



# THE TWIN TOWERS ALLIANCE

WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT — WHAT NEW YORK NEEDS — WHAT AMERICA DESERVES

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## For Immediate Release

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Monday night's appearance by Gov. George Pataki on MSNBC's *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue* with David Shuster raised more questions than it answered, according to advocates of the *Twin Towers II* plan, which is an alternative to the official plan for Ground Zero.

Its supporters claim that building 21st-century Twin Towers next to the official memorial and transit hub would be a far more suitable and far more popular direction for the project to take. Proponents point out two towers that mirror each other will go up with much greater economy of time and resources than four unique structures with literally dozens of different floorplates.

Efforts to defend the current plan as one integrated project were seriously undercut last week when Port Authority Executive Director Christopher Ward suggested that temporary retail low-rises might take the place of Towers 3 and 4 until the recessionary ravages have passed. *The New York Daily News* reported on January 30th that the fallback option "is being referred to by officials variously as a temporary pod, a podium, a pedestal or a stump."

A Silverstein spokesman rejected the proposal saying, "[Larry Silverstein] and his team are not focused on hypothetical interim steps but instead on fully rebuilding the World Trade Center – and as quickly as possible. New Yorkers have waited long enough."

Advocates for *Twin Towers II* are quick to point out that the concerns about flooding an unsteady market with too much office space are resolved by the spectacular mixed use Twin Towers. Thirty-story atriums crowning each tower would be surrounded by some of the most desirable residential and corporate real estate in the world.

Richard Hughes, a spokesman for the Twin Towers Alliance, which is leading a worldwide grassroots campaign for new Twin Towers, suggested that rebuilding the Towers would satisfy both the need to inspire and heal the nation, as well as give Mr. Silverstein an unparalleled economic opportunity.

Nicole Gelinias, a contributing editor to *City Journal* and a Certified Financial Analyst, wrote an article last summer that made a strong case for adopting the *Twin Towers II* plan. Gelinias, who appeared last week at the start of the Shuster inquiry, was asked if it was too late to adjust course.

"It certainly doesn't look like it's too late when you go down there and see how much has been done above ground," she noted. "...there is certainly plenty of opportunity to make sure that we are rebuilding as efficiently as possible, using scarce dollars wisely, and rebuilding something that the people and future tenants and the public actually want. If there's still an opportunity to make sure that we are going about this in a rational way, which we have not done so far, then I would certainly welcome that opportunity."

Hughes said it is important to note that while David Shuster asked the former Governor of New York if the plan he chose was a trade-off for political contributions from a powerful supporter, that is not what is at the heart of this issue. “Making the most of our opportunities to heal the nation does not rest on impugning Gov. Pataki’s motives.

“Rebuilding the Twin Towers was the ultimate no-brainer. We do not challenge the symbolism Gov. Pataki and others may find in the official plan. But the fact remains that it leaves most New Yorkers and other Americans cold. Is that important and what can we do about it?”

Hughes continued: “What matters is that we were all attacked on 9/11. We all deserve an equal voice in what gets built. And from September 12, 2001, to the present the vast majority of Americans have favored the return of the Twin Towers to America’s Skyline. If it weren’t popular or practical, that would be one thing. But since it can be powerfully demonstrated that it is much more popular and much more practical, what can legitimately prevent it? If it were too late, that would be different. But it isn’t.

“What matters above all is that the future World Trade Center must be a fitting tribute to those who didn’t – and those who don’t – count the cost of being Americans. Following the segment with the Governor, a comment posted on the Twin Towers Alliance petition summed it up perfectly: ‘How is it allowed that so few people can be so dismissive of what so many want?’”

Hughes noted that both Gov. Pataki and Director Ward, who appeared on last Friday’s segment, evaded the question when asked if the public really matters. Gov. Pataki suggested that millions of people “voted” online for the current plan, but later admitted that he and Mayor Bloomberg dismissed the design chosen by the online participants and the LMDC because, Pataki said, it was “just terrible.”

Hughes went on to say: “But the elephant in the room is that rebuilding the Twin Towers was never allowed in the online vote. One can only imagine how many more millions of people would have rushed to participate if new Twin Towers had been part of the survey, instead of having been excluded from the very start. What was the point of asking for public input, while negating what every forum indicated was the popular favorite?

“What eludes so many viewers and has been the \$64,000 question all along is, ‘Why are officials so committed to something that has so many shortcomings and drawbacks?’” Hughes suggests that following the money could explain it. “Before going any further, the public should be given the accounting we asked Rep. Rangel’s office for over a year ago. Just a basic breakdown would be a good start, along with the documentation needed to verify the information.”

Hughes pointed out that President Obama’s maiden legislation as a Senator, “The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006,” was aimed at promoting transparency in the expenditure of public funds. “Before there is any further commitment of federal dollars at Ground Zero, the public is entitled to know what has been spent, how it has been spent, and what remains,” Hughes said. “That information should be readily available. It needs to be examined, while this is still correctable.

“The public has paid a high price for a project nobody wants. We need to find out where all these American tax dollars went – and why, after seven and a half years, a hole in the ground is all we have to show for it. Maybe then we’ll understand why such an unpopular plan has so far proved impossible to replace.

“All I can say,” he concluded, “is that the ultimate insult to the memory of all those who were murdered on September 11, 2001, would be if federal, state, and local officials were colluding, for whatever reasons, to deprive us of the World Trade Center we deserve.”