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Developments in the Enola Gay Controversy

1. The Previous script — which the museum on June 21 declared to be final, "minor wording changes aside" — is now defunct. At a meeting in the Pentagon August 16, Museum Director Martin Harwit announced a major script revision to be completed September 1. He said the following changes would be made:

- Add new section to provide historical context for the war in the Pacific. This, apparently would be some sort of corridor outside the gallery through which visitors would be shunted before entering the exhibit area. Details of this section will not be provided as part of September 1 revision.
- Speculation about US motives will be removed. The series of "Historical Controversies," which the Air Force Association (among others) had characterized as anti-American, will be eliminated.
- The exhibit will strongly affirm that the United States employed the atomic bomb to shorten the war and save lives. Important change — but curators have resisted this point in the past and privately, they disagree with it.
- Dr. Harwit says the curators have "taken out adjectives and neutralized language" and have removed "a number of redundant graphic images."
- He said theatrical lighting effects have been removed from the "Ground Zero: Hiroshima and Nagasaki" section.

2. AFA's main role in this matter has been to analyze and report. We will have further analysis and comment after we see the revised script September 1. Important to remember: AFA does not speak for anyone else on this issue.

- We can confirm, however, that there is considerable opinion that the Smithsonian's fix-up plan is too little, too late, and that it's time to shut down this exhibit and start over with different curators.

3. We would prefer that the museum display the Enola Gay in a straightforward aircraft exhibit as it displays Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis and other historic aircraft. Our position on the issue, however, has not been that restrictive. We have asked only that the story be told with balance, historical context, and fairness.

4. We will continue to comment on specific aspects of the exhibition plan, but our assessment of the museum's proposal will be based on the overall message we believe visitors will take with them when they leave the exhibit. The exhibition will not be acceptable if it fosters any of the following impressions:

- That the Japanese were victims in World War II, defending their nation and culture against western aggression.
- That the Americans were ruthless invaders, driven by racism, revenge, and blood lust.

— That the death, suffering, and horrors of war were borne unilaterally or unfairly by a passive Japan.

— That the roles of Japan and the US in World War II were morally equivalent.

— That the United States acted dishonestly, dishonorably, or immorally in its decision to use the atomic bomb.

5. While we do not have a "fix list" for the exhibition, our reports since March 1994 have identified numerous examples of where we believe the script goes wrong. In addition to those — and not all of them have been addressed yet in modifications — major attention is indicated in the following areas.

— Emphasis on the mobilized force waiting in Japan to throw back an invasion. 2.3 million military troops and 4 million civilians — not counting the women, old men, boys trained to resist by such means as strapping explosives to their bodies and throwing themselves under advancing tanks. Up to 10,000 aircraft, two thirds of them *kamikaze*. Tunnels, bunkers, and barbed wire in place along the shores.

— *Bushido* as it really was and what it really meant. Why the Japanese refused to surrender and why they mistreated those who did. Non-romantic treatment of the kamikaze.

— The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Japan's drive for empire in the 1930s. Japanese nation united in support of this. Show how the Japanese behaved before their victims began striking back.

— The Japanese-American internment issue. It's in this exhibit for one reason only: It's a special interest of Dr. Tom Crouch. He already has one Smithsonian exhibit on this. More treatment not required here.

— Extraordinary US postwar aid to Japan in rebuilding. This was a far more significant part of the aftermath of the war than most of the things now covered in Exhibit Section 500.

— Balance in depicting the burden of war. Imbalance in Japanese vs. American casualty photos, for example, was 82 percent in last script. Curators must correct gross inequities such as this.

— Emotional exploitation. Emphasis on women, children, and mutilated religious objects at "Ground Zero," for instance. Artifacts such as the school girl's lunch box with carbonized remains, the story told for maximum emotional effect.