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OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK

By Robin Heid
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Almost four years have now passed since the Twin Towers fell, and while the pain that came with their fall still lingers, it's time for New Yorkers to move beyond grief, recriminations, and provincial politics to face – and then act on – a simple reality: Rebuilding the Twins is the best way to a better world because 911 wasn't about New York, or even America; it's about the future of humanity and whether that future is bright or dark, and whether our children live free or die bloody.

What went down in dust and death must rise again in steel and hope because the Twin Towers were created and destroyed and should be rebuilt again for exactly the same reason: World trade means world peace and the Twins even in death are a towering symbol of man's dedication to world peace through the freedom, cooperation and tolerance created by world trade.(1) The quicker they rise again, the better off the world will be.

Rebuild the Twins and we not only reaffirm our dedication to world peace, we commit the most profound possible act of counter-terrorism through peace not war. There are millions of people worldwide who know civilization must resist and prevail over barbarism, but they don't want to do it by being barbarians themselves – or supporting barbarian action like war. (New Yorkers are at the forefront of this group, by the way: witness the demonstrations during the Republican National Convention).

These millions of energized people right now have no constructive productive outlet for the civilized counter-terrorism they wish to practice; rebuilding the Twin Towers becomes for them –

and the world – the civilized side of counter-terrorism that's tactically equal and strategically superior to shooting and bombing and killing; achieving world peace through world trade rather than worldwide slaughter.

Rebuilding the Twin Towers also underscores the difference between counter-and anti-terrorism. In a nutshell:

Counter-terrorism is what you do to prevent terrorists from even starting their attacks: On the barbarian side, you hunt down their leaders, you bomb their training camps, you invade countries that support them; on the civilized side, you build wells, schools and hospitals and create economic development and greater cooperation and understanding between cultures and peoples so that you eliminate the breeding grounds for terror, thus drying up the recruits even as you exterminate the ones already in action. Rebuilding the World Trade Center restores and reopens the world's pre-eminent symbol of peace, freedom, and human rights through trade and cooperation.

Anti-terrorism is what you do when the genie's already out of the bottle: You try to search every airline passenger, fortify all government buildings, search every shipping container that enters the country, spy on citizens, do wiretaps, etc etc... and have jet fighters to shoot down hijacked airliners if all else fails.

The principal difference? Counter-terrorism is way cheaper than anti-terrorism - it's the equivalent of the old saying "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Another old saying is the political campaign saw that "a

dollar early is worth ten dollars late." In this case, a million dollars of counter-terror action is worth a billion dollars of anti-terrorism. Or to put it another way: The estimated \$15 billion it would take to rebuild, restore and reopen the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center is less than half of the Department of Homeland Security's 2004 budget - the vast majority of which is spent on anti-terrorism, not counter-terrorism.

Since the genie's out of the bottle, we need both counter- and anti-terrorism to prevail over barbarism – and within counter-terrorism we need to employ both civilized and barbarian means. Right now, we have the barbarian part down, but we need more work on the civilized part. Rebuilding the Twins is a monumental step in the right direction.

Contrast all that with the tortured, Twisted Sister to the Statue of Liberty that celebrates confusion, chaos and cowardice. It's built on fraud and lies and its cornerstone is a countertop with a typo that underscores how clueless New York's leaders are about why the Twin Towers were attacked and why they must without delay be rebuilt the way they were only better.(2)

If New York's leaders had even the most basic understanding of geopolitical reality, they would rebuild the Twins. Instead, Governor Pataki, Mayor Bloomberg, and their fellow provincials try to scam the world with a self-absorbed salute to America that's so internationally ignorant and politically tone deaf they unveiled their countertop "cornerstone" on the 4th of July, no less!

The only redeeming feature of the Twisted Sister is how its still-phantom existence emphatically shows why rebuilding the Twin Towers is too important to be left to New Yorkers; they're obviously not up to the job.

I'll say it again. Rebuilding the Twins isn't about New York: it's not even about America; it's about the future of the world and whether that future is dark or bright. The Twisted Sister doesn't rise to that level and neither do those who oppose rebuilding the Twin Towers.

On an even more fundamental level, landmarks and symbols are rebuilt when they are destroyed

because they transcend the physical materials of which they're made. Just ask yourself what we would do if the Statue of Liberty were destroyed. Would we design something different and say it was the same thing? Would we make it a cemetery? Would we rush to make it a cargo ship terminal now that the space had been cleared? Or would we rebuild her and restore her?

And make no mistake: The Twin Towers were destroyed not because they were convenient tall buildings but precisely because they were the ultimate landmark symbols of world peace through world trade.

What's most odd about this is how, when you look and listen around the city, the Twins remain ever-present in both heart and mind – and everybody seems to get it except Governor Pataki and Mayor Bloomberg that the Twin Towers should be rebuilt. Sure, some among the deified Families Of The Victims don't want to be reminded of where their loved ones died, but they need to get past their grief and get out of the way.

Think about it. When al-Qaeda blew up the trains in Spain, the families of the dead didn't demand that the tracks be re-routed around the blast sites and the "Railroad Tracks Site" turned into a memorial park so they wouldn't be reminded of the place where their loved ones died. Almost everybody else wants the Twins to rise again – yet New York's so-called leaders ignore not only the will of the People but geopolitical reality and common sense too.

I wonder why Rudolf Giuliani stood the other day on Ellis Island and said: "We ... can't stand here without looking behind us at and seeing the skyline of the greatest city in the world missing something that meant so much for us, those two towers" – but doesn't seek to rebuild them. How can he stand silently by as the Twins are ignored and the Twisted Sister foisted upon us? *Mr. Giuliani was a great leader on 9/11 but he has so far failed the ultimate test of 9/11 leadership; he did not and still does not insist, demand, and guarantee that the Twins will rise again.*(3)

I also wonder why Mayor Bloomberg could demand that the Statue of Liberty must be reopened because it's "a symbol of America.

C'mon, let's stand up and have some guts... You can't let terrorists win" – yet he remains utterly clueless to the reality that rebuilding the Twin Towers would be somewhat more transcendent than letting kids walk up the stairs to Lady Liberty's torch.(4)

And I wonder how Governor Pataki can try to convince the world that the Twisted Sister is really a legitimate successor to the Twins – and then keep a straight face when he said the other day alongside Mr. Giuliani: "If we look behind us, we see the magnificence of New York, but we remember what we don't see, those two towers that stood over the rest of this harbor."(5)

And I really wonder why Peter Malkin and Donald Trump and the other big dogs aren't pursuing the Art of the Deal in this most rarefied air of all: Whoever rebuilds the Twin Towers the way they were will go down in history as the greatest and most famous developer of all time. Period. Instead of David and Nelson, New Yorkers will call those towers Peter and Anthony or The Donalds and everybody knows it. So where are these guys? (Mr. Trump especially: It's usually downright risky to get between Mr. Trump and a camera – and to his credit, he did in fact call the Twisted Sister "a monstrosity of garbled nonsense"(6) and "a skeleton...the last thing we need in New York."(7) But then he does nothing about it, even though he's one of the few people in the world who could actually make it happen. Whazzupwiddat?)

I wonder why Senator Kerry spoke so eloquently and correctly September 12, 2001, on the Senate floor of the need to immediately rebuild the Twins – but said no word about them since. Has he flip-flopped again or does he have some "nuanced" reason for not acting on his lofty rhetoric?(8)

I also wonder why President Bush stood so resolutely that day on the rubble of the Twins and said all the right things about going after the bad guys but not one word then or since about rebuilding the symbol the bad guys destroyed.

Like Mr. Giuliani, President Bush has so far failed the ultimate test of 9/11 leadership; he did not and still does not insist, demand, and guarantee that the Twins will rise again, despite

their tactical, strategic and unifying importance. And finally, I wonder why the media remain silent about it all - and why they worry more about how the presidential candidates acted in a war 35 years past but not about how they're acting on a pivotal issue of the war we're in now?

Every time I see images of the Twins, it reminds me of the way they were and why what went down in dust and death must go back up in steel and life – and it motivates me to say it over and over and over: It's still not too late to change course and do the right thing because the Twin Towers are the ultimate symbol of world peace through world trade and a piece of our souls will be missing until they rise again.

Notes.

1. Both the creator and destroyer of the Twin Towers said remarkably similar things about them:

Minoru Yamasaki: "World trade means world peace and consequently the World Trade Center... had a bigger purpose than just to provide room for tenants. The World Trade Center is a living symbol of man's dedication to world peace...beyond the compelling need to make this a monument to world peace, the World Trade Center should, because of its importance, become a representation of man's belief in humanity, his need for individual dignity, his beliefs in the cooperation of men, and through cooperation, his ability to find greatness."

Osama bin Laden: "Those awesome symbolic towers that speak of liberty, human rights, and humanity have been destroyed. They have gone up in smoke."

(Howard Kurtz, "Interview Sheds Light on Bin Laden's Views," Washington Post, 7 February 2002, A12. Bin Laden gave this interview to Tayseer Alouni of the Arabic-language satellite television network al-Jazeera in October 2001.)

2. Here's just one lie for you: The Twisted Sister will never be the world's tallest building – even if its full height is accepted as truly a building. Go to <http://skyscraperpage.com/diagrams/?2063133> and check out the Burj Dubai; 2100 feet, scheduled for

2008 completion, a year before the scheduled completion of the Twisted Sister. So every single New York official who says it will be the world's tallest "building" is either criminally uninformed or flat out lying. There are other buildings in the works that will also surpass the Twisted Sister's alleged 1776 feet, either before or shortly after it's completed. As for the "cornerstone," the company that provided it was about to cut it up for Home Depot countertops. No kidding. And they left the comma off "2001" in the inscription. No kidding.

3. Newsday, August 30, 2004. By Glenn Thrush.

4. "Bloomberg blasts Statue of Liberty closing," CNN, April 6, 2004.

5. Newsday, August 30, 2004, by Glenn Thrush.

6. Bloomberg News, September 12, 2003.

7. CNN, "Larry King Live," February 27, 2004.

8. "And I believe one of the first things we should commit to - with federal help that underscores our nation's purpose - is to rebuild the towers of the World Trade Center and show the world we are not afraid - we are defiant.

"To those who might say why create another target, the answer is simple: There is no shortage of targets in the United States: There is a White House - There is a Capital and countless other tall buildings. This is not a question of targets. It is a question of strength and our national resolve to stand up and show our strength. That is the best monument we could build to those who died yesterday."

- Remarks delivered on the US Senate Floor on September 12, 2001. Excerpted from "Kerry: "We Must Build a New World Trade Center -- and Build American Resolve for A New War On Terrorism."

About the author:

A lifelong westerner, Robin grew up in Colorado and was a US Army paratrooper before earning degrees in journalism and political science and starting a communications career. During the mid-1980s, he wrote counter-terrorism commentaries and CT-related book reviews for the Rand

Corporation-based Terrorism, Violence and Insurgency Report. One of those review-commentaries focused on the world's worst pre-911 terrorist attack: The June 1985 bombing of Air India Flight 182 by Sikh terrorists that killed 352 people. His key conclusion and recommendation: a) airline reservation network had enough information to prevent the attack had the system been only marginally "smarter;" and b) it wouldn't take much to make it smarter so "it would be crazy" not to do it.

But it didn't get done and, 15 years later, Robin woke up to smoking rubble piles where once had stood the world's pre-eminent symbol of peace and freedom. Since then he's thought that what went down in dust and death must go back up in steel and hope, and he's committed a large part of his time toward seeing the Twins rise again, principally because it would be a profound act of counter-terrorism through peace not war.

When not working on rebuilding the Twin Towers, Robin splits time between Colorado and California with his media and marketing company, Eagle Dancer Images, and adding to his total of 3,000+ parachute jumps, including several from Malaysia's Petronas Twin Towers.