

Filmmaker admits intimidation by Islam

'2012' maker destroys Vatican, Jesus, but leaves shrine in Mecca alone

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The maker of the upcoming apocalyptic film "2012" has conceded he enjoyed orchestrating the visual disintegration of the world's religious symbols, such as the Vatican and the famous statue of Jesus overlooking Rio de Janeiro.

But he left an Islamic symbol alone because he feared the reaction from the Muslim world.

In an interview with the online SciFiWire website, Roland Emmerich said he had considered including the destruction of the Kaaba, the cube-shaped structure in Mecca worshiped by Muslims as being built by Abraham and his son Ishmael.

"Well, I wanted to do that, I have to admit," Emmerich said. "But my co-writer Harald [Kloser] said I will not have a fatwa on my head because of a movie. And he was right. ... We have to all ... in the Western world ... think about this."

"You can actually ... let ... Christian symbols fall apart, but if you would do this with [an] Arab symbol, you would have ... a fatwa, and that sounds a little bit like what the state of this world is. So it's just something which I kind of didn't [think] was [an] important element, anyway, in the film, so I kind of left it out," he said.

The movie is set to open in theaters in a little over a week.

The SciFi report by Patrick Lee cited Emmerich's previous bent for destruction, taking out the Empire State Building and the White House in "Independence Day," and Manhattan in "Godzilla." Also, the famous Hollywood sign and Capitol Records in Los Angeles met their demise in "The Day After Tomorrow."

"The whole Vatican kind of tips and kind of rolls over the people. It said something, because in the story, some people ... believe in praying and prayer, and they pray in front of the church, and it's probably the wrong thing, what they would do in that situation," Emmerich told SciFi.

He also took out the famous statue of Jesus overlooking Rio.

"Because I'm against organized religion," he said.

"But there is one place even he couldn't bring himself to obliterate," the report said, the Kaaba, the focus of the Islamic Hajj pilgrimage.

At a Yahoo movies discussion page, Jonathan Crow notes Emmerich "has crafted some great tales about global doom, featuring some spectacular scenes of destruction."

It was Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini who issued a "fatwa" – a death sentence – against British author Salman Rushdie for "blasphemies" when his book "The Satanic Verses" was released in 1989, he noted.

"Emmerich has no qualms about wrecking other major landmarks, however," Crow wrote.

On the SciFi site's comment page, readers indulged their feelings:

- Hey wait a minute, I though (sic) Islam was "The religion of peace"?
- So if I don't want my religious landmark virtually destroyed I have to regularly threaten to kill anyone that even looks at them in a manner i don't like.
- Emmerich is just being sensible and watching out for himself and his crew. It doesn't matter that most Arabs or Muslims are not that way, the plain and simple truth is that there are those who resort to this sort of terrorism in the name of their religion.
- It's not that he is afraid of Islam, it's that he's ... cautious of extremists. As a traveler, I count Muslim countries as absolutely wonderful. The people, indeed even the governments, are quite nice. But folks, I have also counted my biggest scares when confronted by

extremists. And I don't blame the man one bit.

- Okay but when an ayatollah issues a fatwa for his failing to consider Mecca worthy of displaying its destruction in his film won't he feel silly.

The one person unafraid of suggesting harming Mecca was former U.S. Rep. Tom Tancredo, R-Colo., who famously concluded that a threat to bomb Islam's holy site would be one possible deterrent to another attack like 9/11.

He told WND such a threat could be used as a deterrent if it was found that another attack was the result of "extremist, fundamentalist Muslims."

His exact words were: "You could take out their holy sites."

Tancredo told WND that in response, "everybody went ballistic."

"If that isn't a deterrent, fine. I'm more than willing to listen to anyone who tells me what a deterrent will be," he said. "Because you'd better find one. That's my point, You better find a deterrent, because if you don't have one, I guarantee you, you will have the event."

Islamic interests worldwide, meanwhile, have continued working within international bodies such as the United Nations to [push a resolution that would bar criticism of Islam](#).

The resolution has been pending in the U.N. in one form or another since 1999 at the request of the members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. Named "Defamation of Religions," it originally was called "Defamation of Islam."

Its impetus derives from the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam, which states "all rights are subject to Shariah law, and makes Shariah law the only source of reference for human rights."

[The U.S. State Department](#) has found the proposal unpalatable.

"This resolution is incomplete inasmuch as it fails to address the situation of all religions," said a statement from Leonard Leo. "We believe that such inclusive language would have furthered the objective of promoting religious freedom. We also believe that any resolution on this topic must include mention of the need to change educational systems that promote hatred of other religions, as well as the problem of state-sponsored media that negatively targets any one religion."

The new movie depicts the destruction of Rome, Rio and Washington. The White House gets it when a wave carries the aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy and drops it atop the structure, and St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican rolls over onto a crowd of the faithful.

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