

commentary

from other pens...

The guiding force behind Alqaida's leader

As a young man, Ayman al-Zawahiri was one of many young, well-educated Egyptians who was attracted to messianic Islam. A doctor, he was appalled by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and spent two tours of duty tending to victims of the conflict. He saw the Soviets as nothing more than an ephemeral enemy. Afghanistan, he believed in 1981, was a mere training course for the Muslim Mujahadeen "to wage their awaited battle against the superpower that now has the sole dominance over the globe, the United States."

It was a turning point for Zawahiri when, during his service on behalf of the Afghan resistance, he met a Saudi, six years his junior, who had the same political outlook. His name was Osama bin Laden.

As reported by Lawrence Wright in the current issue of *The New Yorker* magazine, Zawahiri was a guiding force in making the most of bin Laden's militancy and money on behalf of Islam.

Wright suggests that bin Laden might never have become a terrorist mastermind if not for Zawahiri, a figure virtually unknown in the West outside of intelligence and law enforcement circles.

For Americans, Sept. 11 might be just another day on the calendar were it not for the encouragement and political skills Zawahiri passed on to his al-Qaida colleague. The two were affiliated with different militant groups over the years but often found themselves together on the same turf, including Sudan and Saudi Arabia.

They did not forge a formal alliance until Feb. 23, 1998, becoming part of a new International Islamic Front for Jihad on the Jews and Crusaders. The founding document said the killing of Americans and their allies — civilian and military — is an "individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it."

By that standard, bin Laden has been fulfilling his duty. He is wanted by U.S. law enforcement for the near simultaneous bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998.

Zawahiri was involved as well, Wright reports, saying there was a link between the bombings and the purported CIA breakup of an Islamic Jihad cell in Albania a month earlier.

On Aug. 6, 1998, Zawahiri sent a declaration to a London-based Arabic newspaper: "We are interested in briefly telling the Americans that their message has been received and that the response, which we hope they will read carefully, is being prepared."

The embassy bombings occurred the next day. More than 200 people died and more than 5,000 were injured.

Wright was told bin Laden reviewed photographs of the U.S. Embassy in Kenya and suggested a spot where a truck could go through as a suicide bomber. After the bombings, Wright said, American intelligence concluded that Zawahiri was an equal partner in al-Qaida with bin Laden. They also believed Zawahiri was in charge of al-Qaida's Yemen cell when the USS Cole was bombed at the port of Aden on Oct. 12, 2000.

As Wright describes it, Zawahiri's scientific background may have been the catalyst for al-Qaida's interest in developing chemical and biological weapons.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Wright reports, Zawahiri and bin Laden were in the Afghan city of Kandahar, a Taliban stronghold. They left their quarters there and fled to the mountains where they listened to an Arabic radio station's news flashes about the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Afterward bin Laden and Zawahiri appear together on a videotape and are seen talking about the Sept. 11 operations.

Zawahiri says, "This great victory was possible only by the grace of God. This was not just a human achievement. It was a holy act. These 19 men (suicide bombers) who gave their lives for the cause of God will be well taken care of."

Wright says this may have been Zawahiri's last public statement. He speculates that Zawahiri may have died in the American military campaign that began in Afghanistan three weeks after Sept. 11.

EDITOR'S NOTE — George Gedda has covered foreign affairs for *The Associated Press* since 1968.



More than just pickles

In the cookbook "Joy of Pickling" by Linda Ziedrich pickling of everything from pig's ears to cucumber is covered. The book contains old German Russian favorites, oriental ones including Kimchi, refrigerator varieties, fruits, grape leaves, meats and fish. There is a recipe using sour cherries for cherry relish that I want to try next summer.



pat schiefen

• postscript

This is a recipe for making your own pickling spice.

Mixed Pickling Spice

- One 4 inch cinnamon stick, broken up
- 6 bay leaves, torn into small pieces
- 6 small dried chile peppers, cut into small pieces
- 1 tablespoon black peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon yellow mustard seeds
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 2 teaspoons whole allspice
- 1 teaspoon whole cloves
- 2 teaspoons whole coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon blade (unground) mace or small pieces nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon fenugreek
- 1 tablespoon dill seeds

Since this type of mix has small seeds that settle out be sure to shake before using. Makes 1/2 cup.

In older canning recipes the amounts called for are in pecks and bushels. Here is a conversion table since people don't deal much in those measures anymore.

- 1 bushel = 4 pecks
- 1 peck = 2 gallons
- 1 gallon = 4 quarts
- 1 quart = 4 cups
- 1 pint = 2 cups
- 1 cup = 16 tablespoons
- 1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons

Salt and vinegar react with most metals sometimes with toxic results. Pots and pans made of stainless steel, glass, ceramic, aluminum, copper or tin lined with stainless steel are safe to use.

Really Quick Dill Pickles

- 4 pounds 4 inch pickling cucumbers
 - 24 black peppercorns
 - 1 garlic bulb, cloves peeled and chopped
 - 6 small dried chile peppers (optional)
 - 6 dill heads, with fronds
 - 2 3/4 cups cider vinegar, white wine vinegar, or distilled white vinegar
 - 3 cups water
 - 1/4 cup pickling salt
 - 2 or 3 green leaves or 6 to 8 sour cherry leaves for each quart pickles for firmer pickles
- Wash cucumbers and remove blossom ends. Leave cucumbers whole or halve or quarter. Divide peppercorns, garlic, and chile peppers among 6 pint or 3 quart jars.

In a nonreactive pan, bring vinegar, water, and salt to a boil, stirring to dissolve salt. Pour liquid over cucumbers. Leave 1/2 inch head space in the jars. Close jars with rings and lids.

Process pints for 10 minutes or quarts for 15 minutes in boiling water bath. Store jars in cool, dry, dark place for a month before using. Makes 3 quarts.

Bread and Butters My Way

- About 3 1/2 pounds 3 to 5 inch pickling cucumbers
- 1/4 cup pickling salt
- 4 teaspoons yellow mustard seeds
- 1 teaspoon celery seeds
- 1 teaspoon hot pepper flakes
- 3 cups cider vinegar
- 1 cup water

1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
Wash the cucumbers. Slice 3/16 thick. You should have 2 quarts. In a large bowl, toss the slices with the salt. Cover the cucumbers with ice cubes from 2 ice trays. Let stand 3 to 4 hours.

Drain well. Toss them with the mustard seeds, celery seeds and pepper flakes. Pack loosely into 4 pint jars.

Bring to a boil in a pan vinegar, water, sugar and turmeric. Pour the hot liquid over the cucumber slices. Leave 1/2 inch head space. Close jars with rings and lids. Process jars for 10 minutes in boiling water bath. Store cooled jars in cool, dry, dark place for at least 3 weeks before eating. Makes 4 pints.

Quick Sweet Cucumber Slices

- 2 3/4 pounds 3 to 4 inch pickling cucumbers
- 2 tablespoons pickling salt
- 2 1/4 cups sugar
- 3 1/2 cups cider vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 1/2 teaspoons whole allspice
- 1 tablespoon yellow mustard seeds

Gently wash cucumbers. Slice into 3/16 inch thick slices. Discard thin slice from ends of cucumbers. In a bowl toss cucumbers with the salt. Spread tray of ice cubes over cucumbers. Let stand 3 to 4 hours.

Drain the cucumbers. Discard any ice cubes that haven't melted. Bring to a boil in a pan sugar, vinegar and spices. Stir to dissolve sugar. Add the cucumbers. Over medium heat, bring contents to a boil. Stir occasionally so cucumbers heat evenly. Pack into sterile pint or half pint jars. Leave 1/2 inch head space. Close jars with hot lids and rings. Process jars for minutes in boiling water bath. Store cooled jars in cool, dry and dark place for at least 3 weeks before eating pickles. Makes 3 1/2 pints.

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Coming soon to a theater near you

The nearest movie theater to our farm is thirty miles away. That sounds worse than it is. When we lived in Manhattan, it often took us thirty minutes or more to get to an uptown theater from downtown, or vice versa. And for a hit movie, you'd always have to wait in line. Still, it seems like a minor adventure every time we drive to the county seat, which is so big it has a mall and a two-screen multiplex. It's so small our Star Wars imbecile only had to come two minutes early to be the first in line.

Tiny though it is, some things are exactly like the big city. The couple behind us thinks no one can hear them. They are talking in an absolutely normal tone of voice, as if the rest of us are invisible and there is no one else in the movie theater.

"At five minutes to five she asks me to type this report. Can you believe it? She knew I was going out tonight, too."

"Yeah," says her partner, "you give someone a Harvard degree, a Rhodes scholarship, a Supreme Court clerkship and a Nobel Prize and they think they know everything. Where do they get off?"

In front of us, two college kids are necking. The guy is scraping the back of her throat with his tongue stud. It looks like he's trying to reach something she had for lunch.

"It's right out of a Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers movie, isn't it?" Sue says. I wonder what the proper etiquette is? Is it rude to ask another paying customer to please stop making us sick?

Finally, blessedly, the lights go down. A notice appears that this preview has been approved for all



jim mullen

• the village idiot

audiences. Then, in Dolbyized quadraphonic sound we hear an agonizing human scream; a picture of a shiny carving knife plowing through a chest. The movie we have to watch to see is a light-hearted romantic comedy. A filthy hand reaches into the body cavity and pulls out a still-beating human heart. The hand throws it the floor and a large black boot stomps it flat then kicks it away. A voice announces "You've never seen anything like this before!"

Like that would be a bad thing? I've never seen a man fall into a wood chipper. I've never seen anyone swallow a live rattlesnake. I've never seen one Siamese twin drink milk and the other one blow it out his nose. That doesn't mean I want to.

Once again, the green notice: "This preview has been approved for all audiences" then "He's unpleasant and stupid! She's topless most of the time! Lots of body part jokes! From the man that directed 'Straight to Cable!' and the producers of 'Expensive, Celebrity-Filled Crap' comes the laugh-free comedy, 'Obscene Gesture'! It's the movie your whole middle school will be talking about!"

Will the movie we paid to watch ever start? Re-

mind me to come ten minutes late next time. The two in front of us finish necking and light up a joint. "Isn't this a no smoking theater?" I ask Sue in a stage whisper.

The guy in front of us turns around and says, "They mean cigarettes, dude."

"We've really got to do this more often." I say.

"Do you mind?" says one of the women behind us. "We're trying to watch a movie here!"

"Some people are so inconsiderate," says her friend.

Jim Mullen is the author of "It Takes A Village Idiot: A Memoir of Life After the City" (Simon and Schuster, 2001). He also contributes regularly to *Entertainment Weekly*; his e-mail is jim_mullen@ew.com.

berry's world

OK! OK! I ACCEPT YOUR CONTENTION THAT IT'S NOT EASY BEING A DOVE THESE DAYS; HOWEVER, ...

