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U.S. to Send First Delegation to Hiroshima A-Bomb Ceremony

U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos will attend the city of Hiroshima's annual ceremony memorializing the 1945 atomic bombing of the city on August 6 — the first time a U.S. official has attended the commemoration. Bloomberg News quoted State Department spokesman Philip J. Crowley, who said in Washington on August 3: "At this particular point, we thought it was the right thing to do." Crowley added that the presence of Roos will "express respect for all of the victims of World War II."



A reporter for AP noted that while survivors of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki generally welcome the decision to attend the ceremony, they would welcome an official apology for the bombings — which killed a total of 120,000 men, women, and children — even more. The report quoted Terumi Tanaka, who survived the 1945 atomic bombing of Nagasaki at age 13 and is now secretary-general of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Associations. "The best thing they could do would be to apologize," said Tanaka. "But I doubt that is going to happen."

"We welcome the visit. But without an apology, it is difficult for us," he said. "We aren't asking for reparations. We simply want the U.S. to apologize and get rid of its nuclear arsenal."

Yasunari Fujimoto, secretary-general of the Japan Congress Against A- and H-Bombs, issued similar views: "I don't think it would be unreasonable to expect an apology," said Fujimoto. "But what is most important now is that the U.S. is being represented, the suffering of the victims will be acknowledged, and the process toward getting rid of nuclear weapons will get a boost."

And Hiroshima Mayor Tadatashi Akiba also included a pitch for nuclear disarmament in his approval of Roos' decision to participate in the event. "The attendance of Ambassador Roos will further strengthen world opinion toward the abolition of nuclear weapons and, we strongly hope, deepen the resolve of the government of Washington, as a nuclear power, to destroy such weapons," Akiba said in a statement.

The link made by these individuals between the memorial event and nuclear disarmament appears to combine apples and oranges in a single agenda, unless the history behind the original decision to use atomic weapons against Japan is understood in the context of the founding of the United Nations less than two months before the bombing. Consistent with that history is UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's decision to attend the ceremony. An *Earth News* report noted that Ban told Kyodo News in New York before his departure for Japan of his commitment to achieve a world without nuclear weapons within his lifetime. Ban said the purpose of his visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki is to send a "strong message to the international community" toward nuclear disarmament.

Going back to the summer of 1945, when both the atomic bombings of Japan and the founding of the UN occurred, it is interesting to recall the words of U.S. Communist Party chieftain William Z. Foster,



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who wrote in an article appearing in the party newspaper *Daily Worker* on August 13, 1945: "If ... the new atomic power which is a product of international science is to be directed to constructive uses, the general military control of it will have to be vested in the Security Council of the United Nations."

One clue as to why a leader of the U.S. Communist Party would want the newly founded UN to control atomic power might be found in the fact that the Secretary-General of the United Nations Charter Conference held in San Francisco in 1945 was secret communist and convicted perjurer Alger Hiss. (Hiss was also a member of the U.S. delegation to the wartime Yalta Conference where President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill drew the map of postwar Europe and made plans to set up the United Nations.)

It is also worthwhile to recall that when President Woodrow Wilson submitted the treaty for U.S. participation in the UN's predecessor, Wilson's beloved League of Nations, following World War I, the U.S. Senate rejected it. The advocates of a world body, such as the League of Nations or the UN, undoubtedly recognized that if the finale to World War II were horrific enough, the Senate would "get the point" and agree to participation in a worldwide parliament this time.

All of this might be considered to be merely speculative if not for strong evidence that Japan actually *tried to surrender* long before two of its cities and their inhabitants were incinerated by weapons so terrifying that many people wanted to ban them entirely, or else turn their control over to the UN.

Among the best evidence making a case that the United States deliberately delayed Japan's surrender to allow enough time for Germany to be defeated and for the Soviet Union to shift its attention away from the West and to enter the war against Japan, was presented in the 1956 book, *The Enemy at His Back*, by journalist Elizabeth Churchill Brown, the wife of noted *Washington Star* columnist Constantine Brown. Mrs. Brown had access to many of "the men who were no longer 'under wraps,'" as she noted. She wrote, "With this knowledge at hand, I quickly began to see why the war with Japan was unprecedented in all history. Here was an enemy who had been trying to surrender for almost a year before the conflict ended."

In her book, Brown supplied abundant evidence about the treachery that prevented the Japanese from surrendering until the Soviets were able to enter the war against Japan and U.S. forces had dropped the atomic bombs on two Japanese cities.

A sobering assessment was presented by Admiral William Leahy in his 1950 work *I Was There*, in which he discussed his reaction to the use of the bomb:

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 beaten and ready to surrender....

It was my reaction that the scientists and others wanted to make the test because of the vast sums that had been spent on the project.... My own feeling was that in being the first to use it, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages.

More evidence was offered by Admiral Ernest J. King in his 1952 book *Fleet Admiral King*, wherein he reported President Roosevelt's 1942 understanding that "by the application of sea power, Japan could be forced to surrender without an invasion of her home islands." However, noted King, this position, which was shared by most of our military leaders, was quickly abandoned by Roosevelt.

In his article "Dropping the Bomb," in the August 21, 1995 issue of *The New American* magazine,



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publisher John F. McManus wrote:

The first atomic bomb was exploded over Hiroshima on August 5, 1945; the second was detonated over Nagasaki four days later. On August 8th, the Soviet Union declared war on an already beaten Japan. But other Japanese attempts to surrender had been coming fast and furious prior to these historically important developments.

One of the most compelling was transmitted by General MacArthur to President Roosevelt in January 1945, prior to the Yalta conference. MacArthur's communiqué stated that the Japanese were willing to surrender under terms which included:

- Full surrender of Japanese forces on sea, in the air, at home, on island possessions, and in occupied countries.
- Surrender of all arms and munitions. Occupation of the Japanese homeland and island possessions by allied troops under American direction.
- Japanese relinquishment of Manchuria, Korea, and Formosa, as well as all territory seized during the war.
- Regulation of Japanese industry to halt present and future production of implements of war.
- Turning over of Japanese which the United States might designate war criminals.
- Release of all prisoners of war and internees in Japan and in areas under Japanese control.

Amazingly, these were identical to the terms that were accepted by our government for the surrender of Japan seven months later. Had they been accepted when first offered, there would have been no heavy loss of life on Iwo Jima (over 26,033 Americans killed or wounded, approximately 21,000 Japanese killed) and Okinawa (over 39,000 U.S. dead and wounded, 109,000 Japanese dead), no fire bombing of Japanese cities by B-29 bombers (it is estimated that the dropping of 1,700 tons of incendiary explosives on Japanese cities during March 9-10 alone killed over 80,000 civilians and destroyed 260,000 buildings), and no use of the atomic bomb.

Countless thousands of Japanese civilians perished as a result of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And the world was suddenly and violently brought into the atomic age.

As to who would benefit from refusing Japan's earlier attempts to surrender, the delay of the war and the bombing of two cities and the killing of their inhabitants:

1. The Soviet Union (and its communist allies in China), which, in return for its very brief (August 8–August 14, 1945) participation in the war against Japan received the disputed Kuril Islands and Manchuria, where they found massive stores of arms kept there by the Japanese, and which they turned over to the communist forces of Mao Tse-tung, enabling him to gain control of all of China.
2. The internationalists who had long sought to create a new world body to replace the old League of Nations, this time with U.S. participation. Shocked by the horrors of nuclear war (of which Hiroshima and Nagasaki served as living — and dying — examples) a majority of Americans were softened up for the sales pitch offered by the UN's proponents that it was mankind's "last best hope for peace."

Years later, former President Truman attempted to defend his decision to use the bomb against Japan, stating: "The need for such a fateful decision, of course, would never have arisen had we not been shot in the back by Japan at Pearl Harbor in December 1941."

Harry Elmer Barnes, in an article in *National Review* for May 10, 1958, quoted the response to Truman's statement by members of the Hiroshima City Council:



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Had your decision been based on the Imperial Navy's surprise attack on your country's combatants and military facilities, why could you not choose a military base for the target? You committed the outrage of massacring 200,000 non-combatants as revenge, and you are still trying to justify it.

The recent statements by Japanese officials reveal a strong sense of pacifism and an eagerness for world nuclear disarmament, as if the weapons had transported themselves to Japan and done their damage all on their own. Japanese and Americans alike would do better to recognize that nuclear weapons, like all weapons, can be used either to wage war, or to deter aggressors. It is the policies of those holding the weapons, not the weapons themselves, that determine their use.



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