radio report, quoting an unidentified source, said U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's visit to the region this week was in connection with bin Laden's arrest.

I'm pretty sure he wasn't there to share a plastic-turkey moment with the troops. This report is based on two sources, and one has told the Associated Press they were "misquoted."

The misquoted source is Shamim Shahed,

identified as editor of the English-language Pakistani newspaper *The Nation*. [State radio director Asheq Hossein] said Shahed told him Friday night that bin Laden was arrested "a long time ago."

But Shahed, who is The Nation's Peshawar bureau chief and not its editor, denied telling Iranian radio that bin Laden had been captured.

"I never said this," Shahed said in a telephone interview with AP's Islamabad bureau. "But I have for the last year been saying that he is not far away. He is within their (the Americans') reach, and they can declare him arrested any time."

The other source is only identified as "a man with close links to intelligence services and Afghan tribal leaders."

"Developing," I guess. If Osama is apprehended at any time before the election, an "October Surprise" will always be suspected.

To avoid excessive hand-wringing, flying accusations, and any hint of political motives, here's my advice:

If and when Osama is captured, stick him in a spider hole in deepest darkest Afghanistan, under tighter secrecy than Cheney's "undisclosed location". Don't allow the slightest leak.

Announce the capture (or death) after the election.

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