The atomic bomb that incinerated Hiroshima, Japan Aug. 6, 1945 (pictured) was gob-smacking. It did with one device what had taken 464 heavy B-29 bombers to accomplish in the April 26, 1945 firebombing Tokyo. The 15-kiloton Hiroshima bomb does not compare to today’s nuclear weapons. The smallest warheads in the US arsenal are 22 to 13 times more powerful: the 340-kiloton B-61 gravity bombs; and the 200-kiloton W80-1 on Advanced Cruise Missiles.

Photo by Associated Press.

The atomic bomb had nothing to do with the end of the war at all. —General Curtis LeMay

During his visit, President Obama perpetuated the mythology and the ahistorical nostalgia that guarantees the US public will never acknowledge, much less apologize for, the needless experimental massacres of 200,000 civilians at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As Hashimoto wrote, “No apology [is] needed for this war crime.” And as Mike Hashimoto says, “[P]rophecies of extremely high casualties only came to be widely accepted after the war to rationalize the use of the atomic bombs.” And historian Martin J. Sherwin “cited a ‘considerable body’ of new evidence that suggested the bomb may have cost, rather than saved, American lives. That is, if the US had not dropped the bomb, the war would have continued, and finally, use the bomb, it might have arranged the Japanese surrender weeks earlier, preventing much bloodshed on Okinawa.”

The official story obscures and ignores the fact that US military operational nuclear attacks could have been over in two weeks without the Russians entering and without the atomic bomb.” Pressed by a reporter who asked, “Had they not surrendered because of the atomic bomb?” General LeMay, who directed the destruction of 67 Japanese cities using mass incendiary attacks, answered, “The atomic bomb had nothing to do with the end of the war at all.”

Admirals and Generals Reject Official Pretext

Most of the ranking officers who directed the war in the Pacific never agreed that the bombs were conclusive in ending it. General Curtis LeMay, Commander of the 23rd Bomber Command, said bluntly at a Sept. 20, 1945 press conference: “The war would have been over in two weeks without the Russians entering and without the atomic bomb.” During his visit, President Obama reiterated the official cover-story issued in 1946 by the Intelligence Group of the War Department’s Military Intelligence Division—first discovered in 1989—concluded the atomic bomb had not been needed to end the war. This official study by the US Strategic Bombing Survey is known as “Nuclear Operations, Joint Publication 3-72.”

Steven Aftergood of the Federation of American Scientists noticed and managed to preserve a copy (https://fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp3_72.pdf), before the Joint Chiefs took it down. The manual refers to radioactive mass destruction using abstract, obtuse euphemism, like, “The employment of nuclear weapons could have a significant influence on ground operations.” No reader of the gung-ho report would guess that this objective was to incinerate cities—incinerating fireballs, vaporized flesh, blast and shock-wave devastation, demolished hospitals, mass firestorm, or permanent radioactive contamination of water, soil, and the food chain.

The manual simply says nuclear attacks “create conditions,” but without ever describing them. “Using nuclear weapons could create conditions for decisive results and the restoration of strategic stability,” and, as if Reagan never said, “Nuclear war cannot be won,” the report pretends it can. “[T]he use of a nuclear weapon will...create conditions that affect how commanders will prevail in conflict.”

US nuclear war practice takes place annually in Europe. “Stealthy Noise” is NATO’s NukemSpring nuclear training exercise. The mass destruction rehearsal. Hans Kristensen reported for the Federation of American Scientists that, “This is the exercise that practices NATO’s nuclear mission with the B61…nuclear bombs the US deploys in Europe.” Jan Merička, in ESJ News Oct. 19, 2017, wrote that the practice is designed “to simulate nuclear strikes…and was conducted near Büchel Air Base in Belgium and Büchel Air Base in Germany, where US B61 thermonuclear bombs with the force of up to 340 kilotons of TNT are stored.”

To illustrate the Pentagon’s day-to-day readiness for nuclear war, just days before US $1.1 billion Strategic Command headquarters in Omaha, used for supervising and targeting the nuclear arsenal. The building is named after General Curtis LeMay, who, in an Omaha World-Herald report, denied he had managed the night-time incendiary bombing raids on 60 Japanese towns that “incinerated entire cities” and killed 241,000 and 900,000 civilians.—JL

by American leaders at the time.” Declassification of more documentation over the next 30 years made his comprehensive and matchless 1995 history, The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb and the Architecture of an American Myth even stronger on this point.

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