

Feb. 10, 1994

MEMORANDUM TO: Martin Harwit

FROM: Tom Crouch *TC*

SUBJECT: "Crossroads" Public Programs/Symposia

Yesterday, Gregg Herken, Mike Neufeld, Helen MacMahon and I met to discuss possible public programs and symposia in 1995 in connection to the "Crossroads" exhibit. We concluded that a scholarly symposium on "decision to drop the bomb" and similar questions ~~were~~ not likely to produce anything terribly new. There are, however, a number of exciting public programs we might create which would attract and inform a general audience and put the right face on the exhibit. We came up with the following preliminary plan:

1. Richard Rhodes giving public lecture/keynote speech on "50 Years of the Nuclear Age" to open the exhibit in May 1995. At that time his "Making of the Hydrogen Bomb" book should be just appearing and the "Making of the Atomic Bomb" will certainly still be in print. He would have to waive his usual high lecture fee, but perhaps he would be willing because of his role on the exhibit advisory board. This lecture could be made into the Lindbergh Lecture, if GE is agreeable. A lecture or public event of this type is clearly more appropriate for the exhibit opening than the usual party.

2. A panel debate/discussion, "Resolved: The Atomic Bomb Should Not (or Should) Have Been Dropped on Japan." This event, which could take place in June or July 1995 (or open the exhibit if Rhodes is not available in May), would open up the debate on this question to the general public and reinforce the exhibit's message that the question is open. As our ideal panel we propose Paul Fussell to speak in favor of the decision to drop and Ronald Spector (a leading historian of the Pacific War at George Washington U.) to give his estimate of the invasion plans and the casualties to be expected. Opposing them would be Martin Sherwin and Barton Bernstein (who would provide his estimate of the invasion casualty figures--something Bernstein cares about strongly.) Each would have 10 minutes to summarize their position, followed by responses and public discussion.

3. A 509th veterans panel giving their personal experiences and views of the bombing, in the manner of the many successful and popular panels we have done in the past. Paul Tibbets would be invited, but we would want about three or four others from various crews or parts of the 509th. Joanne Gernstein has cultivated extensive contacts with these veterans and has a good feeling for who might be articulate and thoughtful.

4. A Hibakusha panel giving their personal experiences of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We could draw from Japanese-American survivors or, if funding or support from Japan permitted, we could have a delegation of English-speaking hibakusha from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Our conclusion was that combining 509th veterans and survivors on one panel might be volatile and unpredictable in outcome, while two panels would send the right message of balance to the media and public-- although some controversy is unavoidable. These two panels could take place in the July to September time period. Some thought would have to be given to whether we wish to stage something near to the August 6-9 anniversary period. (During it would not be good, because the proper focus will be on Japan.)

5. A film series in the fall of 1995. There are numerous good possibilities, especially if the scope of the films is widened to the whole nuclear age and Cold War. Among those titles we discussed were: "The Day After Trinity" (a Manhattan Project documentary), the rediscovered 19 reels of Hiroshima/Nagasaki film, "Black Rain" (Kurosawa), "Hiroshima Mon Amour," "Radio Bikini" (a documentary on the 1946 bomb tests and the cavalier attitude to radioactive contamination), "Atomic Cafe," "On the Beach," "Fail Safe" and "Dr. Strangelove."

! || These public programs are a great opportunity to engage the general public in the exhibit and stand a good chance of financing from the MacArthur or other foundations, or perhaps from the Embassy in Tokyo. If you are agree with our proposals, we could then approach Paul Blackburn, some of the participants and the foundations.

cc: M. Neufeld
G. Herken
H. MacMahon
N. Makovenyi
V. Govier
C. Schmidt