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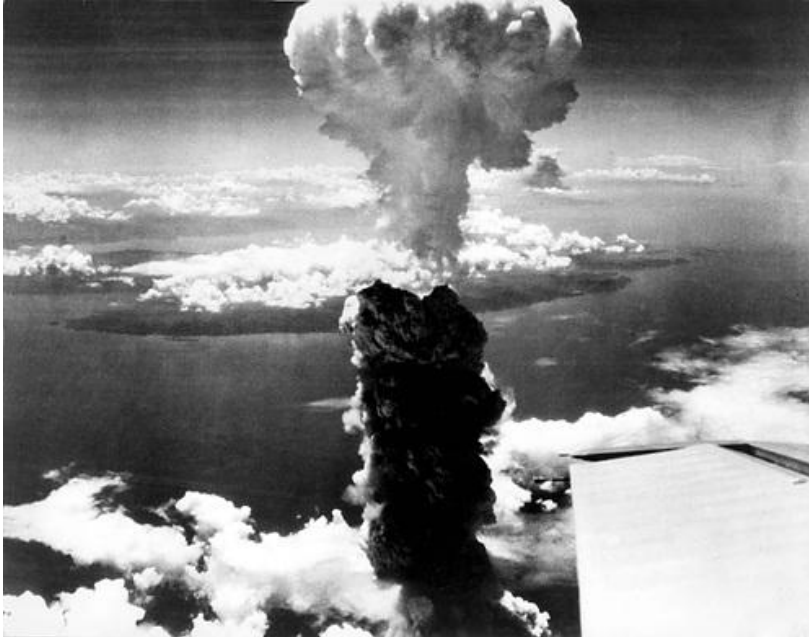
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Apologize for Nagasaki?

By Paul Street
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A recent *New York Daily News* headline runs as follows: “Obama to Pay Historic Visit to Hiroshima but Will Not Apologize for U.S. Dropping Atomic Bomb on Japanese City.”

Well, how about Nagasaki? Could Obama apologize for Nagasaki when he visits Japan later this month?

Don't get me wrong. Hiroshima was a massive crime against humanity on its own, without the too commonly neglected follow-up crime in Nagasaki. On August 6, 1945, the United States atom-bombed Hiroshima, an action that led to 146,000 Japanese civilian deaths within two months. The bomb was dropped in the name of “saving lives” even though its top U.S. military and intelligence leaders understood that Japan was defeated and seeking surrender at the end of World War II.

This monumental crime marked the U.S as the only nation to use nuclear weapons on civilian populations. It was perpetrated to demonstrate unassailable U.S. power to the world and especially to the Soviet Union in the post-WWII era. The purpose was clear, as Gar Alperovitz and numerous other historians have shown. with abundant primary source research.

United States President Harry Truman and his advisors knew very well that a defeated Japan (including its Emperor) had lost its willingness to keep fighting before the first atom bomb fell. As Alperovitz and others have demonstrated, the United States could have secured a formal Japanese surrender earlier in the spring or summer of 1945 simply by modifying U.S surrender terms requiring the abolition of the position of the Japanese Emperor.

Even without such modification, the White House and U.S. military command could simply have waited for the Soviet Union to declare war on Japan – an event that would certainly have precipitated surrender. As it happened, the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki three days after Hiroshima and after the Russians made their declaration.

Alperovitz and others show that U.S. decision-makers saw the atom bomb as a way to end the war before the Soviet Union could enter the war against Japan and as a way to bolster early U.S. Cold War “diplomacy.” Hiroshima and Nagasaki were “chosen as targets because of their concentration of activities and population,” according to the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey. The nuclear assaults on civilians in those two cities were not about “saving lives.” They were about demonstrating and enhancing U.S. power in the post-WWII New World Order, wherein the triumphant U.S. (comparatively undamaged by a global catastrophe that took the lives of 50 to 60 million people, including 25 million Soviets) was determined to dictate the rules of international behavior and to put all potential deterrents to American world dominance (primarily the Soviet Union) in subordinate place.

Of critical significance, both Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been deliberately kept off the U.S. Air Force's target lists for conventional bombing prior to the dropping of the atom bombs. This was so that the demonstration effect of new power of mass devastation possessed by the victorious U.S. could be maximized in both cities. Uncle Sam wanted the killing power of its beloved new weapons of mass destruction to be exhibited in the most shocking and awe-inspiring way possible.

The Nagasaki bombing does not get mentioned or remembered anywhere nearly as often as the Hiroshima one. It killed 80,000 Japanese civilians within two months.

If Hiroshima was criminal and unnecessary, how criminal and unnecessary was Nagasaki?

You don't have to be a left critic of the American Empire to question the United States' horrific decision to atom-bomb mass civilian populations in the summer of 1945. No less of a venerated U.S. military leader than World War Two Allied European Commander and future Republican U.S. president Dwight Eisenhower was appalled by and opposed to the decision to drop the atom bomb on Japan at the time. Eighteen years later he told *Newsweek* magazine that "it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing" (it was two awful things, actually). His opposition and comment have gone down Orwell's memory hole in the U.S., where generations of citizens and opinion makers have been taught to see Hiroshima and the less commonly noted crime in Nagasaki as necessary and even benevolent actions that "saved lives."