



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
Washington, D.C. 20560  
U.S.A.

January 4, 1994<sup>5</sup>

Honorable Sam Johnson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Thank you for your letter of December 13, 1994, regarding the National Air and Space Museum's (NASM) exhibition entitled "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II," which will include a portion of the Enola Gay. Let me assure you and your colleagues that we indeed are taking all the necessary and proper steps to coordinate with the associated outside parties in bringing this exhibition to a successful opening.

The staff of NASM continues to make revisions to the draft script based upon the input of a number of sources, particularly representatives of veterans' organizations and from former members of the 509th Composite Bomb Group. We are doing our utmost to have both the revised script which will reflect these changes and any related media material, such as videos, in a form that is acceptable for review by early February. I will contact you again in late January to apprise you of the status of the revised script and all related material.

I would like to address the concern of you and your colleagues regarding the way in which the Institution has handled this exhibition and the criticism surrounding it. It is not unusual, and is often the case, that any subject as complex and important as World War II and the atomic bombings go through a significant development and revision process. This simply demonstrates our commitment to ensuring historical accuracy, context and balance in all of our exhibitions.

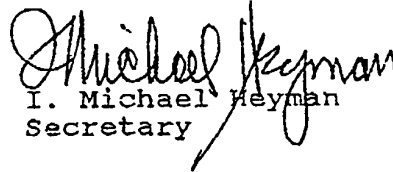
Additionally, I believe we have responded in a very proactive and positive vein with regard to the criticism surrounding the exhibition. When I assumed the position of Secretary this past September, I stated unequivocally that the original script was deficient and that many of the criticisms directed at the exhibition were merited. The Institution had already begun, and will continue through the opening of the exhibition, to consult with a variety of interested parties, particularly representatives of veterans' organizations,

regarding the script. This included a number of lengthy and substantive discussions with The American Legion at which a line-by-line review of the entire script was undertaken. Recently, Under Secretary Newman established an ad hoc advisory group which includes representatives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, The Retired Officers Association and the Air Force Association, which will meet regularly to provide advice and guidance as we move closer to the exhibition's opening.

I am confident that this ongoing dialogue will result in an exhibition that is historically accurate, balanced and informative and will appropriately recognize the veterans who so honorably served their country.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Institution and I will contact you again in late January.

Sincerely,

  
I. Michael Heyman  
Secretary