

Beyond Hiroshima



Boeing B-29 Superfortress "Enola Gay" at the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center. (Eddie Toro/Dreamstime)



By Dr. Peter Vincent Pry Saturday, 01 August 2020 10:48

August 6th marks the 75th anniversary of the 1945 Hiroshima atomic bombing, which ended World War II and began a new era in world history, overshadowed by nuclear weapons.

Haunting every generation since Hiroshima is the horrific specter of nuclear war. Even those who never read John Hershey's book "Hiroshima" (1946), recounting experiences of six survivors, envision a nuclear nightmare looking something like this:

"He was the only person making his way into the city; he met hundreds and hundreds who were fleeing, and every one of them seemed to be hurt in some way. The eyebrows of some were burned off and skin hung from their faces and hands. Others, because of pain, held their arms up as if carrying something in both hands. Some were vomiting as they walked. Many were naked or in shreds of clothing. On some undressed bodies, the burns had made patterns—of undershirt straps and suspenders and, on the skin of some women (since white repelled the heat from the bomb and dark clothes absorbed it and conducted it to the skin), the shapes of flowers they had had on their kimonos. Many, although injured themselves, supported relatives who were worse off. Almost all had their heads bowed, looked straight ahead, were silent, and showed no expression whatsoever." –John Hershey "Hiroshima"

Critics of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki focus upon their ghastly consequences to convince Americans to "ban the bomb". Increasingly, critics argue not only were the atomic bombings unnecessary and inhumane—but that America is evil.

Rarely remembered from Hershey's "Hiroshima" is testimony from another survivor, proving diehard fanaticism displayed by Imperial

Japan's troops during the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa was also shared even by students and university professors:

“Dr. Y. Hiraiwa, professor of Hiroshima University of Literature and Science, and one of my church members, was buried by the bomb under the two storied house with his son, a student of Tokyo University. Both of them could not move an inch under tremendously heavy pressure. And the house already caught fire. His son said: ‘Father, we can do nothing except make our mind up to consecrate our lives for the country. Let us give Banzai to our Emperor.’ Then the father followed after his son, ‘Tenno-heika Banzai, Banzai, Banzai!’...In thinking of their experience of that time Dr. Hiraiwa repeated, ‘What a fortunate that we are Japanese! It was my first time I ever tasted such a beautiful spirit when I decided to die for our Emperor.’”

— John Hershey "Hiroshima"

Atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki made unnecessary invading Japan's home islands against fanatical resistance, that would probably cost one million U.S. and several million Japanese casualties. Battles for the islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, a preview for invading Japan, resulted in over 88,000 U.S. casualties and over 200,000 Japanese military and civilians killed.

August 6, 1945 is not the only date relevant to nuclear weapons, although Hiroshima (and Nagasaki) are the only events anti-nuclear activists would like us to remember. A few other dates worth remembering:

—May 12, 1949: Peaceful end of the USSR's illegal Berlin blockade, that threatened to become World War III, but did not, thanks to U.S. nuclear deterrence.

—July 27, 1953: Armistice ending the Korean War, achieved by President Eisenhower threatening to use tactical nuclear weapons.

—October 28, 1962: Peaceful end of the Cuban missile crisis, the USSR agreeing to withdraw nuclear missiles from Cuba, achieved because the U.S. had a 5-to-1 superiority in ICBMs.

—November 9, 1989: Peaceful fall of the Berlin Wall, and shortly afterwards dissolution of the Warsaw Pact that for decades threatened to overrun NATO, but did not do so, deterred by U.S. nuclear weapons.

—December 21, 1991: Peaceful dissolution of the evil empire that was the USSR, without a nuclear World War III.

The last date above is especially worth remembering. Miraculous and unprecedented in history that two such ideologically hostile military superpowers refrained from a great war, thanks to nuclear deterrence.

Washington has forgotten crucial lessons of nuclear Cold War peaceful victory: the U.S. must maintain at least parity in numbers, modernity, technological quality and capabilities, and allow potential adversaries no significant advantages in the nuclear balance.

Today, Russia's advantage in overall numbers of nuclear weapons (strategic and tactical) is at least 3-to-1, and has significant advantages in modernity, technological quality and capabilities. China's number

of nuclear weapons is unknown—but possibly more than the U.S. Even North Korea has Super-EMP weapons, while the U.S. has none.

If the U.S. cannot maintain nuclear parity, Washington needs to think beyond Hiroshima, as President Ronald Reagan did with his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), and as we hope President Trump is thinking with his U.S. Space Force.

Arms control and “banning the bomb” is a fools game, as totalitarian states always cheat on treaties, making more likely future Hiroshimas.

Former SDI Director, Ambassador Henry Cooper, reminds us weekly (HighFrontier.com) that Brilliant Pebbles space-based anti-missiles are achievable in 5 years for \$20 billion.

Beyond Hiroshima are space-based missile defenses—that can make the long nuclear nightmare obsolete.

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