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COUNTERINSURGENCY: U.S. soldiers conduct a patrol at Kandalay village in the southern Afghan province of Kandahar on Aug. 8. Although counterinsurgency efforts have disrupted al-Qaeda operations, and the number of operatives in Afghanistan and Pakistan has shrunk, al-Qaeda continues to pose a threat as it deliberately tries to appeal to individuals within the United States to conduct attacks.

A Decade After 9/11, Al-Qaeda in Decline

BY GARY FEUERBERG
EPOCH TIMES STAFF

WASHINGTON—As we approach 10 years since the al-Qaeda attack of Sept. 11, 2001, it may be a good time to examine how effective the United States has been in repelling terrorist attacks. The United States has not succumbed to another catastrophic attack like 9/11, although several smaller attacks have been attempted and at least three have been successful, such as the Fort Hood shooting in 2009, in which 13 people were killed.

Under the Obama administration, the mission has often been stated: to disrupt, degrade, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and its affiliates and adherents. Much has been accomplished. The federal government has made progress in breaking down barriers between intelligence gathering entities, and cooperation has increased between federal, state,

and local law enforcement. In the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, al-Qaeda has been on the run. Its only leader, Osama bin Laden, was slain in an April 29 raid, and much of its top leadership has been killed by special forces predatory drone attacks.

“The number of al-Qaeda operatives in Afghanistan and Pakistan combined has shrunk from the level in 2001, when it was probably over 1,000,” wrote Seth G. Jones, senior political scientist at RAND and a former representative for the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command.

In May, Gen. David Petraeus estimated that only 50 to 100 al-Qaeda fighters move back and forth in eastern Afghanistan.

“U.S. efforts have disrupted al-Qaeda’s command and control, communications, morale, freedom of movement, and fundraising,” said Jones.

As a result of al-Qaeda weakening, it has not had a successful ter-

rorist attack in the West since July 2005, when four suicide bombers staged devastating attacks in London, killing 56 people and injuring more than 700 others. Al-Qaeda has repeatedly tried and failed to conduct a follow-up attack in the United States, according to Jones.

Despite American successes in putting al-Qaeda on the defensive, it continues to pose a significant threat to the United States. According to the 2011 “National Strategy for Counterterrorism,” an official U.S. document signed by President Barack Obama last June, al-Qaeda’s ideology resonates with many individuals who “accept al-Qaeda’s agenda, loose affiliation, or mere inspiration. Affiliated movements have taken root far beyond al-Qaeda’s core leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan.”

PLEASE SEE AL-QAEDA ON A2



U.S. efforts have disrupted al-Qaeda’s command and control, communications, morale, freedom of movement, and fundraising.

SETH G. JONES, SENIOR
POLITICAL SCIENTIST,
RAND

The Curious Case of Vanishing US Jobs

ANALYSIS

BY HEIDE B. MALHOTRA
EPOCH TIMES STAFF

The unemployment rate in the United States still hovers around 9.1 percent, yet the U.S. federal government still allows companies to bring in foreign workers under its foreign worker programs with the excuse that local talent is not available.

The most debated programs are the H-1B, H-2B, L-1, OPT, J-1, and B-1 visas, under which a U.S. company can employ a foreign worker for up to six years. Each visa designation addresses a different need, with the H-2B visa allowing a company to bring in a foreign worker who lacks the qualification for a specific job but can be trained within a reasonable time.

During good economic times these programs helped people come to the United States, but over the years, and especially during the recent economic downturn, these programs stop Americans from getting jobs because they are lost to foreign workers that entered the country on the above foreign worker programs, according to a 2011 report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

“The total number of H-1B workers in the United States at any one time—and information about the length of their stay is unknown, because (1) data systems among the various agencies that process such individuals are not linked so individuals cannot be readily tracked, and (2) H-1B workers are not assigned a unique identifier that would allow for tracking them over time,” said the 2011 GAO report.

PLEASE SEE JOBS ON A6

Falun Gong Founder Speaks at New York Conference

BY JAN JEKIELEK
EPOCH TIMES STAFF

NEW YORK CITY—Despite Hurricane Irene having passed through the New York area the previous day, thousands of Falun Gong (also known as Falun Dafa) practitioners from around the world converged on Westchester County Center on Aug. 29 to exchange perspectives on their practice, as well as on countering the Chinese regime’s persecution of their fellow practitioners in China.

After a storm-induced last-minute scheduling change, Falun Gong founder Master Li Hongzhi delivered the opening speech at the 2011 New York Falun Dafa Experience Sharing Conference. He encouraged practitioners to do better in their cultivation—living according to truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance, Falun Gong’s fundamental principles.

“It’s positive reinforcement,” said Xiaodan Nenarella, a 31-year-old musician, one of the attendees. “It’s a great pleasure to see so many practitioners from all over the world, all trying so very hard to help others.”

Xiaodan arrived in the United States from China 12 years ago, sent to university by her relatives in 1999 in a bid to help her avoid persecution. Her father, Zhiwen Wang, was a prominent Falun Gong practitioner, one of the first arrested in 1999 when then-Chinese dictator Jiang Zemin launched a campaign to “eradicate” Falun Gong.

“My father would be really glad to see so many practitioners, after 12 years of imprisonment,” she said.

During the 1990s Falun Gong, a traditional Chinese spiritual

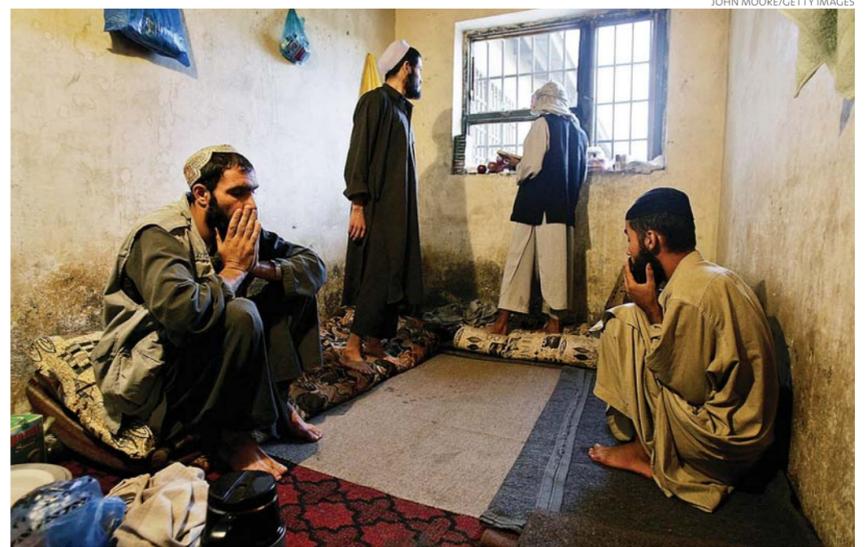


It’s a great pleasure to see so many practitioners from all over the world, all trying so very hard to help others.

XIAODAN
NENARELLA,
MUSICIAN AND
FALUN GONG
PRACTITIONER

practice that includes practicing five sets of gentle exercises, became incredibly popular in China, with the number of practitioners reaching 70 million–100 million by 1999, according to Chinese state estimates. The sheer numbers, the embrace of the practice by high-ranking Communist Party members and officers in the security apparatus and armed forces, and the spiritual independence of Falun Gong scared Jiang into ordering the persecution.

PLEASE SEE FALUN GONG ON A2



JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

TALIBAN: Prisoners accused of being Taliban insurgents, as well as a suspected suicide bomber (R), sit in jail Oct. 10, 2006, in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Corruption Turning Afghan Prisons Into Taliban Bases

Imprisoned Taliban leaders coordinate attacks from within prison walls

BY JOSHUA PHILIPP
EPOCH TIMES STAFF

Cell Block 3 was in flames as prison riots continued in the next block over. The Taliban had grown too powerful, and the confinements of Afghanistan’s Pol-e-charki prison became little more than protective walls rendering them untouchable from the war raging outside.

The December 2008 riots at Pol-

e-charki prison on the outskirts of Kabul served as a wake-up call to the severity of the corruption that had crept in through padded pockets and the turning of blind eyes. Captured Taliban commanders and radicalized prisoners had formed an operating center within Cell Block 3—armed with weapons, and with their own Shura Council to hold trials, vote, and eliminate those who refused to cooperate.

“The guards were not even

allowed to go down into the cell block because they would be killed or kidnapped—I mean, it’s the Wild West out there,” said Drew Berquist, a former U.S. intelligence agent and author of “The Maverick Experiment,” in a phone interview.

Attention fell on the prison after the riots, and rebuilding efforts became focused on increasing security. This included eliminating cells for large groups, and replacing them with cells for smaller groups of between two and eight.

PLEASE SEE AFGHAN PRISONS ON A4