



## The Mosque Controversy

What may surprise some people is that the American taxpayer is currently financing a trip to the Middle East by the imam who is pushing this project, so that he can raise the money to build it. The State Department is subsidizing his travel.

The big talking point is that this is an issue about “religious freedom” and that Muslims have a “right” to build a mosque where they choose. But those who oppose this project are not claiming that there is no legal right to build a mosque near the site of the World Trade Center.



If anybody did, it would be a matter for the courts to decide — and they would undoubtedly say that it is not illegal to build a mosque near the site of the World Trade Center attack.

The intelligentsia and others who are wrapping themselves in the Constitution are fighting a phony war against a straw man. Why create a false issue, except to evade the real issue?

Our betters are telling us that we need to be more “tolerant” and more “sensitive” to the feelings of Muslims. But if we are supposed to be sensitive to Muslims, why are Muslims not supposed to be sensitive to the feelings of millions of Americans, for whom 9/11 was the biggest national trauma since Pearl Harbor?

It would not be illegal for Japanese Americans to build a massive shinto shrine next to Pearl Harbor. But, in all these years, they have never sought to do it.

When Catholic authorities in Poland were planning to build an institution for nuns, years ago, and someone pointed out that it would be near the site of a concentration camp that carried out genocide, the Pope intervened to stop it.

He didn't say that the Catholic Church had a legal right to build there, as it undoubtedly did. Instead, he respected the painful feelings of other people. And he certainly did not denounce those who called attention to the concentration camp.

There is no question that Muslims have a right to build a mosque where they chose to. The real question is why they chose that particular location, in a country that covers more than 3 million square miles.

If we all did everything that we have a legal right to do, we could not even survive as individuals, much less as a society. So the question is whether those who are planning a Ground Zero mosque want to be part of American society or just to see how much they can get away with in American society?

Can anyone in his right mind believe that this was intended to show solidarity with Americans, rather than solidarity with those who attacked America? Does anyone imagine that the Middle East nations, including Iran, from whom financial contributions will be solicited, want to promote reconciliation between Americans and Muslims?

That the President of the United States has joined the chorus of those calling the Ground Zero mosque a



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religious freedom issue tells us a lot about the moral dry rot that is undermining this country from within.

In this, as in other things, Barack Obama is not so much the cause of our decline but the culmination of it. He had many predecessors and many contemporaries who represent the same mindset and the same malaise.

There are people for whom moral preening has become a way of life. They are out in force denouncing critics of the Ground Zero mosque.

There are others for whom a citizen of the world affectation puts them one-up on those of us who are grateful to be Americans, and to enjoy a freedom that is all too rare in other countries around the world, even at this late date in human history.

They think the United States is somehow on trial, and needs to prove itself to others by bending over backwards. But bending over backwards does not win friends. It loses respect, including self-respect.

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