

LET US LEAD THE WAY

› DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES,

For four years in a row during the Vietnam War, members of our Institute debated and voted on resolutions concerning the AIA's position on one of the most important issues of that time. Nearly 50 years later, we find ourselves in a similar position with respect to one of the most important issues of *our* time: the events of September 11, 2001, which have been the foundation of our national policies for the past decade and a half.

On this particular issue, we are more compelled than ever to act because, as architects, we are uniquely qualified to contribute to the ongoing debate about the collapse of **World Trade Center Building 7**. This 47-story high-rise fell completely and symmetrically into its own footprint in just seven seconds in a manner that anyone who watches it can agree *resembles* a classic building implosion.

Seven years after 9/11, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) finally issued a report that was billed as the definitive explanation for Building 7's destruction. As I read the report, my fear that we would not get an honest answer was confirmed: NIST's story is unsupported and far-fetched, and its computer model in no way resembles the building's actual behavior. Instead, the evidence for what caused the collapse – evidence that NIST clearly ignored – points overwhelmingly to controlled demolition.

On April 26, we will have the opportunity to vote on the enclosed resolution. As was the case some 50 years ago, the question before us will not be a technical one, but a moral one: **Do we remain silent? Or do we have the courage to raise our voice for what is right?**

Some have said that this is not an issue for the AIA – that the architecture profession faces many other challenges to which we must devote our full energy. I submit to you that we have the capacity and the strength to include this among our many important goals.

Let us be the first professional association – and hopefully not the last – to call for a new investigation into the collapse of World Trade Center Building 7. Let us lead the way.



Daniel Barnum, FAIA