

REPORT ON

**THE NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM'S PLANNED
ENOLA GAY EXHIBIT**

**"THE LAST ACT: THE ATOMIC BOMB AND THE END OF WORLD
WAR II"**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was prepared to sound a further alarm about the content and political ideology of the proposed National Air and Space Museum Exhibition entitled: "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II", scheduled to open in May, 1995. An outline of the exhibition text is given in Appendix 1.

John T. Correll, Editor-in-Chief, Air Force Magazine, published by the Air Force Association, was the first to point out the imbalance and historical misrepresentations contained in the museum's exhibition. In his article¹, "The Smithsonian and The Enola Gay", he cites the statute² establishing the Air and Space Museum:

"The National Air and Space Museum shall memorialize the national development of aviation and space flight; collect, preserve and display aeronautical and space flight equipment and data pertaining to historical interest and significance; serve as a repository for scientific equipment and data pertaining to the development of aviation and space flights; and provide educational material for the historical study of aviation and space flight."

From his analysis of the text of the Enola Gay Exhibition it is apparent that the museum director and curators have ignored their congressionally ordained charter. John Correll's articles and public speaking on the major flaws in the exhibition were instrumental in activating the 20th Air Force Association and

1 John T. Correll, The Smithsonian and The Enola Gay, March 15, 1994, Special Report, The Air Force Association, See Air Force Magazine, April 1994.

2 20 U.S.C. 77A.

other veterans groups to openly oppose the planned project by the National Air and Space Museum.

After a careful reading and evaluation of the March-April 1994 exhibition text the author of this report sent to Dr. Martin Harwit, Director, National Air and Space Museum, an eight page critique of the planned exhibition. Dr. Harwit's response follows:³

"Thank you so much for your thorough analysis of the "Crossroads" exhibition draft. As the response, you will by now have received from Tom Crouch, states, "We are drastically revising the script in view of imbalance at various points pointed out to us by you and others. The new script will be available in a few weeks, and we invite you to take another look at it then."

Dr. Tom Crouch, Chairman, Aeronautics Department, Air and Space Museum, in his response stated⁴, in part,

"As you know, I do not share all your views regarding our exhibition. I did want you to know, however, that the exhibition script is being significantly altered in response to your concerns and those of others."

After reading the May 31, 1994 revised version of the exhibition text and comparing it to the March-April 1994 document, it was evident that, while some onerous language was deleted or altered the text has been carefully crafted to retain its objectionable political message and its historically revisionist ideology. The original title: "The Crossroads: The End of World War II, The Atomic Bomb, and The Origins of the Cold

3 Letter from Dr. Martin Harwit, dated May 20, 1994.

4 Letter from Dr. Tom Crouch, dated May 19, 1994.

War" was an attempt by the museum staff to link the use of the atomic bomb against Japan with the start of the Cold War with the Russians. This concept was proposed in 1965 by Gar Alperovitz⁵ in his book, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam*, and has been largely discredited by reputable historians^{6,7}. Alperovitz was a leading figure in the revisionist school - individuals who claimed that the use of the atomic bomb was unnecessary and inhumane and that the dropping of the bomb by the United States was the main cause of precipitating the Cold War.

The May 31, 1994 text clearly indicates that the Air and Space Museum staff has no intention of changing the core content and political message of the displays in response to the requests of World War II veterans groups. These groups, including the Air Force Association, 20th Air Force Association, the 315th Bomb Wing Association, the American Legion and other patriotic organizations are offended by the lack of balance and perspective in the exhibition. The museum staff has cast the United States in the role of a vengeful, inhumane, racist nation determined to annihilate an Asiatic people striving to preserve their unique Japanese culture. Japanese kamikaze pilots, whose fanatical, suicidal and deadly missions sank or damaged more than 200 naval

5 Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam*, Vintage Books, New York, 1965.

6 Samuel Eliot Morison, *Why Japan Surrendered*, Atlantic Monthly, 1960.

7 Gordon A. Craig, Emeritus Professor of History, Stanford University, Private Communication.

vessels and killed more than 5,000 American and allied servicemen are glorified in an excessively long display accompanied by photographs, artifacts and captions. In the section on Ground Zero more than 100 photographs, artifacts and captions are included on the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Emphasis is given to dead or badly mutilated women and children. When asked why so much of the exhibition, ostensibly devoted to the display of the Enola Gay aircraft and the air crews of the 509th Composite Group, was instead emphasizing the destructiveness of the atomic bomb, Dr. Crouch's reply was, "Because we have to get the message across." The message that comes across, in line with the revisionist historical philosophy, is that it was both unnecessary and inhumane for the United States to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and that the bombs killed tens of thousands of innocent civilians in each of these cities and caused enormous devastation. The visitor is led to believe that there were other viable options available to the United States, other than using the atomic bomb, to force the Japanese to surrender and to bring the war to a close. The museum staff synthesizes a scenario which portrays President Truman as an atomic warrior who ordered the use of the atomic bomb to intimidate the Soviet Union and gain negotiating advantage in post World War II discussions with Joseph Stalin and the Russians. This too conforms to the Alperovitz-revisionist hypothesis.

This report provides a detailed critique of specific

sections of the exhibition and points out the imbalance and political bias still contained in the current plans. This situation prevails despite the claim by Dr. Harwit that the new text was to have been drastically revised to satisfy the objections of critics of the exhibition.

The exhibition in its present form dishonors the veterans of World War II who saw active military service in the Pacific Theater of Operations and brought about the defeat of the Japanese Empire. The many sacrifices made by U.S. servicemen, including the ultimate sacrifice, are lost in a presentation that shows more sympathy and compassion for the Japanese than for Americans. A very large number of photographs, artifacts and captions are displayed of Japanese casualties due to 20th Air Force bombing raids on Japanese cities, including the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the incendiary raids on Tokyo. As an after thought, following many complaints voiced by veterans groups, the museum staff included photographs of some American casualties in the Pacific area. Because of the unmistakable exhibition message that the use of the atomic bombs against Japan were unnecessary, unwise and immoral the air crews of the 20th Air Force are construed to be brutal messengers of unjust orders rather than patriots placing themselves in harms way to fulfill their duty to their country.

This exhibition will also confuse and misinform visitors who were born after World War II and have little first hand knowledge about the events surrounding the U.S. air offensive against

Japan. One of the tragic consequences of this exhibition is that American school children will leave the Air and Space Museum believing that the United States was wrong in carrying out the atomic bomb and incendiary air attacks on Japan. They will have read captions that the Japanese were already defeated and that there were more effective ways of forcing the Japanese to surrender. The massive display of Japanese civilian casualties, suffering of women and children, and the destruction of Japanese cities are intended to leave them with a sense of pity, guilt and shame. These American children will not have a full and balanced understanding of how the United States was brought to this point in history by Japanese aggression and atrocities. They will not know that the deployment of the atomic bomb against Japan was sanctioned in 1945 by the Interim Committee* composed of the most distinguished U.S. scientists and statesmen, endorsed by the military leaders in Washington and approved by the President of the United States. Nor will they have been told that in 1945 the American people overwhelmingly supported the use of the atomic bomb to bring about a Japanese surrender.

Interim Committee Members:

Henry L. Stimson, Chairman, Secretary of War
George Harrison, Alternate Chairman, President, New York Life
Dr. Vannevar Bush, Scientific Advisor
Dr. James B. Conant, President, Harvard University
Dr. Karl T. Compton, President, MIT
Ralph Bard, Asst. Secretary of the Navy
William Clayton, Asst. Secretary of State
James Byrnes, Special Assistant to the President and soon to be Secretary of State

In his book, *The Atomic Bomb - The Critical Issue*, Bernstein⁸ reports that,

"Most Americans rejoiced that the war was over, and few were troubled by the use of the bomb. For most citizens its justification seemed obvious: the bomb was a legitimate weapon, it speeded victory, and it saved American lives."

Furthermore, the parents of these school children were most probably born after World War II and also deserve to have an undistorted presentation of the facts about the Enola Gay, the airmen of the 509th Composite Bomb Group and the 20th Air Force. How can they guide and educate their children if they are misled and misinformed by the exhibition?

In the light of these findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. That the U.S. Congressional Committees responsible for the legislative oversight and budget of the National Air and Space Museum should hold public hearings on the planned exhibition: "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II".
2. a.) The 20th Air Force Association should continue to inform veterans, patriotic organizations and the American public of the imbalance and historical distortions

⁸ Barton J. Bernstein, *The Atomic Bomb - The Critical Issues*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1976.

contained in the Smithsonian exhibition, b.) A committee should be established to include the 20th Air Force Association, the Air Force Association, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and other interested organizations to review future exhibitions and displays planned by the Air and Space Museum and to evaluate their historical accuracy, balance and appropriateness. 3. An order should be issued by the appropriate authority to halt all further work and planning on the exhibition by the museum staff so that Congressional hearings and other suitable investigations may determine if the exhibition serves the interest and needs of the American public.

I. INTRODUCTION

Before the critique of the text on the exhibition, "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II", is presented, it is worthwhile to review some of the historical aspects related to the use of the atomic bomb. According to Bernstein⁹ there are at least three schools of thought on the reasons for dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The first view, known as the orthodox interpretation, can perhaps best be explained in the words of President Truman,

"We have used the bomb in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans."¹⁰

Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War under Truman, defended the use of the atomic bomb against Japan in a definitive article in Harpers' Magazine¹¹. He also claimed that the purpose of the atomic bomb attack was to shorten the war. Other supporters of the orthodox position included Samuel F. Morison¹² and Herbert Feis.¹³

The second group, known as the realist school of thought, believed that the decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan was

9 See Reference 8.

10 Ibid, p, XIV

11 Henry L. Stimson, The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb, Harpers', February, 1947.

12 Reference 6.

13 Herbert Feis, The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II, 1966.

naive, unwise, and immoral. They felt that the United States, to gain a short term objective - to end the war, sacrificed post war international relations. For example, Hanson Baldwin¹⁴ of the New York Times criticized the use of the atomic bomb because he claimed that it opened the path to unrestricted warfare and weakened the moral position of the United States.

As mentioned earlier, another school of thought was the revisionist position. While agreeing with the realists that the use of the atomic bomb was unnecessary and inhumane, they attributed the decision to drop the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki as part of an American strategy to intimidate the Russians. A leading advocate of this position was Gar Alperovitz. As reported by Bernstein¹⁵, supporters of the revisionist philosophy included William A. Williams, a historian and dean of Cold War revisionism; Herbert Aptheker, a Marxist historian; D.F. Fleming, a political scientist critical of the Cold War and others.

It should be clear from this short discussion that history is often written within the framework of the historian's political perspective. Regardless of which historian has the correct grasp of the situation, it is improper for the staff of the Air and Space Museum to become involved in the politics of history. The museum staff has rewritten history, not as it took

14 Hanson W Baldwin, *Great Mistakes of the War*, Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, 1950.

15 Reference 8, P. XVI.

place during the war-time emotional period of the 1940's, but from their peaceful and secure 1994 perspective. The Museum is a national treasure and should not be allowed to be used as a political instrument by historical revisionists.

II. REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE EXHIBITION TEXT*

1. The Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb

Very early in the exhibition the visitor would encounter the following statement,

"To this date, debate has continued whether dropping this weapon on Japan was necessary to end the war quickly".

Later on the museum staff informs us that,

"Some scholars believe that the real reason Truman, Stimson** and Brynes*** decided to use the bomb on Japan was because they hoped to intimidate the Soviet Union. According to this argument, Truman and his advisers knew there were other ways to end the Pacific war, but proceeded with the bombing anyway to gain diplomatic advantage."

* Although the author of this report offered to duplicate the March-April 1994 and May 31, 1994 copies of the exhibition text at his own expense and return the originals to the museum the same day, the request was refused. Therefore, with the approval of Dr. Tom D. Crouch, Chairman, Aeronautical Department, the Air and Space Museum, the author spent three days (April 5-7, 1994) at the Air and Space Museum reading and evaluating the March-April 1994 text. By appointment, he returned to the Museum on June 15, 1994 to read the revised text, dated May 31, 1994. It was then that he was told that a copy of the March-April 1994 text was not available for comparison with the new version. This, despite the fact, that when telephoning to set up the visit, a copy of the March-April 1994 text was specifically requested so that a line-by-line comparison of the two documents could be made. Detailed handwritten notes of the March-April 1994 text, taken during the earlier visits, had to be used in evaluating the revised May 31, 1994 document.

** Secretary of War

** Secretary of State

Concerning the decision to drop the atomic bomb, Professor Gordon A. Craig, the J.E. Wallace Sterling Professor of Humanities Emeritus of the History Department of Stanford University, has written,¹⁶

"This question has been haggled over ever since 1945, and different conclusions have been drawn. The most extreme being that of Gar Alperovitz, who, about thirty years ago, argued that Harry Truman was a nuclear cold warrior who wanted to drop the bomb to impress the Soviets and hence disregarded signs that the Japanese wanted to surrender. It is generally realized now that there is little evidence to support this argument."

"The most reasonable view, in my opinion, is that it is impossible to say with any accuracy that "the Japanese wanted to surrender."

"Meanwhile the war went on and Americans were being killed."

"Plans for landings on Kyushu and the Tokyo plain were drawn up. (I myself was supposed to go to Kyushu as an air-ground intelligence officer with a Marine fighter squadron.) If the invasion was launched however, the U.S. government was faced with the prospect of very heavy losses (estimates ranged from 100,00 to 500,000 men). No government would be able to justify such losses to the American people if it became known that it had another option. The bomb was the other option, and it was therefore dropped."

"...I asked my friend, Frances Lowenheim, if the recent literature squared with the facts I have just written. He checked the new Pulitzer Prize biography of Truman by Daniel McCullough and the earlier study by John Lewis Gaddis, and said that there was no intimation in their accounts that Truman was moved by other than military motives in deciding to drop the bomb. The effect of the drop upon Soviet attitudes in later negotiations was much discussed in administration circles, but did not affect the decision."

In addition to Professor Craig, most historical scholars

16 Reference 7.

have rejected the "diplomatic advantage" assertion because they believe that Truman and his advisers were convinced that the atomic bomb was the best way to quickly bring the war to an end.

In some of his discussions on the decision to drop the atomic bomb, Michael Amrine¹⁷ reviews the thoughts of several political leaders.

Winston Churchill's comment¹⁸ on the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan follows,

"To quell the Japanese resistance man by man and conquer the country yard by yard might require the loss of a million American lives and half that number of British or more, if we could get them there: for we were resolved to share the agony. Now all this nightmare picture vanished. In its place was the vision- fair and bright indeed it seemed- of the end of the whole war in one or two violent shocks."

Harry L. Stimson, Secretary of War under Truman, expressed himself about the atomic bomb in the following way,¹⁹

"The face of war is the face of death; death is an inevitable part of every order that a wartime leader gives. The decision to use the atomic bomb was a decision that brought death to over one hundred thousand Japanese. No explanation can change that fact and I do not wish to gloss it over. But this deliberate, premeditated destruction was our last abhorrent choice. The destruction of Hiroshima* and Nagasaki* put an end to the Japanese War. It stopped the fire raids, and the strangling blockade; it ended the ghastly specter of a clash of great land armies."

See Appendix 2. Short Description of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

17 Michael Amrine, *The Great Decision*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1959.

18 *ibid*, P. 167.

19 *ibid*, P. 157.

President Truman's remarks on the atomic bomb are reported by Amrine²⁰,

"I gave careful thought to what my advisers had counseled. I wanted to weigh all possibilities and implications... General Marshall said in Potsdam that if the bomb worked we would save a quarter of a million American lives and probably save millions of Japanese... I do not like the weapon... but I had no qualms if in the long run millions of lives could be saved."

Why then, despite strong evidence to the contrary, did the museum staff continue to propagate a discredited hypothesis, claiming that the United States wrongly used the atomic bomb because of Asian racism and to gain political advantage over the Russians? Their response to the massive American invasion of the Japanese mainland planned for November 1, 1945 is as follows:

"The American and Japanese lives that would have been lost in an invasion have often been cited to justify the atomic bombing of Japan. Some have questioned, however, whether an invasion would have been necessary."

The public Congressional hearings called for in this report recommendations should shed light on this and other related questions about the Smithsonian exhibition. 2. Ground Zero

One display consists of the uniforms of three students from the Municipal Middle School who perished while clearing firelanes about 2000 feet from ground zero.

A caption to a photograph describing the aftermath of the atomic explosion reveals that human flesh was horribly burned and

20 *ibid*, p. 176

at ground zero people were vaporized. Another caption reads, "Worshippers in the neighborhood shrines and temples and in the great Urakami Cathedral died at their prayers."

One of the many personal quotations was that of Hide Kurohawa of Nagasaki,

"The river was filled with dead and half-dead, burned children were screaming, "Mommy, Mommy", and mothers searched for their children, calling out their names in faltering voices."

Regarding the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, established by the United States in 1947 to study the survivors of the blast, the museum staff make the following comment,

"To some Japanese, it simply appeared that the U.S. government regarded the atomic bombings as an experiment and survivors as guinea pigs."

The section on Ground Zero is one of the most objectionable parts of the exhibition. More than 100 photographs, artifacts and captions are included to vividly portray the suffering of the civilian population of Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the bomb blast. In the March-April 1994 exhibition text the visitor was warned,

"This exhibit contains graphic photographs of the horrors of war. Parental discretion is advised."

While this specific language has been deleted from the May 31, 1994 version, the graphic displays of death and suffering still remain.

3. Should Warnings Have Been Given To The Japanese?

President Truman warned the Japanese that if they did not accept the Potsdam Declaration they faced "prompt and utter

destruction." The exhibition is critical of the United States for not issuing a specific warning before the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, U.S. Military Intelligence was concerned about a warning that Hiroshima was going to be subjected to an atomic bomb attack because they expected that the Japanese would move allied prisoners into the target area.

On June 1, 1945 the Interim Committee made the following recommendations to President Truman:

- 1. The bomb should be used as soon as possible.**
- 2. It should be used on military installations or war plants surrounded by or adjacent to houses and other buildings most susceptible to damage.**
- 3. It should be used without prior warning.**

When the United States did warn Japanese civilians to evacuate targeted cities, the museum staff failed to recognize the humanitarian motive for this action. They state,

"Starting in late July 1945 American aircraft dropped hundreds of thousands of leaflets like this one, warning people to leave cities that were to be bombed. While the intention was to further disrupt Japanese society, it may have also saved some lives."

Amrine²¹ reports that millions of leaflets were dropped on Japan after the Potsdam Declaration of July 26, 1945 informing the Japanese people of the surrender terms which we considered "honorable". After the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on

21 Reference 17.

August 6, 1945, the 20th Air Force again dropped millions of leaflets on Japan warning the population of total destruction and calling on them to surrender. An example of such a leaflet ²² is shown below:

To The Japanese People

We are in possession of the most destructive explosive ever devised by man. A single one of our newly developed atomic bombs is actually the equivalent in explosive power to what 2,000 of our giant B-29s can carry on a single mission. This awful fact is one for you to ponder and we solemnly assure you it is grimly accurate.

We have just begun to use this weapon against your homeland. If you still have any doubt, make inquiry as to what happened to Hiroshima when just one atomic bomb fell on that city.

Before using this bomb to destroy every resource of the military by which they are prolonging this useless war, we ask that you now petition the Emperor to end the war. Our President has outlined for you the thirteen consequences of an honorable surrender. We urge that you accept these consequences and begin the work of building a new, better, and peace-loving Japan.

You should take steps now to cease military resistance. Otherwise we shall resolutely employ this bomb and all our other superior weapons to promptly and forcefully end the war.

Could the Japanese have been forced to surrender by showing them the destructiveness of the atomic bomb by staging a warning demonstration? The exhibition treats this subject as follows:

"Some historians have argued that the options for a demonstration never got the attention they deserved due to the Manhattan Project's momentum and the precedent set by the strategic bombing of cities."

However, in the summer of 1945 the United States had only

²² *ibid*, p. 210.

two atomic bombs in its stockpile. The Interim Committee and others in the Truman administration considered it unwise to use one of these bombs in a demonstration. Another concern was that if the announced atomic bomb failed to explode the Japanese resolve to fight on would have been significantly strengthened.

4. Alternatives For Ending The War

An exhibition caption reads,

"Although it will never be known for certain, an opportunity to end the war without either atomic bombings or an invasion may have been lost because President Truman refused to make a surrender offer guaranteeing the Emperor's position."

This is a highly speculative statement which implies that President Truman unnecessarily prolonged the war. In fact, by ordering the use of the atomic bomb he ended the war five days after the bombing of Nagasaki.

The Japanese had indicated that unconditional surrender was intolerable and unacceptable. Their conditions for ending the war included continuation of the Imperial Throne and Emperor Hirohito's authority, trial of Japanese war criminals by Japanese courts and judges, no U.S. occupation of the Japanese homeland, etc.

Even after the atomic bombings, Japanese military hardliners would not accept surrender. Some Japanese military officers attempted to seize the government and capture the Emperor on the evening of August 14, 1945 to prevent the surrender, but the attempt failed. This type of disobedience to the Emperor's wishes was unprecedented in the modern history of

the imperial dynasty and indicates how strongly some of the military were set against surrender.

Despite this the museum staff places the blame on the United States for prolonging the war. They state,

"Some claimed that the Truman Administration ignored the signs of the Japanese readiness to negotiate..."

Should the United States have allowed the Japanese to dictate their own surrender terms? This would have established more lenient terms for the Japanese than we had set for the Germans.

Another statement claims,

"Alternatives for ending the war other than by invasion or atomic bombing were available, but are more obvious in hindsight than they were at the time."

These alternatives were examined in detail by the Interim Committee and Truman Administration. They included a naval blockade of Japan in an attempt to force surrender through starvation, naval bombardment of the coastal cities and intensified B-29 incendiary and conventional bombing. All these alternatives would have prolonged the war resulting in increased casualties for the United States. Revoking the Potsdam Declaration calling for unconditional surrender was another option. President Truman was convinced that the American public would not accept anything short of unconditional surrender after such a long and costly war.

A caption in the exhibition states,

"It does seem clear in hindsight that the United States should have paid closer attention to the signals that the Japanese might have been willing to surrender."

To whom does it seem clear? The section devoted to "Did the United States Ignore Japanese Peace Initiatives?" is designed to persuade the visitor that the United States purposely delayed the peace negotiations to intimidate the Soviet Union by dropping the atomic bomb on Japan.

5. Incendiary Bombing of Japanese Cities

Under the title of "Unprecedented Devastation" the exhibition informs the visitor that,

"B-29s bombed one city after another, destroying half the total area in 66 urban centers, burning about 180 square miles to the ground. The five month incendiary campaign probably took more civilian lives than the half million killed during five years of Allied bombing of Germany."

General Curtis LeMay is quoted as saying,

"No matter how you slice it, you're going to kill an awful lot of civilians, thousands and thousands..."

A survivor of the Tokyo incendiary raid is quoted,

"I couldn't tell if they were men or women. They weren't even full skeletons. Piled on top of each other. The bottom of the pile all stuck together."

The visitor should be told that the objective of bombing raids was to destroy the war making capacity of Japan. In addition to large factories, the Japanese production system also consisted of countless "home factories" where families produced war machine components. This was a very important part of their war production supply system and was a legitimate target for

bombardment.

Wyden²³, in discussing the rationale for the fire-bombing of Tokyo reports,

"Two-thirds of all Japanese industry had been dispersed among homes and tiny factories employing thirty or fewer workers. Their productivity had been little affected by the war. Thousands of such flimsy wooden home factories operated within the scope of Meetinghouse*, a three-by-four mile downtown area populated by 750,000 low-income workers. It was time to take these industries out of the war."

Many other authors who have written about the 20th Air Force air raids against Japanese cities have explained that the bombings were designed to destroy the war making capability of Japan.

Michael Amrine²⁴ points out that,

"To these tactical changes was added a policy of striking against "areas", not merely against strictly military installations. One reason for this was that much of Japan's war product was fabricated in home workshops."

In the exhibition display on the incendiary air raids on Japanese cities, which dealt almost entirely with the killing of civilians and physical devastation, why was there not an accompanying explanation giving the military reasons for conducting the attacks?

Codename for the March 9-10, 1945 Incendiary Air Raid on Tokyo.

23 Peter Wyden, Day One - Before Hiroshima and After, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1984, P. 184.

24 See Reference 15, PP. 75-76.

The destruction of cities by aerial bombardment was first initiated by the Germans and Japanese and was adopted by the 8th Air Force in Europe and the 20th Air Force in the Pacific area to force the enemy to surrender.

What purpose does this section serve in an exhibition commemorating the flight of the Enola Gay fifty years ago and the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Japan?

6. A Defeated Japan?

An exhibition display states,

"By the summer of 1945, Japan was on the brink of collapse."

The Japanese might have been close to defeat but they were far from surrender. Rather than behaving like the defeated nation portrayed by the exhibition designers, Japan in the first half of 1945 inflicted more casualties on Americans than they had in the previous three years of combat. During the Battle of Okinawa from April to June 1945, just a few months before the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese killed 12,500 Americans and wounded 35,000.

To repulse the planned U.S. invasion of the Japanese mainland scheduled for November 1945 the Japanese had at least 2 million regular army troops, thousands of aircraft in reserve for use as kamikazes and about 28 million in the Peoples Volunteer Army pledged to fight until the death. It is estimated that the United States would have suffered from 250,000 to 500,000 casualties during the invasion and battle to defeat the Japanese

forces. It is now known that U.S. estimates of Japanese capabilities for defending their homeland were grossly underestimated and some analysts believe that we could have suffered as many as 1,000,000 casualties. The Japanese would have lost even greater numbers of troops and countless civilians in the Peoples Volunteer Army. These volunteers were instructed to fight the American invasion force with spears and make-shift weapons, if necessary, and to strap explosives to their bodies and destroy themselves and the invaders. In one sense, more lives were probably saved by eliminating the need for an invasion than were lost in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Another important possible consequence of the invasion of the Japanese homeland was reported by Perutz²⁵. He states,

"According to Laurens van der Post, who was a prisoner of the Japanese in Java, their army was under orders to kill all allied prisoners in the event of an invasion of Japan. These circumstances should be kept in mind before we condemn the decision to drop the bomb."

In a letter dated October 12, 1993, Dr. Perutz writes,

"... from all I have learned, the proposed Smithsonian wording misrepresents history. When writing my Szilard review, I consulted my historian acquaintance Gordon Craig at Stanford on the question whether it is true that the Japanese were already on the point of surrender before the atomic bomb was dropped." (Professor Craig's reply was presented earlier.)

25 M.F. Perutz, a book review in *The New York Review*, October 7, 1993 of "An Intellectual Bumblebee". *Genius in the Shadows: A Biography of Leo Szilard, The Man Behind the Bomb* by William Lanouette. Scribner's/A Robert Stewart book.

7. Racism

The exhibition contains the following statements,

"The distance separating Japan and the U.S underscored the cultural gulf separating the two societies. Ignorance about each others culture, combined with racism, desire for revenge and the strain of total war, produced virulent hatred on both sides."

"With deep family roots in nations such as Germany and Italy, most Americans had little difficulty understanding their European enemies as good people misled by evil leaders."

"Anti-asian racism, long a factor in American life, made it impossible to view the Japanese enemy in this fashion."

"Some have agreed that the U.S. would never have dropped the bomb on the Germans because Americans were more reluctant to bomb "white people" than Asians. The racial character of the Pacific conflict has been cited to support this view."

The fact of the matter is that the United States had not produced enough uranium and plutonium to make atomic bombs until after the German surrender in May 1945.

A subsequent caption reads,

"Racial stereotypes may have helped foster this attitude but historians have concluded that President Roosevelt would have used the bomb on Germany if it had been available at the time."

These speculative, America-bashing statements are apparently intended to stir up feelings in the visitor that the United States was waging a different kind of war against the Japanese than we did against the Germans. They want us to believe that we were motivated by Asian racism.

Based on the charge against the United States of "deep seated Anti-Asian racism", how does the museum staff account for

U.S. support and cooperation with the Chinese people and other Asians brutalized by the Japanese during World War II?

The visitor should be informed that the U.S. was in a life and death struggle for its survival. What would life in the United States have been like if the Japanese had won the war? This situation needs to be portrayed for the visitor. Some understanding of how Americans would have suffered under Japanese rule can be obtained by examining how the Japanese mistreated their captive populations. For example thousands of Korean women were forced into prostitution by their Japanese conquerors to satisfy their troops stationed in Korea. Millions of captive civilians were starved and tortured by the Japanese and many were murdered. What about the racist and anti-white propaganda produced by the Japanese during the war. Many examples exist in their newspapers and magazines and in official Japanese government publications. This sort of discussion is missing in the exhibition.

The entire section is inappropriate for display in the Air and Space Museum. It is unrelated to the story of the Enola Gay. The museum staff is using the exhibition as a means of dispensing - In Dr. Perutz's words - a misrepresentation of history.

8. The Japanese American Internment

The museum staff tells us that,

"In the spring of 1945, tens of thousands of Americans of Japanese ancestry remained in ten camps where they had been summarily incarcerated in 1942."

What does this have to do with the Enola Gay Exhibition?

This appears to be a carry-over from another exhibition, "A More Perfect Union", which is on display in the Smithsonian American Museum of History and describes the internment. Dr. Tom Crouch, who is mainly responsible for the Enola Gay Exhibition, was in charge of "A More Perfect Union" Exhibition.

During the same period as the Japanese-American internment, about 67,000 Korean and Chinese slave laborers died because of Japanese mistreatment. Of the estimated 26,000 American prisoners held by the Japanese about 10,000 died or were executed by them. Those imprisoned in Japan were treated as slave laborers and many died under the harsh treatment.

This section is related to the racism theme propagated by the museum staff and is inappropriate for display in this exhibition.

9. Kamikazes

It is estimated that more than 1,800 individual suicide missions were flown by Japanese navy and army pilots during the period from April to June 1945. Reports indicate that they sank 28 ships, damaged 176 and killed more than 5,000 servicemen.

During his discussion of the kamikaze pilots, Michael Amrine²⁶ describes how the Japanese suicide pilots would crash their planes into our ships causing great damage and casualties.

26 See Reference 17, P. 78.

He states,

"Such evidence of last-ditch resistance offered us no hope for an easy end to the war. The men of the Chief-of-Staff level, or just below, calculated that very probably the Japanese will to resist would stay alive to the bitter end - perhaps until our soldiers occupied their territory inch by inch."

In an excessive display on the kamikaze pilots and the rituals of sacrifice, the exhibition glorifies these fanatical, suicidal Japanese warriors. An accompanying photograph shows Japanese high school girl students on Kyushu cheering an army kamikaze pilot. Elsewhere captions read,

"They were youths, their young bodies overflowing with life and they were waiting their turn to die."

"Even if we are defeated the noble spirit of this kamikaze corps will keep our homeland from ruin."

Many photos and artifacts are included in this section. About as much space is devoted to the kamikaze pilots and the piloted bombs as is used to describe the Enola Gay.

This display includes a description of the Japanese pilots Shinto purification rite. Various artifacts are exhibited including a kamikaze pilot's head-band, sword and stitched wrapper.

Again, one is entitled to ask,

"What is the purpose of such a display in an exhibition on the Enola Gay?"

10. Plans to Bomb Japan

In the section entitled "The Long Road to Tokyo", the following statement appears,

"The relation between the United States and Japan deteriorated during 1941, the United States began formulating plans for bombing Japan. Then came Pearl Harbor."

General George Marshall is reported to have made the following statement on November 15, 1941,

"We'll fight mercilessly. Flying fortresses will be dispatched immediately to set the paper cities of Japan on fire. There won't be any hesitation about bombing civilians... it will be all-out."

These statements lead the visitor to believe that the United States was plotting to bomb Japan and that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was a pre-emptive strike. What was the objective of the museum staff in inserting these statements into the exhibition?

11. The Legacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

A caption reads,

"For the world a nuclear arms race unfolded that still threatens unimaginable devastation."

Another statement is as follows,

"Particularly shocking has been the revelation of the injection of patients in the United States with radioactive materials."

This last quotation has been borrowed from another Smithsonian exhibition, "Science in American Life", which is currently on display in the Museum of American History. This exhibition emphasizes the risks and hazards resulting from science and technology. The largest display in the exhibition deals with the development of the atomic bomb and the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ten large, explicit photographs of

the bombing of these cities are shown. In the exhibition heavy emphasis is placed on nuclear waste and nuclear pollution.

The section on the Legacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been prepared by the museum staff to link radioactive waste, nuclear proliferation, potential nuclear terrorism and the remaining threat of nuclear devastation to the development of the atomic bomb by the United States and its use against Japan. Also discussed is the rise of the antinuclear movement. At the end of this display there is a notice of the Arms Control Association.

The relationship of this section to the Enola Gay exhibition is farfetched and unrealistic. It does not contribute to the Enola Gay story and, in fact, detracts from the story that is submerged and lost in a plethora of unrelated issues. The purpose of this section appears to be designed to serve the political agenda of the museum staff.

CONCLUSIONS

This report corroborates and supports the earlier findings of John T. Correll, Editor-in-Chief, Air Force Magazine, Air Force Association.

The Air and Space Museum was not established to be a center for political, philosophical, sociological and ethnic discourse. A reading of their charter indicates that the Museum staff has strayed far off course and that they are a long way from their prescribed mission.

The exhibition has been designed as a political vehicle critical of the United States and its wartime decisions. The veterans who fought against the Japanese in the Pacific Theater of operations, and particularly the airmen of the 20th Air Force, are fully aware of the horrors of war and do not need a lecture by the museum staff. We want our children and grandchildren to live in a world at peace and free of nuclear threat and warfare. Yet, we recognize the need, as existed during World War II, to defend our country against attack and annihilation.

There is also strong feelings among veterans that civilian visitors, including school children, should not be misinformed by the exhibition being planned for public display in May 1995. These children will not be in a position to evaluate the accuracy of the displays and will be wrongfully influenced by what they see and read in the exhibition.

With regard to school children, an innovative, very low

budget project²⁷ (\$1,000-\$2,000) planned and organized by three Arlington, Virginia high school teachers has demonstrated how one can capture the essence of the World War II experience and at the same time educate students in a honest and factual way about the war. Each student was asked to find and interview a World War II veteran, discussing his or her wartime experiences. The students tape recorded their interviews with the veterans, then transcribed and edited the text, and collected the interviews into two volumes. More than fifty high school students participated in the project.

The project fulfilled its stated goals:

To give the students a better understanding of war via personal experience.

To record and preserve 20th century oral history by personally experiencing the role of historian. While it was not possible for this author to obtain budget figures on the cost of the Enola Gay exhibition, some have estimated the cost at between \$1,000,000 and \$2,000,000. An exhibition of approximately the same size, "Science in American Life" at the Smithsonian Museum of American History, is known to have cost more than \$5,000,000.

Comparing the Yorktown High School project to the

27 MEMORIES: A collection of World War II Oral Histories from Veterans and Others. A Yorktown High School, Arlington, Virginia project created by Mrs. Katharine Auld Breece, Ms. Julie Lyon-Frantz and Ms. Angela Hammond. May 1994.

Smithsonian project one might ask,

- Which project serves the public interest?
- Will students who visit the Enola Gay exhibition be more educated about World War II when they leave the Air and Space Museum or will they be misinformed and confused?
- Which project captures the love of country, patriotism, heroism and self-sacrifice of those who served in the military during World War II?
- Which project is critical of the United States and accuses it of being racist, inhumane, immoral, and unwise in its conduct of the war against Japan?
- Which project spent, perhaps, millions of dollars of taxpayers dollars on an exhibition that denigrates the airmen of the 20th Air Force, who, following lawful orders, carried out the air offensive against Japan?
- Which project has angered and offended World War II veterans from many different organizations, whose political views range over the full spectrum of American politics, but who are united in their condemnation of the exhibition?

The Air and Space Museum staff has remained resolute in their opinion that the story of the Enola Gay and the air offensive against Japan by the 20th Air Force has to be told "their way".

Under mounting pressure and criticism from veterans groups

and others about the Smithsonian exhibition, the director of the Air and Space Museum, Dr. Martin Harwit, agreed to have changes made to correct the imbalance. While these changes have deleted or reworded the most blatant, politically biased statements in the text they have not corrected the inherent deficiencies in the exhibition. In the author's letter to Dr. Harwit, dated May 16, 1994, the following comment appears,

"I believe that I have made my position clear to you with this letter. I urge you to take this constructive critique seriously and not to be satisfied with purely cosmetic changes in the exhibit".

In the final analysis, the revised May 31, 1994 version of the exhibition text reflects a cosmetic treatment.

One might ask, "How should the museum staff have designed the Enola Gay Exhibition?"

Some suggestions follow:

First, the exhibition should not have included revisionist ideology, speculative political comments, unwarranted criticisms of the United States (e.g. racism, inhumanity, poor judgement) and issues unrelated to the Enola Gay (e.g. incendiary air raids on Tokyo and other Japanese cities). The sections on "Ground Zero" and "The Legacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki" have no place in an exhibit that deals with the Enola Gay aircraft and its crew. This does not mean that comments about the destructive nature of the bomb would be inappropriate. Sections on kamikaze pilots and Japanese-American internment should be deleted from the exhibition.

A proper exhibition would concentrate on the following:

The entire aircraft should be displayed to give the visitor an understanding of the size and majesty of this airplane. Much more descriptive material and engineering information about the aircraft should be on display. The design of the aircraft and the atomic bomb/aircraft configuration should be explained. The air crew deserves to be shown in an entirely different light than their representation in the current exhibition. They are now cast in a negative role as deliverers of death to Japanese civilians. They were, in fact, heroic flyers who carried out lawful military orders and were awarded medals for their mission. The difficult training required by the crew and the skill, airmanship and heroism demanded to successfully carry out the assigned combat mission should be emphasized.

Expert advice was given to the museum staff by Dr. Richard Hallion, Air Force Historian, but his recommendations to improve the exhibition were not accepted. Dr. Harwit, Dr. Crouch and the curators should pay close attention to what he is telling them and follow his advice.

In describing the Air and Space Museum Exhibition in a speech made on June 9, 1994, Brigadier Paul W. Tibbets, the pilot of the Enola Gay, said,

"The Enola Gay and the 509th Composite Bomb Group have been denied a historically correct representation to the public"

"Thus far the proposed display of the Enola Gay is a package of insults."

This report is intended to amplify the alert already sounded by others to the American public and responsible government officials of the misguided and harmful exhibition being finalized by the Smithsonian Institution. Unlike the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese on December 7, 1941, there is still time to scrub the mission of the Air and Space Museum.

Therefore, as is recommended in the Executive Summary, it is considered to be in the public interest that the exhibition be canceled until appropriate public Congressional hearings can be held. Such hearings will provide answers to some important questions related to the exhibition and lead to an improved future course for the Air and Space Museum and its staff.

EPILOGUE*

A contributor to the Wilson Quarterly reminds us:

"Whatever else may be said about it, revisionism is scholarship's¹ one dependable growth industry." "It challenged the "goodness" of America, the social, sexual and political roles to which men and women historically had been assigned, the nature and health of the environment, the premises of organized religion, the rationale for racial integration, the canons of higher education and the legitimacy of American liberalism. It constructed new concepts of oppression, racism, sexism and "sensitivity."

"In any case we (the news media) became addicted to the popularization of revisionist theories which, cumulatively, became the load-bearing underpinnings of what is now called "political correctness."

"... journalists armed with graduate degrees are not content merely saying what happened. They want to offer their reading of the news."

* Richard Harwood, The Trend Explosion Industry, The Washington Post, August 1, 1994, p. A21.

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Appendix 1. - Content and Authors of Exhibition Title: The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and The End of World War II

<u>Part Title</u>	<u>Authors^a</u>	<u>Text Pages</u>	
		<u>1^b</u>	<u>2^c</u>
100: A Fight to the Finish	Tom D. Crouch, Tom Dietz, Michael J. Neufeld	56	53
200: The Decision to Drop the Bomb	Michael J. Neufeld	67	64
300: Delivering the Bomb	Tom D. Crouch, Joanne Gernstein	86	83
400: Ground Zero	Tom D. Crouch	58	63
500: The Legacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki	Michael J. Neufeld	<u>28</u>	<u>25</u>
		295	288
Photographs: Cumulative Total (Estimated)		<u>~200</u>	<u>~200</u>
	Approx. Total	495	488

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- a Names obtained verbally from Dr. Tom Crouch, Chairman, Aeronautic Department
 - b May 31, 1994 Version of Exhibition Text
 - c March-April, 1994 Version of Exhibition Text. The title of this text was - "The Crossroads: The End of World War II, The Atomic Bomb, and The Origins of The Cold War.

Appendix 2. Brief Description of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Hiroshima, Japan: A Military City

Hiroshima was the seventh largest city in Japan in 1945 and had a population of about 350,000. It is estimated that approximately 25,000 Japanese troops were garrisoned in the city. An August 5, 1945, U.S. military intelligence report indicated that 40,000 Japanese troops had moved into Hiroshima. Artillery, aircraft parts, and machine tools were produced in many home factories. It also served as the site for the Second General Headquarters which had the responsibility for planning and leading the defense against the American invasion of the Japanese mainland. In the Spring of 1945, the United States learned through intercepted, decoded Japanese messages that they were beginning an alarming build-up of military forces in Southern Japan in the very area where American forces were supposed to make their landings in November 1945. Thus, the Second General Headquarters stationed in Hiroshima, was an important part of the Japanese defense system. Furthermore, during the war, military supplies for the Japanese forces in China, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific area were shipped from Hiroshima Ujina port.

Nagasaki, Japan: A Major Industrial City

There were many war related factories in Nagasaki, including the Mitsubishi Steel Works. In the Urakami Valley, which was located in the northwest section of the city, Mitsubishi, had a complex of war plants that produced armaments for the Japanese navy and firearms. The factories in Nagasaki produced the torpedoes used in the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. One of the major Japanese ship yards was located in Nagasaki.