

## Remembering Nine-Eleven

By Musafir

The Bush Doctrine states, “*You’re with us or you’re with the terrorists (enemy).*” The enemy that Mr. Bush was referring to won the battle. The good news is that America will win the war. Our enemies do not belong to any country nor do they own any army, navy or air force. They (the enemy) razed the Twin Towers, demolished parts of the Pentagon and barely missed attacking the White House. They killed more than 3,000 Americans instantly and induced fear and insecurity in rest of us. Our cost of defending the country and fighting wars made us bankrupt. All this damage was cast upon us only by an army of 11 men. Their cost for the entire operation was merely ten domestic airline tickets.

I have been to New York City at least five times since the terrorist attack that took place on September 11, 2001. I purposely refrained from visiting Ground Zero on all those occasions. Nevertheless, I often remember the victims of the attacks and the unsung heroes who gave up their lives in their effort to save others. They were innocent folks, parents, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters just like us. Despite that, I did not want to see the hollow ground where the Twin Towers once stood.

I viewed the Twin Towers as America’s pride. I went to those towers twice with my family to marvel at the land of ‘the free and home of the brave.’ Losing those towers was like losing one of my own. The thought of witnessing their ruins was unbearable. I could not witness a wounded America. That would remind me of the atrocities of the past several centuries which I have been trying to forget and forgive.

The tenth anniversary of Nine-Eleven hit me with a mixed emotions. On one hand I remembered the day of infamy and on the other I rejoiced at the sight of the soon to be completed buildings and memorials on the site of then Ground Zero. I witnessed young boys and girls remembering their parents and pledging to keep their dreams alive. That is the American spirit, resilience and rejuvenation – always looking forward and winning in the face of adversity.

I believe in George Santayana’s warning that “those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” So, I am glad that we have built something admirable as a constant reminder to us that no one is too big to be harmed. Designed by the architect Michael Arad and the

landscape architect Peter Walker and called “Reflecting Absence,” the memorial will be about eight acres in size and consist of two sunken reflecting pools, each surrounded by an enormous waterfall, the largest man-made ones in North America, according to the memorial’s official website. The names of the 2,982 people who died on 9/11 and in the failed 1993 attempt to destroy the twin towers will be etched on the bronze panels edging these memorial pools. The closing sentence of the memorial’s mission statement reads: “May the lives remembered, the deeds recognized, and the spirit reawakened be eternal beacons, which reaffirm respect for life, strengthen our resolve to preserve freedom, and inspire an end to hatred, ignorance and intolerance.”

Like those boys and girls who grew up since Nine-Eleven, the new World Trade Center complex is the emergence of new and determined America from the ashes. It has been built by people of vision and with the contribution of the families and friends of victims and rescuers. The spirit of America always has and always will transcend despair, hatred and evil like a beacon of hope for the rest of the humanity. I will reiterate the words of Gita which can heal us faster: “Fear Not. What is not real, never was and never will be. What is real, always was and cannot be destroyed.”

