

# Park51 controversy / Mosque should be allowed to be built

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## Position: Mosque should be allowed to be built

*This position addresses the topic Park51 controversy.*

For this position

“ The anti-Muslim rage-aholics, however, feel that Islam cannot exist within America's pluralism. Ironically, their view is shared by Al-Qaeda -- making right-wing groups and former Republican speaker of the House Newt Gingrich closer to the Al-Qaeda narrative than the local Muslim communities they are fiercely protesting. The vitriol from these anti-Muslim groups plays right into the hands of Al-Qaeda, a group that works tirelessly to prove that America is at war with Islam.”

From Anti-Muslim Is Anti-American, by Salam Al Marayati (*The Huffington Post*, July 27, 2010) (view)

“ The number of violent extremists in the American Islamic community is microscopically small. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has reported that of terrorist attacks carried out in the United States between 1980 and 2005, only 6 percent were committed by radical Muslims. A recent study by researchers at Duke University and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, found one reason the number is so low is that "Muslim religious and community leaders ... consistently condemned political violence in public sermons and private conversations." Palin's position is hard to reconcile with the reverence she and her fans claim to hold for the framers, who gave the highest protection to religious freedom.”

From Ban a ground zero mosque?, by Steve Chapman (*Chicago Tribune*, July 22, 2010) (view)

“ The man spearheading the center, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, is a moderate Muslim clergyman. He has said one or two things about American foreign policy that strike me as overly critical —but it's stuff you could read on The Huffington Post any day. On Islam, his main subject, Rauf's views are clear: he routinely denounces all terrorism—as he did again last week, publicly. He speaks of the need for Muslims to live peacefully with all other religions. He emphasizes the commonalities among all faiths. He advocates equal rights for women, and argues against laws that in any way punish non-Muslims.”

From Build the Ground Zero Mosque, by Fareed Zakaria (*Newsweek*, August 6, 2010) (view)

“ Islam did not attack the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, sick and twisted men did, who not only hijacked four airplanes but also hijacked a religion. Let us not stereotype the over one billion Muslims around the world because of the evil acts of a few. A decision like this one, to support or not support the construction of this center, defines who we are as a nation. It's at the essence of our values, our freedom of expression, freedom of religion and religious tolerance.”

From *Ground Zero Mosque: Digging a Hole in the Soul of America*, by Russell Simmons (*The Huffington Post*, August 4, 2010) ([view](#))

“ The only recourse for people of good sense, which one hopes will include Muslim leaders, is to plead with this group to find some less sensitive location in New York City to build the center. If the Cordoba Initiative fails to listen, then it has the time-honored constitutional right, under religious freedom, to build the mosque near Ground Zero, and its members should receive protection from police against any harassment and vandalism that will probably result.”

From *Mosque is no way to 'build bridges'*, by Thomas S. Kidd (*USA Today*, August 4, 2010) ([view](#))

“ Some of the families of the victims of the attacks, who deserve our respect and sympathy, are uneasy about the mosque. But it would be a greater disservice to the memories of their loved ones to give into the very fear that the terrorists wanted to create and, thus, to abandon the principles of freedom and tolerance.”

From *A Monument to Tolerance*, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, August 3, 2010) ([view](#))

“ You can study Islam at virtually any American university, but you can't even build a one-room church in Saudi Arabia. That resistance to diversity, though, is not something we want to emulate, which is why I'm glad the mosque was approved on Tuesday. Countries that choke themselves off from exposure to different cultures, faiths and ideas will never invent the next Google or a cancer cure, let alone export a musical or body of literature that would bring enjoyment to children everywhere.”

From *Broadway and the Mosque*, by Thomas Friedman (*The New York Times*, August 3, 2010) ([view](#))

“ Appearing on ABC's "This Week with Christiane Amanpour," Daisy Khan, a founder of the mosque (and the wife of the imam), rejected any compromise. She was right to do so because to compromise is to accede, even a bit, to the arguments of bigots, demagogues or the merely uninformed. This is no longer her fight. The fight is now all of ours.”

From *No compromise on religious freedom*, by Richard Cohen (*The Washington Post*, August 24, 2010) ([view](#))

“ So virulent is the Islamophobic hysteria of the neocon and Fox News right — abetted by the useful idiocy of the Anti-Defamation League, Harry Reid and other cowed Democrats — that it has also rendered Gen. David Petraeus's last-ditch counterinsurgency strategy for fighting the war inoperative. How do you win Muslim hearts and minds in Kandahar when you are calling Muslims every filthy name in the book in New York?”

From *How Fox Betrayed Petraeus*, by Frank Rich (*The New York Times*, August 21, 2010)

(view)

“ “My hunch is that the violence in the Islamic world has less to do with the Koran or Islam than with culture, youth bulges in the population, and the marginalization of women. In Pakistan, I know a young woman whose brothers want to kill her for honor — but her family is Christian, not Muslim.” ”

From Taking Bin Laden's Side, by Nicholas D. Kristof (*The New York Times*, August 21, 2010) (view)

“ “Republican pols claim they don't oppose religious freedom. But have any of them stood in solidarity with Muslims in Mufreesboro, Tenn., or Temecula, Calif., or other locales where local Republicans and tea partyers have opposed the building of local mosques? No way. (Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, pressed by his Republican opponent, also opposed the mosque, but at least he didn't pile on more anti-Muslim slurs.)” ”

From Insisting on our principles, by Trudy Rubin (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 19, 2010) (view)

“ “Some of the imam's views - for example, advocating "personal status" courts to decide family law issues according to religious tenets - are not acceptable to most Americans. But a nation whose Constitution promotes religious freedom doesn't have to agree with him to let him preach in Lower Manhattan.” ”

From Build the mosque, by The Philadelphia Inquirer editorial board (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 18, 2010) (view)

“ “Some critics have said the ultimate victory for Osama and the 9/11 hijackers would be to allow a mosque to be built near ground zero. Actually, the ultimate victory for Osama and the 9/11 hijackers is the moral timidity that would ban a mosque from that neighborhood. Our enemies struck at our heart, but did they also warp our identity?” ”

From Our Mosque Madness, by Maureen Dowd (*The New York Times*, August 17, 2010) (view)

“ “This was never a war between us and the Muslim world. It's a war between us and al-Qaida. The central battleground in this war isn't Iraq, Afghanistan, or Lower Manhattan. It's Islam. That's the ground al-Qaida is fighting for. It's the ground Imam Rauf wants to take back. He wants to build an Islam that loves America, embraces freedom, and preaches coexistence. Let's help him.” ”

From Islam Is Ground Zero, by William Saletan (*Slate*, August 16, 2010) (view)

“ “Obama would have done better if he had explained the wisdom of going ahead with the project, which developers said is intended to bring Muslims and non-Muslims together. In addition to a place of worship, it would have a pool and performing arts center. They also have said they want the board to include members from other faiths — a promise they should take care to keep.” ”

From The Constitution and the Mosque, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, August 16, 2010) (view)

“ “Around the world, mainstream Muslims are the key to curbing the spread of radicalism; at home, they are the first line of defense for average Americans, the people best-positioned to spot radical plots in their infancy. And the surest way for America to isolate and alienate mainstream Muslims is to scapegoat them for the actions of the radicals.” ”

From Obama's sage decision to back Manhattan mosque, by The Boston Globe editorial board (*The Boston Globe*, August 15, 2010) (view)

## Against this position

“ “The United States should ban any overseas funding for construction of religious sites originating in countries that do not allow religious freedom and end the one-way relationship that allows those promoting Islam an unfair advantage over other faiths. Furthermore, Ms. Khan and Mr. Rauf should come clean about the expected sources of funding for the Cordoba House. It would be ironic and tragic (if not surprising) if the same channels that seek to build the Ground Zero mosque also underwrote the attacks that made it necessary to build a memorial.” ”

From The 9/11 mosque, by The Washington Times editorial board (*The Washington Times*, May 27, 2010) (view)

“ “Aren't officials at least curious why these supposedly "patriotic" Muslim activists named their planned \$100 million mosque after the Great Mosque of Cordoba — a legacy of Muslim Spain representing the zenith of Islamic dominance. There may be nothing to it — except that a radical Islamic school in Virginia, raided by the feds after 9/11, also goes by that name. Cordoba University's founder was recently named an unindicted co-conspirator in a terror case. Symbolism is not lost on such jihadists.” ”

From Ground Zero Mosque, by Investor's Business Daily editorial board (*Investor's Business Daily*, May 17, 2010) (view)

“ ““For us, a mosque was always a place to pray, to be together on holidays — not a way to make an ostentatious architectural statement,” Jasser said. “Ground zero shouldn't be about promoting Islam. It's the place where war was declared on us as Americans.” To use that space for Muslim outreach, he argues, is “the worst form of misjudgment.”” ”

From A mosque at ground zero?, by Jeff Jacoby (*The Boston Globe*, June 6, 2010) (view)

“ “We need to have the moral courage to denounce it. It is simply grotesque to erect a mosque at the site of the most visible and powerful symbol of the horrible consequences of radical Islamist ideology. Well-meaning Muslims, with common human sensitivity to the victims' families, realize they have plenty of other places to gather and worship. But for radical Islamists, the mosque would become an icon of triumph, encouraging them in their challenge to our civilization.” ”

From No Mosque at Ground Zero, by Newt Gingrich (*Human Events*, July 28, 2010) (view)

“ "New York currently boasts at least 30 mosques so it's not as if there is pressing need to find space for worshippers. The fact we Muslims know the idea behind the Ground Zero mosque is meant to be a deliberate provocation to thumb our noses at the infidel. The proposal has been made in bad faith and in Islamic parlance, such an act is referred to as "Fitna," meaning "mischief-making" that is clearly forbidden in the Koran." ”

From *Mischief in Manhattan*, by Raheel Raza, Tarek Fatah (*Ottawa Citizen*, August 9, 2010) (view)

“ "Here was an idea we have been hearing more and more of lately—the need to show the world America's devotion to democracy and justice, also cited by the administration as a reason to try Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in New York City. Who is it, we can only wonder, that requires these proofs? What occasions these regular brayings on the need to show the world the United States is a free nation?" ”

From *Liberal Piety and the Memory of 9/11*, by Dorothy Rabinowitz (*The Wall Street Journal*, August 4, 2010) (view)

“ "The fact that an apologist for terrorists and an associate of terrorist-allied organizations is proceeding with this provocation is indecent. We have thousands of mosques in the United States, and who knows how many Islamic cultural centers in New York City. We do not need this one, in this place, built by these people. We're all stocked up on Hamas apologists, thanks very much." ”

From *Not at Ground Zero*, by National Review editorial board (*National Review*, August 4, 2010) (view)

“ "Then again, even if we were boundlessly tolerant, there is an inescapable fact: This 13-story community center is going to be built two blocks from the worst modern atrocity committed in the name of Islam. Not only is such a project in poor taste, for many Americans it confirms their concerns about Islam's provocative nature. How that helps interfaith dialogue remains a mystery." ”

From *How is this tolerant?*, by David Harsanyi (*The Denver Post*, August 4, 2010) (view)

“ "The question is not whether there should be another mosque in New York. It's whether one is appropriate on this site. The mayor's stance recalls his initial support for putting the 9/11 mastermind on trial a few blocks away. "It is fitting that 9/11 suspects face justice near the World Trade Center site, where so many New Yorkers were murdered," he said before switching sides." ”

From *Don't play the bigotry card, Mike!*, by Michael Goodwin (*New York Post*, August 4, 2010) (view)

“ "Even in his allegedly ringing iftar speech, Obama said that Ground Zero is "hallowed ground," that we must "respect the sensitivities surrounding the development of Lower Manhattan," and that "we must never forget those we lost so tragically on 9/11." Those words easily could have been spoken by a mosque opponent. "Hallowed" ground deserves special treatment; what is unobjectionable elsewhere can become unseemly and ill-considered on such resonant ground." ”

From *Thanks for clarifying, O*, by Rich Lowry (*New York Post*, August 17, 2010) (view)

“ “Who is to say that the mosque won't one day hire an Anwar al-Aulaqi -- spiritual mentor to the Fort Hood shooter and the Christmas Day bomber, and onetime imam at the Virginia mosque attended by two of the 9/11 terrorists? An Aulaqi preaching in Virginia is a security problem. An Aulaqi preaching at Ground Zero is a sacrilege.” ”

From Sacrilege at Ground Zero, by Charles Krauthammer (*The Washington Post*, August 13, 2010) (view)

“ “If the founders of the project are as serious about interfaith bridge-building as they say, they'd be *delighted* to find a less controversial location. Rubbing hurt feelings raw is not an act of understanding. Stoking a religiously charged debate at Ground Zero is not a blow for tolerance. They are provocations, by people who are either witless or understand exactly what they are doing.” ”

From Bloomberg's bunk, by Rich Lowry (*New York Post*, August 10, 2010) (view)

## Mixed on this position

“ “In the case of the famous Muhammad cartoons, "moderate" Muslims typically make the case that while free speech has its place, the sensitivities of the Muslim community should be respected. But tolerance can't just be a one-way street, and sensitivity is not the preserve of Muslims alone. So what do they make of the sensitivities of 9/11 families in the face of their mega-mosque? And if they are prepared to so lightly traduce on those sensitivities, will they perhaps return the favor by hosting an exhibition of pictorial depictions of the prophet?” ”

From The Mosque at Ground Zero, by Bret Stephens (*The Wall Street Journal*, May 25, 2010) (view)

“ “Rauf has said to domestic audiences that money to build the 13-story mosque-cum-community center will be raised from among American Muslims -- though he hasn't said from whom. Yet he recently told an Arabic-language newspaper in Britain that funding would also come from Arab countries. And that's a red flag. As laid out in a 2005 report from Freedom House, financing mosques abroad to spread the radical Wahhabist strain of Islam is one of the main ways Saudi Arabia keeps its own radicals pacified.” ”

From About that mosque, by New York Post editorial board (*New York Post*, July 26, 2010) (view)

“ “Now, the Saudis *openly* fund mosques abroad, spreading the radical Wahhabi strain of Islam, as a means of pacifying their own home-grown radicals. So it would be particularly troubling if Rauf's funding comes from abroad -- particularly from Riyadh. Especially given his own disturbing ties to figures like Hossein Mahallati, Iran's former UN ambassador and an unabashed supporter of Hamas. Not to mention Rauf's own pointed refusal to label Hamas a terrorist organization -- and his statement, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, that "United States policies were an accessory to the crime that happened.” ”

From Money behind the mosque, by New York Post editorial board (*New York Post*, August 4, 2010) (view)

“ “From the beginning, though, I pointed out that Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf was no great bargain and that his Cordoba Initiative was full of euphemisms about Islamic jihad and Islamic theocracy. I mentioned his sinister belief that the United States was partially responsible for the assault on the World Trade Center and his refusal to take a position on the racist Hamas dictatorship in Gaza. The more one reads through his statements, the more alarming it gets.”

From A Test of Tolerance, by Christopher Hitchens (*Slate*, August 23, 2010) (view)

“ “We find some historic examples regarding treatment of hallowed grounds useful, like the much-referenced decision by the Catholic Church to abandon a convent at Auschwitz. The church ultimately bowed to concerns that well-meaning nuns served as a hurtful distraction to the memory of the many Jews killed at the camp, despite the fact Catholics also died there. Likewise, Muslims were among the many faiths and people killed at the World Trade Center, so we understand Cordoba's desire to promote its message of peace. Yet in the face of the hurt and anger the idea of a mosque there evokes, truly thoughtful people would better serve their cause by choosing a different location.”

From Build mosque, just not there, by The Denver Post editorial board (*The Denver Post*, August 18, 2010) (view)

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