

LETTERS

To the Editor

An anniversary disremembered

This week 64 years ago the U.S. vaporized the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These atomic weapons killed 70,000 to 80,000 people instantly in Hiroshima and about 74,000 in Nagasaki. Of course over time hundreds of thousands in both cities died lingering deaths from radiation sickness and other radiation-induced maladies. These two mega-events ended the War in the Pacific and President Harry S. Truman celebrated the news as the greatest thing in history.

It would be foolhardy to expect that this anniversary will receive little, if any, mass media attention — and little, if any, dinner table discussion in American homes. As a people, our mental surfaces seem so overloaded that we have trouble recalling last week's bit stories and breaking news events. More is the pity.

In today's world there are at least nine known nations with nuclear arsenals. While "Little Boy," the Hiroshima bomb, was 15 kilotons, today's ICBMs carry warheads that range from 170 to 335 kilotons. Any single one is capable of leveling a metropolitan area the size of New York City. What the U.S. and Russia alone have in

their respective nuclear arsenals if launched would be equivalent to 100,000 Hiroshimas, according to Bruce Blai, president of the World Security Institute.

According to trusted sources, the U.S. has an estimated 5,200 warheads and the Obama administration will spend more than \$6 billion on R&D on nuclear weapons alone this year.

It may be time, well overdue actually, for citizens to begin to get curious about what the current administration's thinking is about the role these weapons play in the U.S. pantheon of power.

JERRY McKNIGHT
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Why we shout

Arul Menezes ("Why I should pay more income taxes," Aug. 7) opines that the Bush tax cuts should be rescinded and that we should all pay more taxes (and be happy and proud to do so).

The problem with notions like this is that the politicians don't know when to stop when it comes to implementing them. My wife and I both receive small Social Security stipends from the federal government. From those stipends, the government takes back federal income tax and Medicare premiums. My

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