

July 2010

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The Problem with Second Place

Thanks to your democratic laws, we will invade you. Thanks to our religious laws, we will dominate you.
--Muslim leader to Rev. Guiseppe Germano Barnardini during an interfaith dialogue

On the morning of September 11, 2001, representatives of real estate developer Donald Trump were in Chicago meeting with architect Adrian Smith when someone burst into the room and turned on the TV just as the second plane hit tower number two. On the table were three proposals for what would be Chicago's finest—and at 2,000 feet—the world's tallest building. Trump's people left immediately, later calling to say they preferred to scale back to 900 feet. According to Smith, "They didn't want to be the tallest anymore."¹

Nevertheless, a cry went forth for the reconstruction of the Twin Towers or something even grander. In 2003, plans were unveiled for a new **1 World Trade Center** topping out at a symbolic 1,776 feet. But by the start of construction in 2006, another quickly rising structure in the Middle East was already destined to surpass it in elevation—by nearly one-thousand feet!

Designed by senior architect Adrian Smith of Chicago, Dubai's record-shattering **Burj Khalifais**, said to honor the UAE President, Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan for his financial support, officially opened earlier this year. Currently the world's tallest building, the Burj is erected in the general region of a once controversial tower noted in Genesis 11. *Burj* is Arabic for "tower."

It is thought that the popular function of tall buildings is to convey glory. If so, America, home to the world's highest superstructures throughout most of the 20th century, must now share its prestige with others like China that currently boasts six of the world's ten tallest buildings. Also receiving the praise of men are Taiwan's **Taipei 101**, the second highest building in the world (until 1 World Trade Center is completed in 2013), and the twin **Petronas Towers** in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) which wrested, by 33 feet, top honors from the 108-story Sears Tower back in 1998.

Except for The Americas, *September 11* seems to have been a launch date for the skyscraper "race-to-the-heavens." Even giddy industry analysts speculated that North Korea's Ryugyong Tower, 23 years under construction, might eventually become the world's second tallest hotel—except that it is considered the worst building in the world and will probably never be finished, much less opened.

In 1956, near the end of his career, Frank Lloyd Wright drew plans for *The Illinois*, a 5,280 foot tower that would have been served by a 15,000-car garage, 100 helipads, and atom-powered elevators. He may have been laughed at then—but not now. Leading architects and engineers for the world's super-high buildings all believe a mile-high colossus will be completed somewhere in the world in the next 20 years. They just don't envision such an undertaking in America.

Architectural historians say that Skyscrapers follow the monetary tides (the flow of capital, cost of land, materials, labor—and projected demand). While those tides are moving offshore, there is a substantial inflow of Shariah-compliant investment funds that should raise concerns.

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, founder of the American Society for Muslim Advancement and the Cordoba Initiative, says he hopes to build a \$100 million, 13-story Islamic cultural center at Park Place, the site of a former Burlington Coat Factory that was badly damaged during the 9/11 attack.

Situated several blocks from Ground Zero, the center will include a mosque, a museum, a 500-seat performing-arts theater, fitness center, swimming pool, library, public conference rooms, basketball courts and restaurants—and a mosque. Did we say that already? New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg has given the project a thumbs up, but New Yorkers in general, are definitely thumbs down.

Also thumbs down is former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin. But media coverage this week of Palin's internet "tweet," lends the impression that she is butting in where she has no business. In her Sunday *tweet*, Palin wrote, "Peace-seeking Muslims, pls understand, Ground Zero mosque is UNNECESSARY provocation; it stabs hearts. Pls reject it in interest of healing."

Far from butting in, Palin has encouraged a vigorous debate while forcing the media to report stories that may not be favorable to Abdul Rauf. One of the stories surfacing concerns the refusals by CBS and NBC to air an ad from the National Republican Trust PAC that crosscut footage of the 9/11 attacks with the sounds of Muslim prayer. "On Sept. 11, they declared war against us," a narrator says. "And to celebrate that murder of 3,000 Americans, they want to build a monstrous 13-story mosque at Ground Zero."

Another news blackout occurred on June 6 when perhaps as many as 10,000 people assembled near Ground Zero to register their disapproval of the Cordoba Mosque and their disappointment with the Mayor. Although large rallies usually draw several (news) satellite trucks, this event didn't. Not even one.

Bloomberg has inappropriately advanced the notion that the right to build a mosque wherever one is desired comes with the blessings of our founders by way of the First Amendment. He should be informed that there were many activities the founders neither condoned nor tolerated. A partial list of some of them can be found in the *Declaration of Independence*. Moreover, the Mayor does not consider America to be under siege. But many former Muslims do. Mr. Reza Safa is one of them.

Reza was raised a Muslim in Iran but now serves JESUS in America. "On September 11, 2001," says Reza, "a gigantic port was opened, a gate that will lead us, eventually, to the end of time. On that day of infamy America faced a new giant unlike any force by which she has ever been challenged. That principality, better known as Islam, will be a contending force until it opens the way for its master, the Antichrist."²

[Palestinian] Mosab Hassan Yousef, a former double agent for MOSSAD, Israel's intelligence agency, and son of a founding member of Hamas, says "...shame on Muslims to do this, to build a mosque on a graveyard that all its victims were killed [in the name of the god of the Quran, who mandated the killing of those innocent people]." But Mosab is quick to add that Muslims are not his enemies. "I am fighting their god, and I believe that the biggest enemy that Muslims are facing is their god and their prophet."³

Walid Shoebat, a former Palestinian terrorist thinks Homeland Security should "follow the money" because at least two pledged donors to the Ground Zero mosque are terrorist-sponsoring states. He says the unmistakable message Abdul Rauf is sending to the Muslim world is that "America is being conquered."⁴

Daniel spoke of an end time "god of fortresses" that would challenge the world. Perhaps that god revealed himself to a certain false prophet near Mecca in 610 A.D. More than a few former Muslims think so.

But back to tall buildings. In 2007, Bill Baker, chief engineer for the Burj said, "There's a real can-do, will-do attitude in China and the Middle East. We interviewed for the Burj in March 2003. We got the commission in April. And now we're already up 90 floors in the air. That tells you a lot about where those countries are in their optimism, not unlike the U.S. in an earlier time. I hope we haven't lost it."⁵

Mr. Baker, we hope so too.

Rick Forcier

¹ Philip Nobel, *Lust for Height*, *The American*, February 2007, pg.20

² Safa, Reza F., *The Coming Fall of Islam in Iran*, FrontLine, 2006, pg.100

³ 'Son of Hamas' opposes Ground Zero mosque, *WorldNetDaily.com*, 7/26/2010

⁴ Walid Shoebat interview, *CBNNewschannel*, *cbn.com/cbnnews*, 7/23/2010

⁵ Philip Nobel, *Ibid*