

Al-Qaida 'On the Ropes,' Says Counterterrorism Chief

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Al-Qaida is “on a steady slide,” according to John Brennan, White House counterterrorism chief. Brennan told The Associated Press Wednesday that the killing of al-Qaida’s latest second-in-command, Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, in Pakistan last week was a “huge blow” to the organization.

This comes just months after the U.S. raid that killed Osama bin Laden in May.

"Al-Qaida is sort of on the ropes and taking a lot of shots to the body and the head," Brennan said.

He also mentioned that this is not the time to “step back and let them recover.”

"There's no longer a management grooming program (in Pakistan)," Brennan said of Rahman's death, "They don't stay in place long enough."

Rahman had not been in a leadership position very long, only assuming the role after bin Laden's death. Brennan described Rahman as a "workaholic" and an "operational mastermind," who kept al-Qaida's nodes from Yemen to Europe connected.

"Taking him out of commission is huge," said Brennan. "There's not another bin Laden out there. I don't know if there's another Atiyah Abd al-Rahman out there."

The key to keeping another Rahman from assuming power is to put pressure on all locations where al-Qaida operates. Despite tension over the use of U.S. drones, America's relationship with Pakistan has improved, said Brennan. This has helped American and NATO forces apply the much-needed pressure to terrorists in that region. He also credits this strategy to the fact that there has been no detected active terror plot before the 10th anniversary of Sept. 11.

According to Fox News, Brennan said the White House now has the right formula for fighting the terrorist organization: pairing U.S. intelligence and counterterrorist forces with host nations from Pakistan to Iraq to Yemen, fighting beside them or sometimes through them.

The goal is to keep al-Qaida off balance.

"If they're worrying about their security ... they're going to have less time to plot and plan," Brennan said of the militants, according to Fox. "They're going to be constantly looking over their shoulder or up in the air or wherever, and it really has disrupted their operational cadence and ability to carry out attacks."

The decline of al-Qaida is nothing new, said Ben Friedman, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, to The Christian Post.

"They have always been on the ropes. We over estimated their capabilities and popularity in their countries since 9/11. The main source of their decreased abilities is that their ideology is not very popular."

"On top of that all the counter terrorism around the world has degraded them and they have lost a lot of their members. They are no longer a coherent organization."

Friedman hopes that the decline of al-Qaida will help the United States get out of Afghanistan.

"It can lead to us dispensing of the idea that we have to constantly be fighting terrorists in all these countries. I hope it will lead us to relax a little bit and save some money."

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