

Editorial

How we lost the peace

Plans by the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum to run an exhibit entitled: "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II," have generated a storm of opposition based upon emphasis in the display on scenes of the aftermath of the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As planned, the exhibit is divided into five areas—the context in which the war in the Pacific occurred, the decision to develop and use atomic bombs, details about the two bombing missions, the effects of the bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the legacy of the bombings.

Its critics contend that the exhibit not only is biased toward a Japanese point of view, but that it treats the bombing as a matter of U.S. war guilt on a par with Nazi concentration camps. The horrors inflicted on the populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were terrible, but war itself is always terrible. The question to be answered is first, whether a given war is a just war; second, whether the means used to fight it are appropriate; and third, whether the terms on which a war is brought to conclusion provide a basis for a fruitful peace for both victors and vanquished.

Few people today would deny that World War I was an unjust war, and certainly it was an unjust peace. This led to circumstances in which Hitler was catapulted to power in Germany with the backing of the British royal house and many in the United States. Notwithstanding, by 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the die was cast and the United States had to ensure the defeat of Hitler and the Axis powers allied with him.

Much could and should have been done to avert World War II, but by then, it had to be fought; and the goals enunciated by President Roosevelt on behalf of the American people made it a just war. The terrible thing is that, after President Roosevelt's death, we did not have a just peace, nor can it be said that the conduct of the war in itself was just. It did not take the killing of the 200,000 residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end the war without an invasion of Japan. Before the two bombs were dropped, the Japanese had already been licked.

In 1943, President Roosevelt stated repeatedly that he had made no decision as to whether or not he would approve using atomic weapons. By 1945, in the last months of Roosevelt's life, it was an even bet whether Japan or Germany would collapse first. The Japanese had already sent out peace feelers through Josef Stalin and also through the Vatican. Indeed, according to the U.S. National Archive documentation, President Roosevelt had planned to meet with Pope Pius XII early that year, to discuss these negotiations and other matters with the pontiff. Then he died.

"Drop atomic bombs on the Japanese," his advisers told President Truman, "and not only will the war in the Pacific be over, but you will have the means of forcing concessions from the Soviets." Stupidly, and cruelly, he agreed. As Bertrand Russell admitted in print just one year later, the atom bomb was to be the battering ram to force world government not only on the Soviets, but on the recalcitrant Americans as well. Harry Truman was fooled by these one-worlders into playing their game.

They planned to control the United States and force a new form of imperialism upon the peoples of the world. The terror potential of unlimited development of nuclear weapons was to be the lever.

They did not, of course, succeed with their total agenda, but they have shaped the events of the past 50 years so as to gradually erode national sovereignty and to allow the United Nations organization to accrue de facto more and more police power. They have done this through various world-government instrumentalities of the United Nations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization (Unesco) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This is their agenda for the population conference now occurring at Cairo.

President Roosevelt, in both private conversation as reported by his son Elliot and in public speeches, made his purpose clear. World War II was being fought to end all imperialisms, not least that of the British. His death, like that of Abraham Lincoln, ended a just war with a bad peace and we are still paying the price for that.