

The Hiroshima Myth. Unaccountable War Crimes and the Lies of US Military History

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This coming Tuesday, August 6, 2013, is the 68th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, the whole truth of which has been heavily censored and mythologized ever since war-weary Americans celebrated V-J Day 10 days later.

In the pitiful history lessons that were taught by my uninspired/bored history teachers (which seemed to be mostly jocks) came from patriotic and highly censored books where everything the British and US military ever did in war time was honorable and self-sacrificing and everything their opponents did was barbaric. Everybody in my graduating class of 26 swallowed the post-war propaganda in our history books. It was from these books that we learned about the “glorious” end of the war against Japan.

Of course, I now know that I had been given false information, orchestrated by war-justifying militarists (and assorted uber-patriotic historians) starting with General Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur successfully imposed total censorship of what really happened at Ground Zero. One of his first acts after taking over as viceroy of Japan was to confiscate and/or destroy all the photographic evidence documenting the horrors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Back in 1995, the Smithsonian Institution was preparing to correct some the 50-year-old pseudo-patriotic myths by staging an honest, historically-accurate display dealing with the atomic bombings. Following the vehement, orchestrated, reactionary outrage emanating from right-wing veterans groups and other patriot groups (including Newt Gingrich’s GOP-dominated Congress that threatened to stop federal funding of the Institute), the Smithsonian was forced to censor-out all of the unwelcome but contextually important parts of the story. So again we had another example of politically-motivated groups heavily altering real history because they were afraid of revealing “unpatriotic” historical truths that might shake the confidence of average Americans in our leaders, sort of like the near-total media black-out about the controlled demolitions of the three World Trade Center buildings on 9/11/01 that killed thousands of innocent people and unleashed the dogs of war against innocents in Afghanistan (explore www.ae911truth.org for the documentation of that assertion).



Nagasaki on August 9, 1945

The Smithsonian historians did have a gun to their heads, of course, but in the melee, the corporate-controlled mainstream media - and therefore the public - failed to learn an important historical point, and that is this: The war could have ended in the spring of 1945 without the summer atomic bombs, and therefore there might have been no Okinawa bloodbath for thousands of American Marines and soldiers. Also there would have been no need for an American land invasion of Japan - the basis of the subsequent propaganda campaign that justified the use of atomic weapons on defenseless civilian populations and meets the definition of an international war crime and a crime against humanity.

American intelligence, with the full knowledge of President Truman's administration, was aware of Japan's desperate search for ways to honorably surrender months before Truman gave the fateful order to incinerate Hiroshima.

Intelligence data, revealed in the 1980s, showed that the contingency plans for a large-scale US invasion (planned for no sooner than November 1, 1945) would have been unnecessary. Japan was working on peace negotiations through its Moscow ambassador as early as April of 1945. Truman knew of these developments because the US had broken the Japanese code years earlier, and all of Japan's military and diplomatic messages were being intercepted. On July 13, 1945, Foreign Minister Togo said: "Unconditional surrender (giving up all sovereignty, especially deposing the Emperor) is the only obstacle to peace."

Truman and his advisors knew about these efforts, and the war could have ended through diplomacy by simply conceding a post-war figurehead position for the emperor Hirohito - who was regarded as a deity in Japan. That reasonable concession was - seemingly illogically - refused by the US in their demands for unconditional surrender, initially demanded at the 1943 Casablanca Conference between Roosevelt and Churchill and reiterated at the Potsdam Conference between Truman, Churchill and Stalin. Still, the Japanese continued searching for an honorable peace through negotiations.

Even Secretary of War Henry Stimson, said: "the true question was not whether surrender could have been achieved without the use of the bomb but whether a different diplomatic and military course would have led to an earlier surrender. A large segment of the Japanese

cabinet was ready in the spring of 1945 to accept substantially the same terms as those finally agreed on.” In other words, Stimson felt that the US had unnecessarily prolonged the war.

After Japan did surrender, MacArthur allowed the emperor to remain in place as spiritual head of Japan, the very condition that coerced the Japanese leadership to refuse to accept the humiliating “unconditional surrender” terms.

So the two essential questions that need answering to comprehend what was going on behind the scenes are these:

- 1) Why did the US refuse to accept Japan’s only demand concerning their surrender (the retention of the emperor) and
- 2) why were the atomic bombs used when victory in the Pacific was already a certainty?

Shortly after WWII, military analyst Hanson Baldwin wrote:

“The Japanese, in a military sense, were in a hopeless strategic situation by the time the Potsdam Declaration (insisting on Japan’s unconditional surrender) was made on July 26, 1945.”

Admiral William Leahy, top military aide to President Truman, said in his war memoirs, *I Was There*:

“It is my opinion that the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender because of the effective sea blockade and the successful bombing with conventional weapons. My own feeling is that in being the first to use it, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages.”



And General Dwight D. Eisenhower, in a personal visit to President Truman a couple of weeks before the bombings, urged him not to use the atomic bombs. Eisenhower said (in a 1963 interview in *Newsweek*):

“It wasn’t necessary to hit them with that awful thing . . . to use the atomic bomb, to kill and terrorize civilians, without even attempting [negotiations], was a double crime.”

There are a number of factors that contributed to the Truman administration’s decision to use the bombs.

- 1) The US had made a huge investment in time, mind and money (a massive 2 billion in

1940 dollars) to produce three bombs, and there was no inclination – and no guts – to stop the momentum.

2) The US military and political leadership – as did many ordinary Americans – had a tremendous appetite for revenge because of Pearl Harbor. Mercy wasn't in the mindset of the US military or the war-weary populace, and the missions against Hiroshima and Nagasaki were accepted – no questions asked – by most of those folks who only knew the sanitized, national security version of events.

3) The fissionable material in Hiroshima's bomb was uranium. The Nagasaki bomb was a plutonium bomb. Scientific curiosity was a significant factor that pushed the project to its completion. The Manhattan Project scientists (and the US Army director of the project, General Leslie Groves) were curious about "what would happen if an entire city was leveled by a single uranium bomb?" "What about a plutonium bomb?"

The decision to use both bombs had been made well in advance of August 1945. Accepting the surrender of Japan was not an option if the science experiment was to go ahead. Of course the three-day interval between the two bombs was unconscionably short if the Hiroshima bomb was designed to coerce immediate surrender. Japan's communications and transportation capabilities were in shambles, and no one, not even the US military, much less the Japanese high command, fully understood what had happened at Hiroshima. (The Manhattan Project was so top secret that even Douglas MacArthur, commanding general of the entire Pacific theatre, had been kept out of the loop until five days before Hiroshima.)

4) The Russians had proclaimed their intent to enter the war with Japan 90 days after V-E Day (Victory in Europe Day, May 8), which would have been Aug. 8, two days after Hiroshima was bombed. Indeed, Russia did declare war on Japan on August 8 and was advancing eastward across Manchuria when Nagasaki was incinerated. The US didn't want Japan surrendering to Russia or sharing the spoils of war.

Russia was soon to be the only other superpower – and a future enemy – so the first nuclear threat "messages" of the Cold War were sent. Russia indeed received far less of the spoils of war than they had anticipated, and the two superpowers were instantly mired in the Cold War stalemate that led to the unaffordable nuclear arms race and the possibility of total extinction of the human race. What did happen was the mutual moral and financial bankruptcies of both nations that occurred over the next couple of generations of military madness.

An estimated 80,000 innocent civilians, plus 20,000 weaponless young Japanese conscripts died instantly in the Hiroshima bombing. Hundreds of thousands more suffered slow deaths from agonizing burns, radiation sickness, leukemias, anemias and untreatable infections for the rest of their shortened lives. Generations of the survivor's progeny were also afflicted with horrible radiation-induced illnesses, cancers and premature deaths, still going on to this very hour.

Another shameful reality that has been covered up is the fact that 12 American Navy pilots, their existence well known to the US command, were instantly incinerated in the Hiroshima jail on the fateful day

So the official War Department-approved version of the end of the war in the Pacific contained a new batch of myths that took their places among the long lists of myths that

Americans are continuously fed by our corporate, military, political and media opinion leaders, the gruesomeness of war being changed to glorification in the process. Among the other censored out realities include what really happened in the US military invasions and occupations of the countries of North Korea, Iran, Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Lebanon, Granada, Panama, the Philippines, Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Colombia, Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc, etc. This list doesn't cover the uncountable secret Pentagon/CIA covert operations and assassination plots in the rest of the world, where as many as 150 nations contain American military bases (permission lavishly paid for by bribery or threats of economic sanctions).

But somehow most of us still hang on to our shaky "my country right or wrong" patriotism, desperately wanting to believe the cunningly-orchestrated myths that say that the war-profiteering multibillionaire corporate elite (and their politicians, military leaders and media talking heads who are in their employ) only work for peace, justice, equality, liberty and "making the world safe" for predatory capitalism.

While it is true that the US military has faced down the occasional despot, with necessary sacrifice from dead and mortally-wounded (in body, mind and spirit) American soldiers and veterans, more often than not the rationalization for going to war are the same as those of the "godless communists", the anti-American "insurgents" and "freedom fighters" who want to convince us Yankees to just go home where we belong.

August 6 and 9, 1945 are just two more examples of the brain-washing that goes on in all "total war" political agendas, which are always accompanied by the inevitable human slaughter that is euphemistically labeled "collateral damage" or "friendly fire".

It might already be too late to rescue and resuscitate the humanitarian, peacemaking America that we used to know and love. It might be too late to effectively confront the corporate hijacking of liberal democracy in America. It might be too late to successfully bring down the arrogant and greedy ruling elites who are selfishly dragging our world down the road to our destruction. The rolling coup d'etat of what I call Friendly American Fascism may have already accomplished its goals.

But there may still be some hope. Rather than being silent about the wars that the war-mongers are provoking all over the planet (with the very willing assistance of the Pentagon, the weapons industry and their lapdogs in Congress), people of conscience need to start learning the whole truth of history, despite the discomfort we will feel (cognitive dissonance) when the truth can't be ignored any more.

We need to start owning up to America's uncountable war crimes that have been orchestrated in our names. And then we need to go to the streets, publicly protesting and courageously refusing to cooperate with those who are transforming America into a criminal rogue nation that will eventually be targeted for downfall by its billions of suffering victims outside our borders, similar to what happened to Nazi Germany and Fascist Japan.

Doing what is right for the whole of humanity for a change, rather than just doing what is profitable or advantageous for our over-privileged, over-consumptive and unsustainable American way of life, would be real honor, real patriotism and an essential start toward real peace.

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