

Mosque Furor Aids Al-Qaida

By NAT HENTOFF

Newspaper Enterprise Association

The source of the firestorm over the mosque at Ground Zero, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, could have located his mosque in New York anywhere he liked if he had not fixated on the spot two blocks north of Ground Zero. During a bitterly divided demonstration at the planned site on Aug. 22, retired firefighter Jack McLaughlin said: "Part of the (destroyed) plane landed (here). There's a mosque only four blocks away up Warren Street. So why didn't they build ... there?" (*New York Daily News*, Aug. 23).

As of this writing, Rauf has not wavered, despite the resulting national furor that has anguished and enraged opponents of the mosque, and, alarmingly, increased hostility toward American Muslims in general — including those who reject violent jihadism.

Even if Rauf were to decide tomorrow to move the mosque/cultural center's site, the

deeply penetrating rage on all sides will take a long time to fade. As the imam's partner and wife, Daisy Kahn, says, "We understand the pain and the anguish that has been displayed throughout the country" (ABC News, Aug. 23).

As someone affected for years — most threateningly as a boy — by anti-Semitism in this country, I can understand the anxiety of a considerable number of Muslims. That experience of hatred made me an outsider, with the Constitution as my Bible.

And the mosque in lower Manhattan is not the only one to come under siege. An Aug. 23 *Washington Post* report on unexpected resistance to a proposed Islamic center in Murfreesboro, Tenn. — before the eruption of the 9/11 mosque — where Muslims had "worshipped quietly" for more than 30 years, led reporter Annie Gowen to note that beyond Murfreesboro, "the intense feelings driving that (New York) debate have surfaced in communities from Cali-

fornia to Florida in recent months."

Accordingly, even the local Murfreesboro Islamic center stimulated evangelist Pat Robertson to speculate, in his inimitable manner, on his Aug. 19 television program whether "a Muslim takeover was imminent."

That reminded me of Sunday-afternoon family car rides when I was a child, and my father stopped driving to calm down as the very popular the Rev. Charles Coughlin, a devoted anti-Semite, wondered aloud during his Sunday radio program how long it would take the Jews, who he claimed were already in control of Communist Russia and much of America, to take over our whole country.

Meanwhile, in another result of Rauf's fixation on building where so many American lives had been shattered by Osama Bin Laden's assassins, Jonathan Weisman reported in the Aug. 23 *Wall Street Journal*: "Islamic radicals are seizing on protests

against a planned Islamic community center near Manhattan's Ground Zero and anti-Muslim rhetoric elsewhere as a propaganda opportunity and are stepping up anti-U.S. chatter and threats on their websites."

This news story quoted Jarret Brachman, director of Cronus Global, a security consulting firm, and author of the book "Global Jihadism," as pointing out that these violent website postings "are not just al-Qaida linked but on prominent, mainstream Muslim chat forums."

Evan Kohlmann, "an independent terrorism consultant" added: "We are handing al-Qaida a propaganda coup, an absolute propaganda coup" with the firestorm over Rauf's mosque vision. Kohlmann's job at Flashpoint Partners, where he works, is monitoring jihadist websites. He knows whereof he speaks — and worries.

Rauf, even if inadvertently, is not the only American propaganda provider to al-Qaida. There is Terry Jones, a pastor at a

megachurch in Gainesville, Fla., the Dove World Outreach Center.

It was not from the debate over the Rauf mosque that this pastor, on his own, has declared that Sept. 11 be "an International Burn a Koran Day." But after the jihadist threats following the New York mosque debate, Jones is nonetheless going ahead to actually burn a Koran on the evening of Sept. 11. The Fire Department refused to give him a permit, but the pastor is on what for him is a holy mission. Islamic radicals around the world will be very pleased at this glistening recruiting tool. They may toast the pastor.

In a significant article in the Aug. 18 *Washington Post* ("Mosque near Ground Zero? It's about the community, stupid."), Abed Z. Bhuyan, a Muslim and a graduate of Georgetown University who will be teaching English in Turkey next year as a Fulbright scholar, charges that this "is not a fight that ever really needed fighting."

WAYCROSS JOURNAL-HERALD

ROGER L. WILLIAMS
Publisher

Founded 1875
400 Isabella St.
Waycross, Ga. 31501

GARY GRIFFIN
Managing Editor

DONNIE L. CARTER
Business Manager

JACK WILLIAMS, JR., Publisher (1957-1992)

JACK WILLIAMS, Editor & Publisher (1914-1957)

P-5 Waycross Journal-Herald, Thursday, September 2, 2010

Thought for Today

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" Psalm 107:31

Kingston Urges Beer Bill

Athens Banner-Herald

It may be that Jack Kingston, who grew up in Athens and now represents coastal and deep south Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives, actually believes that soldiers' ages of 18 and 21 ought to have access to alcohol beverages and isn't just pandering to the youth vote in November general elections.

After all, the U.S. military, a Democratic opponent of the farm, and the raising of the drinking age.

So, the resolution of the congressmen who work for the military personnel and their families, not the least of which are the troops between the words, old enough to drink beer and wine for on-premise consumption at certain on-base locations.

Dissecting Kingston's resolution shows it to be an eminently reasonable approach to addressing the lingering issue of how this country can allow 18-year-olds to serve their country, possibly making the ultimate sacrifice for it, and not allow them to consume alcohol.

The unassailable, if crude, logic here is, of course, that if someone is considered old enough to die for their country, they ought to be considered old enough to drink in their country.

Kingston's resolution recognizes that conun-

drum, and takes a sensible "middle way" toward addressing it, notwithstanding the arbitrary distinction it makes between beer and wine on the one hand and hard liquor on the other.

Kingston's resolution limits consumption to on-base locations. That's not the only restriction. It wouldn't allow anyone under 21 to purchase alcohol at other facilities for

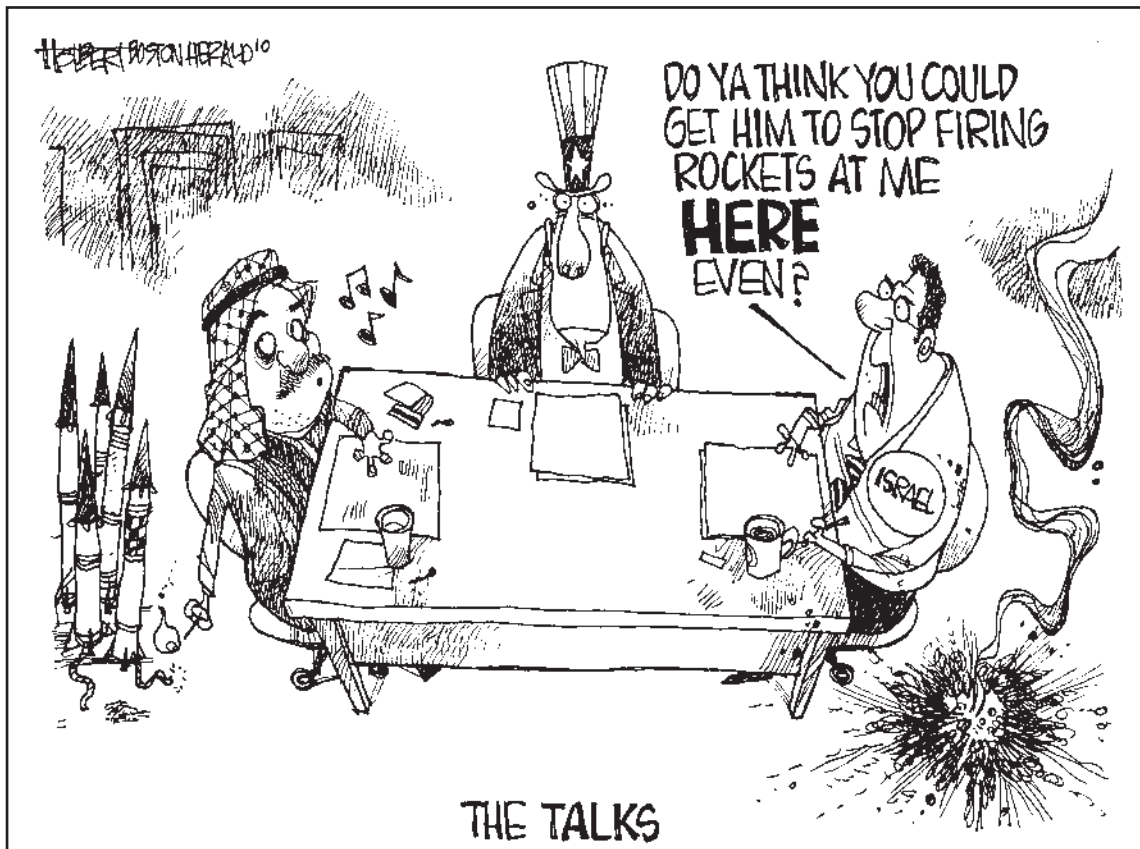
beer or wine where it is sold for recreation and entertainment.

As a final thought, it would, of course, be naive to suppose that there aren't off-base bars and restaurants near military installations that serve underage troops.

But, insofar as Kingston's resolution would allow those troops to drink on base, it could lessen the temptation for young military personnel to venture off base in search of alcohol.

Kingston's bill should get quick and favorable action in Congress.

To View The Entire Newspaper Online Please Visit Our Subscription Page.



Peace Talks Netanyahu, Abbas Will Fail

By YOSSI BEILIN
Bloomberg News

Peace talks between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, which are due to begin Thursday in Washington, won't succeed in finding a permanent solution to the conflict.

Such talks, sponsored by President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, aren't just another attempt whose failure would have no consequences. If the negotiations fail, it will lead to more frustration and deeper skepticism that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be resolved. The security arrangement between the two sides, which is guaranteeing the current state of calm, will be dealt a blow and there will be a danger of violent outbursts.

If there were even the slightest chance of the talks succeeding, I would say it was worth making one more attempt. However, in this situation, there is almost no such chance, whereas the grave implications of failure are both clear and painful. I call upon the U.S. administration to hurry up and change the goal of the talks. They should deal with what the parties are prepared to implement, and not with what they are forced to do as a result of American pressure: open negotiations on a partial and temporary agreement.

I say this with no small amount of pain. For decades, I have been calling for a permanent-status agreement, and I was opposed to interim solutions.

When I commenced the Oslo process, I believed it would be possible to go much further than a document of principles before an interim agreement. When I tried to persuade then Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to push for negotiations on a permanent-status agreement, he was firmly opposed. According to Rabin, failure of such an approach could mean that no attempt would be made to reach an additional accord, not even an interim one.

He was wrong, and we have found ourselves going along the track proposed in the Camp David Agreements of 1978: autonomous Palestinian government for five years, only at the end of which the negotiations on permanent status would begin.

A month after the Oslo Accords were signed on the White House lawn in 1993, I made an agreement with Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat to open secret negotiations on permanent-status issues with Mahmoud Abbas.

The understandings between us, which were never signed and were supposed to have been submitted to Arafat and Rabin, were discussed for two years, and they formed a fairly detailed outline for a full agreement.



Beilin

Israeli-Palestinian permanent-status agreement: the Geneva Initiative.

About a year ago, we published some 500 pages of appendices, which would appear to resolve all of the disputes between Israel and the Palestinians. But the two sides would never agree to sign such an agreement today.

There are two possibilities. One is to wait until new leaders replace the present ones, although that would entail a loss of time and opportunities and be a gamble on the unknown. Nobody knows whether the next set of leaders will be any more interested in a peace agreement than the present ones.

The second is to change the goal of the talks, and to try and hold pragmatic talks on a temporary agreement, as per the second stage (a Palestinian state with temporary borders) of the "road map," or the third withdrawal in the West Bank that Israel still owes the Palestinians, according to the interim agreement of 1995.

This is no simple matter. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would find it difficult to persuade his voters to uproot settlements and withdraw from most of the West Bank without any mention of the finality of the dispute, or of other advantages that would arise from a permanent peace agreement.

The Palestinians would be afraid that any temporary agreement would become a permanent one because the world would delude itself into believing that this regional conflict had been resolved, even though issues such as refugees and the status of Jerusalem wouldn't be included in such an agreement.

The way to overcome the opposition is to guarantee that upon the signing of the interim agreement, a presidential declaration would be made, defining the detailed principles for a permanent-status agreement, as a clear American position, while the Arab countries would be asked to partially implement the 2002 Arab peace initiative toward Israel, and to send commercial representatives to Israel, or to show other indications of normal relations, even if they aren't full diplomatic ones.

Netanyahu wasn't voted in by the right wing to divide East Jerusalem or to resolve, even symbolically, the problem of Palestinian refugees. The distance between his positions and the minimum claims of the pragmatic Palestinian camp can't be bridged. Even when he talks about a willingness to accept the two-state solution, and even when he makes promises to surprise, he reverts to a long list of positions that don't allow him to reach a historic compromise.

Abbas can't implement a peace agreement with Israel because as long as Hamas retains control of Gaza, Gaza won't be part of the solution, and there can't be any "safe passage" between the West Bank and Gaza. In addition, it won't be possible to work out land swaps between Israel and the West Bank because the area designated for them is the region surrounding the Gaza Strip, and no Israeli government would agree to hand over land adjacent to Gaza while it is still under Hamas control.

South Georgia Targeted

The Valdosta Daily Times

Both the Democrat and Republican candidates for governor are targeting south Georgia as part of their campaigns.

This newspaper published a story earlier this week from the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* as part of our Georgia Newspapers Partnership.

Through interviews and analysis, including insights from a Valdosta State University professor, the article noted how south Georgia could be crucial in deciding who will be sitting in the Governor's Mansion next year.

Both Roy Barnes, the former Georgia governor and Democratic candidate, and Nathan Deal, the GOP gubernatorial candidate, have taken note of this possibility. Each man is concentrating on the region, through marketing and campaign stops.

"Nathan Deal as well as Roy Barnes are targeting this region and realize it's going to be an important part of the election," said James LaPlant, a political scientist at Valdosta State University.

LaPlant said Barnes has often visited the region south of Macon since handily winning the Democratic nomination in July. LaPlant said in the article that he believes such attention has given Barnes "a leg up" in the region.

"Roy realizes he has to do well here to get back to

the Governor's Mansion," LaPlant said. "When Roy lost to Sonny Perdue, he lost throughout all of south Georgia. The only area that Roy held on to was around Columbus, Albany, the very southwest corner of the state."

Meanwhile, Deal has made inroads in south Georgia, through the region's conservative base and a runoff election with Karen Handel that better identified him to voters. A group of VSU students has formed a group supporting Deal.

In the coming weeks, if polls continue indicating this trend, south Georgia can likely expect more visits from Barnes, Deal and their respective representatives.

This attention is a good thing for south Georgia. We will not only get to hear the candidates' platforms firsthand, but we can let them know what's on our minds. They can better understand the concerns of south Georgia.

While we should look at our importance in the election as an opportunity, we're hopeful that whoever wins will remember what he has learned during his visits here.

We hope that the winner will pay just as much attention to south Georgia as governor as he is as a candidate.