

The lecture presented by Geoff Hayes outlines the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and the controversy over the commemorative exhibit for it. The lecture focused primarily on the plane that dropped the Little Boy, the Enola Gay. The various motivations for dropping the bomb were explored as well as the public reactions, both immediately after and in more recent years. These issues were discussed in the context of the Smithsonian's attempt to build an exhibit for the Enola Gay. This exhibit was eventually canceled for being too "revisionist" as stated by a member of congress.

The reading to accompany this week's lecture was an article written by Timothy W. Luke. In it he outlines the context and controversy of the Smithsonian Enola Gay exhibit. The Enola Gay's eventual resting place is described and contrasted with Japan's exhibit, the Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for Atomic Bomb Victims. Luke criticizes the American exhibits unwillingness to discuss the casualties and the indiscriminate nature of the atomic bomb. The article concludes that the US's actions in hiding the bombing might be encouraging other states to hide their own WMDs.

This report aims to argue that the canceling of the 1995 Smithsonian Enola Gay exhibit was not only the incorrect course of action, but morally reproachable. The dropping of the atomic bomb was a huge event and the motivations behind it are still not fully understood. Hayes' lecture outlines many different potential motivations for dropping the atomic bomb, from ones as altruistic as saving lives to ones as cold blooded as justifying research costs. The reasoning behind so much damage should be understood and explored in a public setting, not hidden because it might be offensive. For a democratic nation, transparency is paramount. Parallels can be drawn to the Snowden Leaks where government secret dealings shattered public trust. For a nation to give their government the power to destroy other nations it is vital that the populace be able to question their motivations for doing so.

The dropping of the atomic bomb caused more damage than can really be properly understood by a human brain. Luke states that there were 140 000 deaths in Hiroshima alone. This is all that is mentioned in the current exhibit for the Enola Gay. The Japanese exhibit shows as many of these victims as possible, including the Americans that were in the city at the time as POWs. When the

casualties of an event are described as a number it is much more palatable than when described in greater detail. Luke speculates that this hiding of the Enola Gay's role as a weapon of mass destruction has allowed the American people to ignore the true power and potential of the atomic bomb, and "emboldens other states to acquire atomic weapons". Historical events should be displayed with all of the facts from all sides, even when those facts are painful. It is only through this that lessons from the past can be learned. It is clear from the wars in Vietnam and the Middle East that Americans have not learned the true cost of war. The original script for the exhibit was struck down for being "revisionist" but the new exhibit clearly glosses over certain facts that are vital to the telling of this story.

The deployment of the first atomic bomb was a huge event, both tragic and revolutionary. It should have been displayed for the public to view, understand, and question.