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The Ground Zero Mosque: Second Wave of the 9/11 Jihad Attacks

And the hits just kept coming. In early December 2009, the *New York Times*—on its front page—heralded the arrival of a fifteen-story mega-mosque going up at Ground Zero. I, of course, began writing it up for *Atlas Shrugs*. It was shocking. I don't know what was more grotesque: the jihadists' triumphal mosque or the *New York Times*' preening of it. The *New York Times* ran a piece entitled "Muslim Prayers Fuel Spiritual Rebuilding Project at Ground Zero;" the title was later changed to "Muslim Prayers and Renewal Near Ground Zero."¹

The *Times* was enthusiastic:

The location was precisely a key selling point for the group of Muslims who bought the building in July. A presence so close to the World Trade Center, "where a piece of the wreckage fell," said Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, the cleric leading the project, "sends the opposite statement to what happened on 9/11."²

The *Times* article contained no quotes at all against the project.

Imagine: a triumphal mosque built on the site of an Islamic victory, one no less unmistakable than the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa mosques on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, which both assert the victory of Islam over Judaism. There are thousands of triumphal mosques marking the site of Islamic victories all over the Islamic world. The Ground Zero Mosque would

be yet another. These triumphal mosques are either converted from churches, synagogues, and Hindu temples, or built over churches, synagogues, and Hindu temples that were destroyed in jihad attacks.

These mosques were designed to mark Islam's victory over and superiority to the religions that Islam views as rivals. Everywhere jihad attacks have been successful, triumphal mosques have been established. The most famous are the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and the Aya Sofya Mosque in Istanbul, formerly the Hagia Sophia Cathedral, which, for one thousand years, was the grandest church in the Christian world.³ Historian Sita Ram Goel has estimated that over two thousand mosques in India were built on the sites of Hindu temples.⁴

There are, by contrast, no mosques of healing and reconciliation built at the site of previous jihad attacks in order to reach out to those targeted by these attacks. The Ground Zero Mosque was supposed to be the first, but how could Muslims worldwide see it that way with no historical precedents? If Muslims worldwide had seen the Ground Zero Mosque go up, they would have viewed it in light of the victory mosques around them—and this victory mosque would have emboldened jihadists worldwide as no other victory mosque ever had.

The location was no accident. The imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, the cleric leading the project, said in that *Times* article, "New York is the capital of the world, and this location close to 9/11 is iconic." And even that was deceptive. The building slated to be torn down to build the mega-mosque, the former Burlington Coat Factory at 45 Park Place, was partially destroyed on 9/11. A piece of the landing gear from one of the planes that hit into the World Trade Center crashed through its roof. Interestingly enough, when the controversy heated up, Rauf's comment was scrubbed from the *Times* article. I caught the quote right away and wrote about it, and soon afterward it vanished, even from the Wayback Machine.⁵

I was appalled, and blogged on it, as did several other counter-jihad blogs. The media virtually ignored it. As the months passed, the powers behind the Ground Zero mosque proceeded to host horse-and-pony shows for the clueless and complicit politicians and various puppets on lower Manhattan's Community Board One, which did not have to approve the project, but would serve the propaganda campaign of the stealth jihadists. In one of the news articles, when it was reported that the financial committee, a small subcommittee of Community Board One,

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had unanimously approved the project, it was time for action. I didn't even know such a meeting was held. I hunkered down and began working the phones to find out the next such clandestine meeting. This was not going to happen in a vacuum. America deserved no less than transparency. "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants," as Louis Brandeis said.

On *Atlas Shrugs*, I called patriots and freedom-lovers to attend the community board hearing scheduled to discuss the project. Hundreds showed up ready to defend freedom and have their say as to why the mosque must not be built. As soon as they began to speak, those who were in favor of the mosque started to smear their foes as racists and bigots. The room was noisy and the atmosphere grew tense. Margaret Chin, the local city councilwoman, said that all opposition to the mosque was "bigotry," and supporters of tolerance and pluralism had to support the mosque.⁶ She issued a statement calling upon people to "speak out against hate and bigotry," and declared that "Lower Manhattan has no room for bigotry."⁷ A couple who lost their son on 9/11 wrote in to the *New York Times* that Chin "accused opponents of being prejudiced or anti-immigrant."⁸

The hearing organizers distributed a written statement from Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer that stated, "I for one never want to see our country or our city abandon religious tolerance as the result of an act of violence, even one as unspeakable as the 9/11 attacks."⁹ Later, Manhattan's Community Board 7 issued a statement in favor of the mosque project that said: "Should we become haters and bigots in reaction to hatred and bigotry? We must not."¹⁰

Each person who wanted to address the board had to fill out a form in order to speak. And on this form, the speakers had to give the topic of their remarks. In order to be heard early on I wrote "outreach" as the reason for my being there and wanting to speak. I wrote my name down as Pam Atta (after the ringleader of the 9/11 attacks, Mohamed Atta). Sure enough, I was called third after two speakers in favor of the mosque and long before any other opponents were given an opportunity to say anything. Imagine that. But that's how they stack the deck.

I made my way through the hot, crowded room, amid too large a crowd for that space, and I understood in that moment that I had two minutes to right the wrong narrative that Islamic supremacists and their media skills were trying to lay on the American people, guiltily them into submission, trying

to shame their rational reactions to so monstrous a proposal. I also knew that given the way they were “selecting” people to speak I would be the only one heard on our side for hours maybe.

And while my remarks and the remarks of my peers never made it onto the media newscasts, they did go viral in the only place left for us—the Internet—and the movement was born. Here are my remarks at the Community Board meeting:

First, I'd like to say that it's interesting to me that the elected officials do not represent all of the people. Every elected official has one perspective. Also: Cordoba Initiative [the name that the Ground Zero Mosque organizers had given to their project]. It's important to remember that Cordoba is symbolic of the Islamic conquest of Spain, where Christians and Jews lived as *dhimmi*s, where they lived under a sub-class status, and that is the message in the word “Cordoba.” I want also to say that the opposition to the mosque is against bigotry, against racism, against Islamic anti-Semitism, and against kastrophobia. We too want outreach with the Muslim world. We too are sensitive to the sensibilities of the Muslim world. We ask that Muslims be sensitive to our sensibilities. This is an insult, this is demeaning, this is humiliating, that you would build a shrine to the very ideology that inspired the attacks of 9/11. We feel that an Islamic Center dedicated to the hundreds of millions of victims of over a millennium of jihadi wars, land appropriations, enslavements, and cultural annihilation would be more in order. An Islamic Center dedicated to expunging the Koran of its violent texts would be appropriate on the hallowed ground of 9/11. I encourage all infidels, kafirs, and non-Muslims to join me—and Muslims with a conscience—decent Americans on June 6 to protest the mega-mosque going up on sacred ground. Thank you.

The largely anti-Cordoba crowd cheered, as they did when 9/11 family members were eventually given the opportunity to speak. A black Coptic Christian priest from Egypt would blow the shofar when people made good points against the mosque project. But the fix was in. After the lopsided vote in favor of the mosque, defying the crowd that was easily 75% against the

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mosque, printed remarks were distributed from Stringer congratulating the board for its vote. He must have known before the hearing how the board would vote. How did he know how the board would vote? Was the fix in from the start?

And the pushback began. So loud and fierce was the opposition that the media could no longer ignore the story—especially when thousands showed up at my American Freedom Defense Initiative/Stop Islamization of America rally in lower Manhattan on D-Day, June 6, 2010, to protest the Ground Zero mosque. Free people came from Washington state, California, Texas, Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, South Carolina, Florida, and elsewhere. They were Christians, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, atheists, and Muslims of conscience. They were lovers of freedom.

Both of our rallies were attended by tens of thousands of people and featured speeches by me, Dutch freedom fighter Geert Wilders, former U.N. Ambassador John Bolton, the late conservative journalist Andrew Breitbart, popular talk show host Mike Gallagher, Sudanese ex-slave Simon Deng, courageous military vet Ilario Pantano, and many 9/11 family members and first responders.

At our first rally, police estimated that 5,000 people were there, and other estimates ranged as high as 10,000. The crowd carried signs expressing their love for freedom, their contempt for sharia, and their anger at Islamic supremacism and the insult to the memories of those murdered on 9/11 that this mosque represents.

Even more people showed up for our second rally. Tens of thousands attended the Rally of Remembrance for the 9/11 victims and against the Ground Zero mega-mosque on September 11, 2010. The crowd was so large, it stretched as far as the eye could see; you could not see the horizon from our stage.

Yet the bias was relentless. The *Associated Press* reported that the pro-mosque counter-demonstration drew around a thousand “activists,” while “a smaller group of opponents rallied nearby, chanting, ‘USA, USA.’” The *New York Post* was only marginally more honest, numbering our rally attendees at 2,500: “The estimated 3,000 pro-mosque demonstrators outnumbered the mosque opponents by about 500.”

NY1 did a story on the rallies, but only showed footage of the small pro-mosque rally. The *Post* likewise only published pictures of the pro-mosque rally. *AP* ran an aerial photo of the rally, but one that was so poorly framed

that one-third of it was dominated by a large gray building, and the crowd was cut off on the other side.

No one ran accurate photos of the rally, showing the full size of the crowd stretching beyond the horizon. Why didn't anyone think to take aerial shots of both rallies? That would have settled all questions. The pictures don't lie, but the media does. *AP* and the *Post* were not alone in their depiction of our rally and the pro-Islamic supremacist one as "dueling rallies." Their coverage of our immense rally versus the tiny counter-protest is dangerous and absurd.

The media operate under the narcissistic assumption that if they don't report it, it didn't happen. The Ground Zero mosque story shattered this fundamental belief of theirs. The Ground Zero mosque story is the first news of not only national but international proportions that dominated the headlines day after day, week after week, month after month, without the propulsion of the mainstream media. They scrambled to cover it late. They were playing catch-up, and then tried to force it, shape it, and destroy it.

The people were having none of it. The people drove that story. The people came to be heard. The media favored the construction of a 15-story megamosque at Ground Zero and, like the activists and politicians, charged that those who opposed it were racists and bigots—a claim as absurd as their suggestion that the 70% of Americans who opposed the building of the mosque did so out of hatred of Muslims.

The mainstream media began to blame me for the conflict, as if millions of Americans didn't know right from wrong and had no mind of their own. *Salon* said that, "the controversy was kicked up and driven by Pamela Geller, a right-wing, viciously anti-Muslim, conspiracy-mongering blogger."¹¹ CNN blamed me also—as did Rauf's wife, Daisy Khan, Hamas-linked CAIR's Nihad Awad, and others. They consistently ignored the fact that the vast majority of Americans were against this mosque. Americans didn't want a victory mosque marking the site of the 9/11 attacks. They didn't want an insult to the 3,000 Americans who were murdered there by Islamic jihadists and for whom Ground Zero is a cemetery.

From the media's perspective, the Ground Zero mosque was an historical phenomenon. For the first time, a major news story became the most important national and international news story without the media. They were forced to cover it when almost 15,000 people showed up at my first rally. The little coverage there was about the mosque before this was all sweetness and

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light. The puff piece in the *New York Times*, all about how wonderful a mosque at Ground Zero would be for “spiritual rebuilding,” was typical of the coverage. There was little else. But I was not having it, and began writing about it regularly. When I heard a Community Board vote passed with no notice, I vowed we would be at the next meeting and we were. Were we ever. Once we packed the Community Board meeting and then showed up fifteen thousand strong at my June 6 Ground Zero mosque protest, the story took on a life of its own. Then we had roughly 20,000 people at Ground Zero on September 11, 2010. The story could not be written or controlled by the mainstream media.

Think about that. The Ground Zero mosque was not shaped by the media, not covered by the media—not at first anyway. The media scrambled to cover the story. They had no narrative, at first. They would put me on and let me speak. Of course, they always had some Islamic supremacist liar on to destroy me, but they never could. And, despite all the handicaps, I had the opportunity to present America with concretes on Islam.

Fox had me on with Nihad Awad, and CNN had Ahmed Soliman debate me.¹² I got in the ring with Ibrahim Ramey on CNN, and again with Ramey on the Canadian Broadcasting Centre.¹³ There were lefty apologists like Nicole Neroulias, faculty member of the Columbia School of Journalism, who got into the ring with me on *Fox and Friends*.¹⁴

“Palestinian” hip-hopper Will Youmans spewed pure fiction in our debate. I also debated with Robert Salaam on RLTV and other hostile talking heads, including a nasty Bill O’Reilly who *had* to have me on to refute what Nihad Awad had said on his show the night before. He didn’t say “Kill Pamela Geller,” but he held up a cartoon of Muhammad with urine on his head, saying that I had depicted Muhammad on my website. This was a clear incitement to violence.¹⁵ Joy Behar took her best shot (and missed), joined by Daisy Khan and Roy Sekoff, founding editor of the *Huffington Post*.¹⁶ That panel was thus stacked with three mosque supporters against me alone, but even that was still not skewed enough for them.

I faced off against David Lane and Michael Gross, ACLU and civil rights lawyers who took their shots at me on *Hannity*.¹⁷ And there were classic moments with Ibrahim Hooper of CAIR.¹⁸ CNN’s *Anderson Cooper 360* show went so far as to do a whole segment accusing me of ginning up the Ground Zero mosque controversy, saying that if it hadn’t been for me, there would have been no issue. (Talk about condescending to the American people.)¹⁹

There were skirmishes with Safaa Zarzour, Secretary General of the Muslim Brotherhood-front Islamic Society of North America, and Hussam Ayloush of Hamas-tied CAIR's Los Angeles chapter.²⁰ Not to mention a brisk brush with Michael Ghouse.²¹ Across the pond I debated Shahed Amanullah on the BBC.²² Geraldo did a hit piece on me.²³ I took on Malik Shabazz of the New Black Panthers.²⁴ I went head-to-head with leftist misogynist Bob Beckel and hate sponsor CAIR-Chicago's Ahmed Rehab.²⁵

It is also instructive to contrast these battles to the kid gloves, fawning treatment the media accorded to Rauf and the Ground Zero Mosque project developer, Sharif El-Gamal. Rauf even claimed credit for "training" a particularly compliant *New York Times* reporter.²⁶

I was not deterred. Each appearance was "a teachable moment." And I was glad of it.

The Sunday magazine of the UK's *Independent* ran a cover story under the headline, "Pamela Geller, The Most Dangerous Woman in America?"

As if...

Still, it was a unique opportunity for counter-jihadists. Right after 9/11, the media didn't have its story straight either, and there were moments where you heard and saw things you would never hear or see now. The media was surprised and wasn't ready for that terrible act of war against America. But they dusted the human remains off their jackets and began to shape a suicidal narrative about how the West was ultimately responsible for the conflict. We have gone so far down the rabbit hole, 9/11 images are embargoed and not shown. They are trundled out but once a year and then secreted back into the vault of things the media won't talk about.

The dirty smear merchants over at Media [anti-]Matters understood what was happening and issued a directive to the left-wing lemmings: "Do not have Geller on national television."²⁷ The very same day that Goebbels-inspired post ran, Chris Matthews canceled my TV appearance for that evening.²⁸ And with the exception of breaking news stories (i.e., historic landmark First Amendment rulings, the jihad attack on our free speech event in Garland or jihad beheading plots to kill me), I haven't been on ever since, with the rare exception of a few appearances on the *Hannity* show.

The media, both left and right, has generally fallen into lockstep. They will only have me on if they have no choice. If I make news vis-a-vis a lawsuit or rally or some other newsmaking event and they are forced to, they do so

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reluctantly. If they can get my lawyer instead, they will because they have become so fearful of the truth.

Despite this, the left could not contain the story. The American people would not back down.

In the continuing Ground Zero mosque story, the media hoped the “opposition would just melt away,” to quote Matt Lauer in his puff piece on thug Ground Zero mosque developer El-Gamal. The media tried to play catch-up. They settled on the tired “racist–Islamophobic–anti-Muslim–bigot” narrative, but it didn’t fit. The 9/11 families, like all Americans, were entitled to their pain and their grief. The *ummah* couldn’t cry about sensitivity to Muslims when their leaders showed such callous heartlessness towards the pain and sensitivity of non-Muslims and Muslims of conscience. The more they tried to destroy the opposition, the more intolerant they looked.

The alphabet networks stayed out of it for as long as they could without looking completely out of touch. And when they finally weighed in, the heavyweights like *60 Minutes* shilled for Islamic supremacists, and consequently came under enormous fire from the American people, the blogs, and talk radio.

The mosque story has been a game-changer. The media is now working on preaching Islam, spreading the historically inaccurate whitewash of Islam. That is how they are using their considerable power to disarm the American people against a mortal enemy that seeks our destruction. They ask, why are we fighting? That is the role the media has chosen and it’s no accident. Beware, America.

There were numerous reasons to oppose the mosque. Even the name of the initiative—Cordoba—spoke volumes. While Islamic Spain is held up today as a proto-multiculturalist paradise, in reality non-Muslims there suffered under the discrimination prescribed in Islamic law for *dhimmis*, non-believers who were subjugated as inferiors and denied equality of rights. When we started calling attention to the true meaning of the name Cordoba, the name of the mosque initiative suddenly changed to Park51—with the media lapdogs immediately falling into line. They never mentioned Cordoba again, just like that.

These mega-mosques are making a supremacist statement. Most people assume they’re just like synagogues or churches. They don’t realize that Islam has political goals that are expressed through the mosques, and that the

mosques often symbolize that Muslims are claiming a particular territory as their own.

For the Muslim Brotherhood, mosques aren't just houses of worship. They're centers of political power, from which plans are made to increase that power in various ways.

When you hear Muslims speak of tolerance, you should understand that Islamic notions of "tolerance" arise out of Koran 9:29, where tolerance means that non-Muslims are to be tolerated only as those who submit to Islam as inferiors, without equality of rights with Muslims. Many oppose the Ground Zero mosque for just this reason. After all, we do know that this is what is taught in mosques that are designated "Islamic Centers"—the ones that some people ignorantly claim are not mosques. Certainly the Muslim Brotherhood in America's goals in outreach have nothing to do with successful outreach or achieving Western standards of tolerance, but rather with bringing over converts and getting us to subvert our way of life—primarily by working with them.

Is it really "racism" and "bigotry" to oppose the mega-mosque because of all this? Of course it isn't. It's just common sense—common sense and love for America.

One might think that the Muslim community would have been capable of some sensitivity, considering how maniacally sensitive they are about any perceived insult to Islam. Every time there is a jihadist attack, which is happening with increasing frequency, the *ummah* (global Muslim community) starts wailing on us infidels about Muslim sensitivities and anticipatory and imaginary affronts and insults. Yet what could be more insulting and humiliating than a mosquestrosity (as I called it) sold to us as a multicultural Islamic community center in the shadow of what once was the greatest multicultural community center in the world, the World Trade Center buildings?

Imam Rauf and Daisy Khan, along with the Ground Zero mosque developer Sharif El-Gamal, said it was a mosque of healing. Yet Rauf, Khan, and El-Gamal could not control the perception that Muslims worldwide will have of this mosque. That perception would be guided by Muslims' own cultural context.

If this mosque really were about healing, why wouldn't the self-declared Muslim leaders build an Islamic Center dedicated to expunging the Koran and Sunnah of their prescribed violent teachings that inspired the attacks of

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9/11? There have been over 17,000 Islamic jihad attacks since 9/11, each one with the imprimatur of a Muslim cleric. What is being done about this?

Sadly, New York City officials were avid to help the Ground Zero mosque organizers get their victory mosque built. The *New York Daily News* reported in December 2010:

Mayor Bloomberg's top deputies went to great lengths to help those trying to build a mosque at Ground Zero—even drafting a letter to the community board for them, newly released documents show. City Hall on Thursday released a flurry of emails between its brass and Feisal Abdul Rauf, the imam pushing to build a mosque near the sensitive site, and his supporters.

Another instance of the New York City government colluding with the mosque organizers was the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's refusal to allow SIOA's anti-mosque, pro-freedom ads on New York City buses. They said that the ad's images of the burning World Trade Center towers were offensive. As I said at the time, "What's more insulting and offensive—that image of truth, or a fifteen-story mega-mosque looking down on the sacred ground of Ground Zero?"²⁹

We threatened a lawsuit. The MTA backed off and allowed the ads. But the episode illustrated two things: the city government's strong pro-mosque stance, and the necessity to keep fighting until attaining victory. The fact that we even had to fight this battle shows the grave threat to freedom of speech in the US today, and how anxious authorities are to kowtow to Islamic supremacism.

We called attention to the mosque organizers' dishonesty. We galvanized the opposition to the mosque and used every means at our disposal to make our voice heard. And we were heard. The mosque remains wildly unpopular with the American people, despite relentless media propagandizing for it. And so by the spring of 2011, it was likely that the organizers would not make their initial goal of breaking ground for the mosque on September 11, 2011. And we would keep up the pressure to make sure that it would never be built at all.

The people were awake.

And that mosque was never built.

Despite all the opposition and abuse they faced, the people stood up and fought against the Ground Zero Mosque, and *won*. An army of Davids.

The Ground Zero mosque battle is a story of ordinary Americans defeating powerful and moneyed elites. Our acclaimed documentary, *The Ground Zero Mosque: Second Wave of the 9/11 Attacks*, tells the whole story, gives highlights of the rally speeches, exposes the sinister forces behind the mosque, and strikes back against the media liars. This was the first and only documentary that told the whole truth about the Ground Zero mosque. We premiered it in Manhattan's Theatre District before a standing-room-only crowd of freedom-lovers. It was after our AFDI 9/11 Freedom Rally celebrating our victory over the sinister forces behind the Ground Zero mosque.

By far our greatest victory was the defeat of the Ground Zero mosque. Despite overwhelming odds, President Obama, Mayor Bloomberg, legions of craven politicians and a sharia-compliant, jackbooted media intent on getting that cultural obscenity built, it was soundly and roundly defeated. We did that. Our rallies and our patriots did that.

In May 2017, Ronda Kaysen of *New York Times*, still licking her wounds that a 16-story mega-mosque on hallowed ground was not going to be built, asked me for comment about Sharif El-Gamal's new project: pricey condos combined with a hagiographic museum of Islam. How many condo projects in New York get written up in the *Times*? The *Times* has a real estate section, so development projects do often get written up, but this was treated as a news story, not in the development section, but on the front page.

The *Times* was still reeling from their defeat in the Ground Zero mosque controversy.

I opened my laptop and fired off a response.

The 16-story mosque that El-Gamal initially planned to build there has not been built. [The exact number of stories the mosque was slated to have changed in various reports; some said 13, some 15, some 16.] Our efforts in showing what an insult it was to the American people and to the victims of 9/11, and how many Muslims worldwide would inevitably view it as a triumphal mosque built on the site of a jihad attack, defeated it. Now El-Gamal plans an Islamic Museum, which is just as much of an insult; it will be like having a Museum touting the glories of the Japanese Empire at

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Pearl Harbor. A genuine Islamic Museum that detailed the 1,400-year history of jihad warfare, cultural annihilation, land appropriation and enslavement would be appropriate at that location, but El-Gamal's museum is certain to be a whitewash of the doctrine and history of jihad and a paean to imaginary Muslim contributions to various important inventions and achievements.

We will never surrender.