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*Editor in Chief*

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Statement

The attached document is the complete, verbatim text of a statement, dated April 16, 1994, and circulated by Dr. Martin Harwit, director of the Air and Space Museum. I received copies of the original document from three different sources. It has been transcribed to eliminate any markings on the originals.

At the time of Dr. Harwit's commentary, the exhibition title was "The Crossroads: The End of World War II, the Atomic Bomb, and the Origins of the Cold War." It has since been retitled, "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of the World War II."

SIGNED  
John T. Correll

**Martin Harwit: Comments on *Crossroads* — April 16, 1994**

All of us associated with the exhibition have always known that the most difficult task before us would be to achieve accuracy and balance.

Though I carefully read the script a month ago, I evidently paid greater attention to accuracy than to balance. Accuracy is somewhat easier to check, at least for the aspects of the exhibition that are familiar. Balance is more difficult to assess, since it requires an overview that allows one to see the script as a whole. One reading apparently was not enough to afford me that overview.

A second reading shows that we do have a lack of balance and that much of the criticism that has been levied against us is understandable. Most strikingly:

- We talk about Hitler's vow not to bomb civilians, (100-29) but dwell on the corpses in Dresden (100-29, 200-13) due to Allied bombing without showing in similar detail the prior bombings of Nanking, Warsaw, Antwerp, Nottingham, and other cities that had earlier been heavily bombed by the Axis powers. We talk of the heavy bombing of Tokyo (100-32,33), show great empathy for Japanese mothers (100-34), but are strangely quiet about similar losses to American s and among our own allies in Europe and Asia.
- We show terrible pictures of human suffering in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in section 400, without earlier, in section 100, showing pictures of the suffering the Japanese had inflicted in China, in the camps they set up for the Dutch and British civilians and military, and U.S.

prisoners of war. We mention internment camps for U.S. citizens of Japanese extraction (100-41) but go into nowhere near as much detail into the internment of Koreans and other non-Japanese in Japan (100-49) providing statistics alone, but no pictures. Nor do we show pictures of Japanese racism against Americans. We do not note that conditions in the American internment camps were far more favorable than in Japanese interment camps, where slave labor conditions prevailed.

- We show virtually no pictures of Allied dead or wounded either in sections 100 or 300. Section 300 is almost clinically military in its tone, when contrasted to section 400 which speaks about the action on the ground entirely in human terms. Section 400 has nay number of heart-wrenching, tragic stories of suffering on the ground. Where are the corresponding tragedies in section 100 in China, in the Philippines, in Singapore, in the former Dutch possessions? We go into American racism against Japanese (100-43) but show nothing equivalent on the Japanese side.
- The alternatives to the atomic bomb are stated more as 'probabilities' than as 'speculations', and are dwelled on more than they should be.
- Section 400 has far too many explicit, horrible pictures.

I suggest the following cures:

1. Take out all but about one third of the explicit pictures of death and suffering in section 400. Add to section 400 pictures of prisoners just released form Japanese internment camps. (Lin Ezell has a wonderful letter from a woman who had been released as a young girl and might have pictures, too).
2. Put in an equal number of pictures of death and suffering in section 200 for soldiers on both sides. This will document the enormous casualties that preceded the atomic bombing.
3. Put in more pictures of allied cities that were destroyed before we ever reached Japan or started bombing Germany with effect. Show Japanese bombing in their Asian campaigns. (See e.g. the film in the World War I gallery.)
4. Contrast the hardships of war in Japan with hardships the allies in Europe and in the Pacific were suffering. America, with its great wealth, was entirely exceptional. Not doing that makes it look as though the allies had no reason to complain. In the U.S., show a copy of a telegram received by a family announcing their son's death. Show gold star mothers, yellow ribbons, etc.
5. Reduce much of the speculative material about what might have been possible without the atomic bomb. I have made some specific suggestions on the relevant pages, but further deletions might be useful as well.

If we make these changes, I think we will have a better exhibition. I do not think that these changes would be difficult to implement, since most of them require deletion of material rather than addition, except where pictures of allied suffering are involved, and those should be readily available.