

**\$9.99** per Internet equity trade  
No matter what your balance. Period.  
**AMERITRADE**

**TRADE FREE  
FOR 30 DAYS  
+ GET \$100**  
**GET STARTED**

## Bloggers Respond to Imam Feisal Rauf's NYT Op-Ed

By *MAX FISHER* | September 08, 2010 5:25pm



Imam Feisal Rauf, the leader of the group planning the Cordoba Center, called the "Ground Zero Mosque" by critics, addressed the controversy over his work in a [guest column today in the New York Times](#). Rauf has just returned from a [trip](#) abroad doing public outreach on behalf of the U.S. State Department, work he also did under the Bush administration. Here is an excerpt from his column and, below that, several of the reactions from bloggers. Most of the bloggers who responded to his column are critical of his project.

*Many people wondered why I did not speak out more, and sooner, about this project. I felt that it would not be right to comment from abroad. It would be better if I addressed these issues once I returned home to America, and after I could confer with leaders of other faiths who have been deliberating with us over this project. My life's work has been focused on building bridges between religious groups and never has that been as important as it is now.*

*We are proceeding with the community center, Cordoba House. More important, we are doing so with the support of the downtown community, government at all levels and leaders from across the religious spectrum, who will be our partners. I am convinced that it is the right thing to do for many reasons.*

*... I therefore call upon all Americans to rise to this challenge. Let us commemorate the anniversary of 9/11 by pausing to reflect and meditate and tone down the vitriol and rhetoric that serves only to strengthen the radicals and weaken our friends' belief in our values.*

- **The Illogical Opposition to Rauf** The Atlantic's [Andrew Sullivan](#) sighs, "As the far right seems to relish a clash of civilizations, [Rauf's] op-ed strikes me as so transparently constructive, so evidently in the interests not only of domestic peace but of strategic victory against Jihadist terror that I'm again at a loss to understand why so many have reacted so ferociously to this project."
- **If He Respected 'American Values' He Wouldn't Build It** Cato's [Roger Pilon](#) points out that Rauf writes, "the level of attention reflects the degree to which people care about the very American values under debate: recognition of the rights of others, tolerance and freedom of worship." Pilon responds, "Singularly missing among those 'American values' is respect for the feelings of others, quite apart from the rights of one's self. Tolerance, in short, does not mean acceptance. New Yorkers, and Americans generally, will tolerate a mosque at Ground Zero, because they must, as a matter of principle, but in their hearts they will not accept it, because it is an insensitive affront to their deepest values."
- **Most Islamic Centers Are Anti-American** National Review's [Andy McCarthy](#) seethes, "Americans have had our fill. We are willing to live many lies. This one, though, strikes too close to

home, arousing our heretofore dormant sense of decency. Americans have now heard Barack Obama's shtick enough times to know that when he talks about 'our values,' he's really talking about *his* values, which most of us don't share. And after ten years of CAIR's tired tirades, we're immune to Feisal Rauf, too. ... Why would a self-proclaimed bridge-builder insist on something so patently provocative and divisive? How can we be sure that if imam Rauf builds his monument on our graveyard, it won't become what other purportedly 'moderate' Islamic centers have become: a cauldron of anti-American vitriol?"

- **He Wants Us to Shut Up** The Daily Caller's [Jim Treacher cracks](#) a joke that will offend both sides of this issue: "Here's how *not* to start off your op-ed about why you want to build the Ground Zero Mosque: A story about your airplane ride." He adds, "This is followed by 1,000 words or so about 'tolerance,' 'building bridges,' and other comforting euphemisms for 'Why don't you all just shut up?'"
- **Optimistic or Just Naive?** Mediaites [Glynnis MacNicol calls](#) the column a "notably optimistic piece (a cynic might call it a tad naive at this point)." His column means that "any chance of the Park51 mosque story slipping away with the August newscycle is pretty much a fantasy at this point."

## Sources

- [Building on Faith](#) *Feisal Rauf*, The New York Times
- [Rauf Speaks 9](#) *Andrew Sullivan*, The Atlantic
- [Optimistic or Naive?](#) *Glynnis MacNicol*, Mediaite
- [Wher We Say No](#) *Andrew McCarthy*, National Review

---

*Copyright © 2010 by The Atlantic Media Company. All rights reserved.*