



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on February 16, 2012

Dresden, Hiroshima, and Soviet Machinations

The anniversary of the Allied bombing of Dresden on February 13 and 14, 1945 has become an increasingly contentious memory for thousands of Germans. Historians have debated the military value of the old and crowded city, some saying it had little significance, with others pointing out that until the bombing it was still active with war production. What few doubt is that the war was already lost for Germany before the bombing of Dresden, and that the unconditional surrender demanded by President Roosevelt was inevitable in a few weeks no matter what.



What is even more certain is that the intractable decision of FDR to settle for nothing less than unconditional surrender by the Axis Powers cost tens of millions of lives, lengthened the war, and extended the reach of Soviet power dramatically. Such an outcome is what traitors deep within the U.S. government wanted. In Europe, the demand for unconditional surrender meant that the brave Germans who worked to end the evil of national socialism worked without hope. The Anglo-American nations threw back every overture from these anti-Nazi Germans, some of whom held positions of influence in the military and government (though not in the Nazi Party).

The impact upon other Axis Powers created a horrific muddle which prolonged the war. Italy, for example, was willing not only to quit the Axis but to actively enter the war on the side of the Allied Powers. If its overture had been cleanly and quietly accepted by the Allies, then the whole bloody battle up the Italian peninsula might have been avoided and German military units in Italy in 1943 could have been disarmed and interned.

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Nations such as Finland, perversely listed on the Military Channel's program on Nazi collaborators as a helper of Hitler, wanted simply the return of territory taken from it by Stalin, the most important "Nazi collaborator" in the world. Interestingly, the Military Channel is not including in the series this biggest collaborator — the Soviet Union — the facilitator of the division of Poland, the Marxist regime which turned over German Jews to the Gestapo, as the chilling personal accounts of Margarete Buber-Neumann demonstrate in her [Under Two Dictators](#). Nations such as Hungary — which loathed Nazi anti-Semitism (Jews continued to serve in the Hungarian national legislature deep into the war) — likewise had no way out.

Strategic bombing, rather than negotiated surrenders, was not something that naturally appealed to Americans, most of whom wanted the concentration camps and death camps shut down as soon as possible. It is a horrific historical truth that half of those who died in those camps did so in the last six months of the war, long after most European Axis powers and a large percentage of the German army leaders saw that the war was lost.

Even if bombing had been the only way to defeat the Nazis, the immolation of Dresden was disastrously



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ineffective (however, in no way diminishing the courage and nobility of American airmen who fought and died in large numbers for their country). Two years before Dresden, in “Operation Gomorrah,” British night bombers and American daylight bombers pounded Hamburg around the clock until fire services were overwhelmed, streets quite literally melted, and Germans of all ages were sucked by hundred-mile-an-hour winds into firestorms which killed in a few nights as many as would die in Dresden.

What happened in Europe was mirrored in the Pacific. As Professor Anthony Kubek recounted in his magisterial work, [How the Far East was Lost: American Foreign Policy and the Creation of Communist China, 1941-1941](#) (Regnery: 1963), there need never have been a decision about whether to drop a fission bomb on Hiroshima or later on Nagasaki. Most historians say the decision to bomb Japanese cities was the natural consequence of Japanese imperialism, which made them unwilling to surrender under any conceivable circumstances; additionally, they assert that factored into the decision was the number of American soldiers who would likely die in the initial assault on the Home Islands of Japan. But, unlike the need for an unconditional surrender by Nazi Germany, there was no need to demand unconditional surrender of Japan. More than a year before Hiroshima, General Douglas MacArthur received surrender proposals from Japan and transmitted them, along with his own advice to accept these terms, prior to the Yalta Conference.

What did these terms provide?

1. Full surrender of the Japanese forces on the sea, in the air, at home, and in occupied countries
2. Surrender of all arms and munitions
3. Occupation of the Japanese homeland and island possessions by Allied troops under American direction
4. Japanese relinquishment of Manchuria, Korea, Formosa, as well as all territory seized during the war
5. Regulation of Japanese industry to halt present and future production of implements of war
6. Surrender of all designated war criminals
7. Release of all prisoners of war and interns in Japan proper and in areas under Japanese control

These seven terms were Japan’s initial bargaining position for peace. The proposals were made on no less than seven occasions through American and British channels. However, FDR preferred to continue the war and, critically, to seek the “help” of Stalin against Japan — this despite the fact that Stalin had scrupulously adhered to his 1941 non-aggression pact with Japan until late 1945.

MacArthur urged FDR to begin immediate negotiations and pleaded with the President not to invite Stalin to enter the war against Japan. FDR observed tersely, “MacArthur is our greatest general and our poorest politician.” But MacArthur considered that the lives of America’s bravest — the Marines and infantrymen who need not have died on Okinawa and Iwo Jima in horrific campaigns if these surrender terms had been accepted — were worth something.

The grotesque failure of rational American statecraft in the last year of WWII was sadly not an accident. American and British military leaders, to say nothing of the Commonwealth Dominion democracies who had joined in the war, simply wanted what most commanders wanted: for the fighting to cease as quickly as was consistent with the objects of war.

By 1944, however, the Roosevelt administration was honeycombed with Soviet agents; Britain, also, had been infiltrated at different levels. The firebombing of German and Japanese cities by the Allies would



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insure bitterness lasting for many generations. The invitation of the Soviet Union to occupy half of Europe and half of Asia — despite Stalin's de facto alliance with Hitler and his faithful four-year allegiance to his wartime non-aggression pact with Japan — guaranteed that that Marxist power could enslave and impoverish hundreds of millions of souls.

As Sherman said, war is hell. It is also an unnatural condition for a nation whose principal objects are liberty, faith, and peaceful relations with all other countries who wish it. The legacy of Dresden and of Hiroshima lingers because America was not guided by those who loved her, but by those who used her.

Photo: A Dresden mother stares at her twins in the baby carriage, killed in the Allied bombing.

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