

On the Enduring Significance of Hiroshima after 75 Years

By [Canadian Peace Congress](#)
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Seventy-five years ago, an act of international criminality and infamy took place, the consequences of which have posed an existential threat to humanity ever since. For the first time ever, a species had created the capacity to not only bring about its own extinction, but also to potentially threaten all life on our planet.

On August 6 and 9, 1945, the U.S. military bombed the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with nuclear weapons. Over 200,000 people, mostly civilians, died instantly or later succumbed from burns, malnutrition, and radiation-related illnesses, and their cities levelled to the ground. Many of their descendants carry the affected genes and pass them onto their children. Those notorious acts will forever be remembered as the first time the devastating impact of nuclear warfare was unleashed.

There was absolutely no justification for this wanton attack – the worst *crime against humanity* in history (paralleled only by the Holocaust). Unclassified documents have since confirmed that there was no truth to the constructed ‘myth’ that the atomic attack was necessary to spare the lives of U.S. servicemen and end the war. In fact, Imperial Japan was already on the verge of collapse and surrender by early August 1945, its industries and war-making capacities destroyed or exhausted by repeated conventional air raids.

We now know that the U.S. Truman Administration proceeded with the nuclear attack anyway because it was anxious to unveil its awesome new weaponry while it still could, thus ‘showcasing’ U.S. global military superiority in the post-war period. It is now known, for instance, that the Targeting Committee of the U.S. military’s “Manhattan Project” specifically chose the two cities – Hiroshima and Nagasaki – not because they were important military centres, but rather because these two cities had been scarcely bombed by conventional air raids, so it would be easier to document the full destructive power of the atomic blasts, and to monitor the number of ‘kills’ among the largely civilian populations of those urban centres. The callousness and racially-tinged inhumanity of such calculations is undeniable.

More specifically, the U.S. nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were intended to send an unmistakable message to the Soviet Union – its erstwhile ally during WWII – that U.S. imperialism, with its monopoly on nuclear weaponry, would be top dog and ‘world policeman’ in the post-war era. Most history books claim the opening salvo of the “cold war” which was to dominate international politics and spur the nuclear arms race for the next half-century was launched by Winston Churchill in his “Iron Curtain” speech in Fulton, Missouri in March 1946. But there is every reason to conclude that it actually came seven months earlier, in Hiroshima.

75 years later, those nuclear weapons arsenals remain the principle threat – a sword of Damocles – hanging over the heads of all humanity and our global environment. Despite the hopes and demands of the world’s people for the complete elimination of *all* nuclear stockpiles, disarmament talks remain stalled and important treaties, such as the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) and the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaties, and the Iranian nuclear deal (JCPOA) have been unilaterally cancelled by Washington, setting the stage for another devastating round of the arms race.

Instead the leading nuclear states – in the first place, U.S. imperialism – are pressing forward with plans to modernize nuclear arsenals and extend the arms race into outer space (in the form of the Ballistic Missile Defence system and Trump’s “Space Command”). For this reason, the anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki assumes even greater significance and urgency this year.

This is especially so because we can all see another ‘cold war’ – this time directed against the People’s Republic of China – looming on the horizon. Actually, it is already here, and is being ratcheted up daily by the U.S. Administration and its Western allies, including Canada. The last ‘cold war’ had devastating effects. Not only did it bring humanity to the brink of mutually assured destruction, and consume trillions of dollars (in today’s currency) on arms spending instead of peaceful development and the elimination of poverty, homelessness, illiteracy and social inequality. It also led to witch-hunts, fostered xenophobia and racism, and suppressed academic freedom and the right to dissent.

For the sake of the future of humanity and our environment, we must not allow fear-mongering and McCarthyism to gain the upper hand again.

We are not powerless in the face of this alarming drift toward nuclear calamity and environmental devastation. We need to take mass action to demand Canada take a firm stand promoting peace, disarmament, mutual respect and understanding, rejecting militarism, aggression and war.

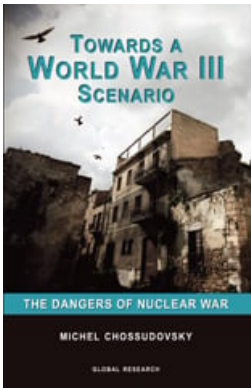
For starters, we must demand that Canada sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). And we must call for a massive cut in arms spending, for Canada’s withdrawal from the aggressive NATO military alliance, and for full respect for – and compliance with – the principles of the UN Charter and international law

The real challenge is to re-build a grassroots peace constituency in this country made up of working people, women, youth, indigenous peoples, those living below the poverty line, the homeless and disenfranchised, environmental and social activists and all who cherish peace. One that is powerful and united around a “*Peace Alternative*” that would take our country in a fundamentally different direction, and win a truly independent Canadian foreign policy based on disarmament and peace.

That is the best way to remember and pay tribute to the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and to all victims of economic and military aggression, occupation and war!

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[“Towards a World War III Scenario: The Dangers of Nuclear War”](#)

by Michel Chossudovsky

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PDF Edition: \$6.50 (sent directly to your email account!)

[Michel Chossudovsky](#) is Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), which hosts the critically acclaimed website www.globalresearch.ca. He is a contributor to the Encyclopedia Britannica. His writings have been translated into more than 20 languages.

Reviews

“This book is a ‘must’ resource – a richly documented and systematic diagnosis of the supremely pathological geo-strategic planning of US wars since ‘9-11’ against non-nuclear countries to seize their oil fields and resources under cover of ‘freedom and democracy’.”

-John McMurtry, Professor of Philosophy, Guelph University

“In a world where engineered, pre-emptive, or more fashionably “humanitarian” wars of aggression have become the norm, this challenging book may be our final wake-up call.”

-Denis Halliday, Former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations

Michel Chossudovsky exposes the insanity of our privatized war machine. Iran is being targeted with nuclear weapons as part of a war agenda built on distortions and lies for the purpose of private profit. The real aims are oil, financial hegemony and global control. The price could be nuclear holocaust. When weapons become the hottest export of the world’s only superpower, and diplomats work as salesmen for the defense industry, the whole world is recklessly endangered. If we must have a military, it belongs entirely in the public sector. No one should profit from mass death and destruction.

-Ellen Brown, author of ‘Web of Debt’ and president of the Public Banking Institute



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