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An Independent Non Profit Aerospace Organization

MONROE W. HATCH, JR.
Executive Director

September 27, 1994

Dr. Martin Harwit
Director
National Air and Space Museum
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560

Dear Martin:

I am writing in response to your letter of September 21. While your August 31 script was an improvement over the May 31 script, there are serious lingering structural, contextual and ideological issues that still must be addressed.

As you know, I presented our main concerns in a detailed letter dated August 24, 1994. I am enclosing that letter as an attachment to this, since most of the problems I outlined there in reference to the May 31 script still exist. I also want to restate that I believe you would be better served if you expanded the charter of the military curators you have assigned to work on the new addition to the exhibit and let them help you modify the entire exhibit.

I believe by now it is evident that veterans' groups, including the Military Coalition, members of Congress, military historians, and many others are not satisfied with your August 31 script. I am not their spokesman, but I believe all would agree that your new addition fronting the exhibit will help add balance, although using the "American Perspective" in the title of this section is an obvious mistake. A number of your critics believe that sections 100, 200, and 300 are salvageable with detailed line-in, line-out work (refer to my August 24 comments). However, sections 400 and 500 must be changed significantly. The lighting change in section 400 is welcome, but the section itself should be subdivided as described below. In the remaining "Ground Zero" portion, another 25 photos should be deleted to meet your original direction to reduce this section by two-thirds. Section 500 also needs to undergo major change. We recommend discarding everything beyond page 16 and replacing it with the material described below.

Let me summarize again our broad structural, contextual and ideological comments as they apply to your August 31 script revision.

* Begin the War in the Pacific section with 1931 instead of 1937 and chronicle the Japanese march from Manchuria onward and the drive to establish the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

* Eliminate the anti-American speculation, including material from the previous “Historical Controversies” that is now camouflaged under new subheadings. In both sections 200 and 500, the curators continue to cast doubt upon and question American decisions while taking Japanese actions at face value.

* Present the casualty issue in greater context. The casualty toll in the Pacific was rising at the rate of 900 a day. There are many credible estimates of the casualties of a land invasion of Japan put forth by prominent historians that are far higher than those cited by your curators.

* Present military actions as such. The curators tend to emphasize sociological versus military aspects of warfare. The B-29 bombing campaign (conventional and nuclear) was military in nature. It should be portrayed in that context.

* Reduce and subdivide section 400. We recommend the following:

□ “Imperial Japan: Defiant and Still Dangerous.” Force of millions waiting in the home island. Commitment to fight to the death. Photo of War Minister, General Anami. The determination to keep fighting continues into August — even after the first atomic bomb has fallen.

□ “A Warning Declined.” Photo of Prime Minister Suzuki. “*Mokusatsu*” to the Potsdam Proclamation. However you interpret the word, they still said “no.” They were holding out for a better deal.

□ “Ground Zero: Hiroshima and Nagasaki.” We agree that it should be included — but not as the excessive “emotional center” the curators had in mind. Reduce the volume of it and stop the emotional manipulation. Twenty pictures and a half dozen artifacts would be ample. These photos and artifacts should not unduly emphasize women, children, and religious objects.

□ The Surrender. The Number One consequence of the *Enola Gay*’s mission — given short shrift to date by the curators — was that it brought on the end of the war. Nine days after Hiroshima, six days after Nagasaki, the Japanese surrendered.

□ The Invasion That Didn’t Occur. The bomb saved lives on both sides.

* Balance photos of survivors of the atomic bomb with photos of disabled American veterans of World War II.

* Discard everything in section 500 after p. 16. The discussion of nuclear deterrence cannot possibly be developed in passing. As currently structured, it misleads and distorts over 40 years of U.S. strategic policy. We recommend you replace that material with the following:

□ *A New Partnership in the Pacific*. Show the extraordinary US postwar aid to Japan in rebuilding. That was a far more significant part of the aftermath of the war than things now covered in this exhibit. Show Hiroshima and Nagasaki as they are, 50 years later.

The bottom line is that time is running out to obtain a consensus in favor of this exhibit. Both houses of Congress recently introduced resolutions critical of this exhibit, and the Senate's was passed unanimously. There is also critical language in the Appropriations conference report for the Department of the Interior. Media coverage from around the country continues to focus on the shortfalls in your current plans. In summary, there is compelling evidence that you have not achieved the balance and context that we have been advocating over the past year. Again, I urge you to go beyond the limited approach to changes in the main exhibit that have been taken to date.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

Monroe W. Hatch, Jr.