

# The atomic bomb essay sample



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## The *Boom* Discourse

This introduction is intended to lead to other discussions and further analysis on the atomic bomb in U. S. history, which, apart from ending 70, 000 lives on August 6th, 1945, was (and still is) also considered a necessary evil. This paper shall thus attempt to provide a qualitative review on how the atomic bomb shaped the American mindset (and also the other way round) and its course of making history; we shall also look deep into whether it was an ending to a brutal war or an initiation of unreasonable demands, besides being the pathway towards acquiring a vast plethora of technological advancements.

Americans are known for their driving force, which they used in creating the atomic bomb as well, a force identical to nuclear fission if we take into account the complexities that convoluted the diverse ranges of commitments, individual energies and efforts into a single endeavor. It was because the perception, learning and reasoning shaped the psychological bent of an entire citizenry that understood an onset of newer military warfare techniques; if it's inevitable, then let it be the United States to obtain it first. Whether it is the monopoly on atomic weapons that made U. S. a super power during the Second World War or vice versa still remains subjected to debate.

It was U. S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt who took the decision for creating the atomic bombs under The Manhattan Project in 1939, following the invasion of Poland by German dictator Adolf Hitler. It was around the same time that German scientists claimed of being capable of splitting

uranium atoms to set-off a chain reaction to release an awesome burst of power. Dr. Albert Einstein (then residing at Long Island in US) was informed by two other scientists (Szilard and Teller) about the particular info being in wrong hands, which made him let President Roosevelt know the consequences through a letter:

I believe, therefore, that it is my duty to bring to your attention that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new-like elements would be generated. A single bomb of this type, carried by a boat and exploded in a port, might very well destroy the whole port, together with some of the surrounding territory. (Dr. A Einstein to President Roosevelt).

President Roosevelt, two months after the receipt of the letter sent a committee to determine if Szilard and Teller can help America build a nuclear bomb; together with Enrico Fermi (winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics, 1938), the process initiated, resulting in a success on December 2, 1942 inside a graphite nuclear reactor in Chicago. From this point onwards, the brightest mathematicians and the most highly trained technical people were included into the project along with twelve Nobel Prize winners. At this point of time, it was more like a race that Roosevelt was trying to win against Hitler, but the early 1940's had seen Washington swaying to rumors on that Germany gathering nuclear power.

All the above accounts are a proof of what the Manhattan Project was to become; it is considered as the most ambitious and scientific undertaking that American History ever come across. Proofs are ample; firstly, the

numbers of people who got involved (more than a one hundred thousand people; both men and women) and their way of careful referring to the bomb (a gadget or a gizmo) in casual conversations.

It seems the American society was waiting for something like the atomic bomb to save its blood (President Truman, after receiving a full report of the test, decided on dropping the bomb, though United States Strategic Bombing Survey claimed:

The Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs did not defeat Japan, nor by the testimony of the enemy leaders who ended the war did they persuade Japan to accept unconditional surrender. The Emperor, the lord privy seal, the prime minister, the foreign minister and the navy minister had decided as early as May of 1945 that the war should be ended even it meant acceptance of defeat on allied terms. On 10 July [1945] the Emperor again urged haste in the moves to mediate through Russia, but Potsdam intervened. While the government still awaited a Russian answer, the Hiroshima bomb was dropped on 6 August.

Based on a detailed investigation of all the facts and supported by the testimony of the surviving Japanese leaders involved, it is the Survey's opinion that certainly prior to 31 December 1945, and in all probability prior to 1 November 1945, Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated] but it can also be seen the American way to reinforce the country's future; whether it's by becoming the first creator of nuclear weaponry or by impressing the Soviets

is open to personal interpretation; however, fact remains the first hit made America score 70, 000 lives, with a large percentage being immediate deaths and making Japan submit to America's terms of surrender. This made the world look upon the act of procuring nuclear power for warfare from a different angle, who wondered whether nuclear weapons shall spell an end for the planet: "...Am sure that at the end of the world – at the last millisecond of the world's existence – the last man will see something very familiar to what we have seen today." (A scientist's remark after the New Mexico desert experiment in 1945).

Even the Press coverage on the atomic bomb described the incident as an inauguration of an era that brings the possibilities of cutting short an existence of the human race in a few minutes. All this made the incident of the dropping of the atomic bomb appear at the top of the list of the 100 most sensational stories of the past century, which becomes evident from most of the articles featured in the New York Times [August 7, 1945]. These articles relate more to the atomic bomb than on the incident of its dropping. In short, the bold headlines spoke about the events that led to the historic catastrophe more than the ruins it made; evident from the articles written by the reporters Lewis Wood and Jay Walz, all the news that received prominence was how the steel tower was vaporized, the July 16th Trinity test and the birthplaces of the atomic bomb [Oak Ridge, Los Alamos and Richland Village].

The front page of the New York Times of August 9, 1945 read: "SOVIET DECLARES WAR ON JAPAN, ATTACKS MANCHURIA, TOKYO SAYS ATOM BOMB LOOSED ON NAGASAKI." This was when the previous coverage in the New

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York Times faded into distant memories to which, the announcements of the Soviets on their participation in the war also played a part. There were no articles to be found on the bombing of Hiroshima succeeding the bombing on the Japanese city of Nagasaki.

The New York Times reports made informed American readers mark the bombing on Hiroshima on a positive note. These emphasized more on the achievements of America and its collaborators, stating an accomplishment that outlined an evolution of a super race. However, with Nagasaki, reports rang a different note; this time, they demonstrated a horrendous outcome and insights upon what a weapon of this magnitude may accomplish.

However, the later reports show Hiroshima's devastation in clearer lights and accused the United States of violating the international laws, a change of opinion brought over by the realizations of horrors and effects of an atomic bomb.

This was far from the camouflaging act of: "Development of the Atomic Bomb Already Dropped on Japs Opens the Way to a New Source of Power for Industry." [Wall Street Journal, August 7 1945] or the reports that came out in The London Times [Atomic Bomb Coverage, August 6, 1945], the British newspaper. The similarity can be easily understood since they all belong to the *Times* group; however, with the American version, the reports later inclined more towards a political belligerence. Thanks to the Chicago Daily News, who published the dispatch from Vern Haugland (Associated Press war correspondent) on page one; the original headlines of "U. S. Writer Views Hiroshima" to "First U. S. Reporter Sees Hiroshima Ruins" initiated others to

look at the Hiroshima disaster from a more rational and humane point of view.

Among the many texts we get today on the Hiroshima incident, most dramatize the bombing in a photographic way; while there are ample photographs that show the city going up in a mushroom smoke, none put any particular emphasis to the mangled corpses or orphaned children or people suffering from the shell shock. Alan Brinkley's *The Unfinished Nation* takes perhaps the fullest and the most balanced approach in this regard; he takes notes from Truman's claim: "...was an American invasion of mainland Japan that might have cost as many as a million lives" on an appropriate alternative provides an effective view that was challenged by revisionist historians. Brinkley's dismissal of the argument: "the bomb was used to shorten the war and save lives" thus reinforces the second theory; with Japan soon to surrender, it was more of an example from the United States about the power it needs to make Russia a more manageable country in Europe. In his arguments of proponents and critics, Brinkley provides substantial information that concerns the cost entire humanity had to pay, its strategic impacts and the alternatives. This is more towards dissipating a debate on multiple yet relative tracks rather than making it conclude on a single point and resolve it thereby.

From all the above evidences, it becomes clear that it is not only an unconditional surrender that forms the base of the Hiroshima bombing; if the Japanese Emperor would have been safeguarded, the war would have ended indisputably. President Truman, after being advised by Henry L. Stimson [Secretary of War] and Joseph C. Grew [Acting Secretary of State]

concentrated in the development to gather force of the highest order in the US government. This is the “two-step” US strategy that showed up in the spring and the summer of 1945; it focused on the Russians damning the Japanese to make the latter surrender under a clarification of terms.

This fundamental strategic concept was abandoned and the Russian attack was stalled; the following trains of events made an entire world see the powers of the United States of America, though we are not sure what would result if the clarifications demanded by the Republican political leaders on the terms could have ended the war.

Looking at a good deal of evidences, it can strongly be suggested that Hiroshima bombing was a desire to manage Russia more effectively and impress J. Stalin and to build an image that can be identified with the mention of a single event. Hiroshima bombing can be said a collective of all sufferings that an entire race can go through.

But then again, it is also not to be denied that the Japanese military leaders were keen to preserve their positions and US demanding for an unconditional surrender threatened them equally to continue the war. We may come to a conclusion that the step was taken as per the demanded by the situation; that 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1945 became a historical event from the global point of view is just a by-product of an entire reaction as much as creating a tyrannical image for the US. For we must not forget an old adages: “Every man for himself”; if US would have been in a position of distress, would the Japanese care to give Americans a brotherly approach? The Japanese are infamous with their treatments towards the prisoners of war and the Nanking



Massacres prove a good example to think and compare between the situations.

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