

Chapter 9: Did the Atomic Bombing of Japan Prevent a "Staggering Number" of Deaths?

"Many have asked whether it was necessary to drop the bomb, and from studying this period for 25 years, I would say without this bomb, an invasion of Japan in November 1945 would most likely have gone forward and cost the lives of millions."

(Japan's Holocaust, Chapter 22, p. 275)

For someone who has studied this issue for 25 years, Rigg's statement shows very poor understanding of the issue surrounding the use of the atomic bombs and does not go beyond commonly held myths.

Herbert Hoover, the 31st President of the United States, left behind a large volume, *Freedom Betrayed*. In this book, "Document 18: A Review of Lost Statesmanship - 19 Times in 7 Years (1953)" lists Hoover's thoughts on Roosevelt-Truman foreign policy.

Refusal of Japanese Peace Proposals of May- July, 1945

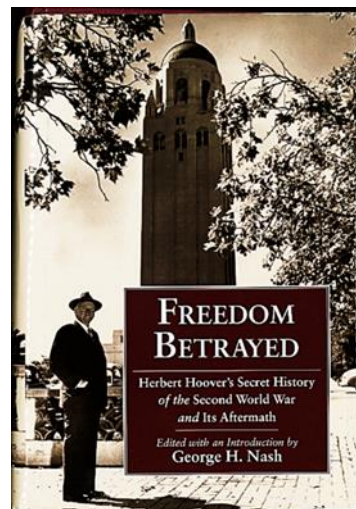
"Fifteenth. The fifteenth time of lost statesmanship was in respect to Japan in May, June and July, 1945. Truman refused to take notice of the Japanese white flags. Truman was not obligated to Roosevelt's "Unconditional Surrender" folly. It had been denounced by our own military leaders in Europe. Peace could have been with Japan only one concession. That was the preservation of Mikado who was the spiritual as well as secular head of the state. His position was rooted in a thousand years of Japanese religious faith and tradition. And we finally conceded this after hundreds of thousands of human lives had been sacrificed."¹

As Hoover said, Japan was moving towards peace between May and July 1945. This was because on May 14, at the Supreme War Leaders Conference, a decision was made to appeal to the US and Britain for peace through the Soviet Union as an intermediary. However, the Soviet Union delayed its response because it planned to use this opportunity to break its neutrality pact with Japan and enter the war with Japan cornered, seize

¹ *Freedom Betrayed*, by Herbert Hoover, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, California, 2011. P. 881.

Manchuria and occupy Hokkaido. The Japanese even proposed a visit to the Soviet Union by former Prime Minister Konoe on July 13 in an attempt to push peace forward.

The Americans, who had long intercepted radio communications between Japan and the Soviet Union, had learned of Japanese aims through these intercepts. Therefore, the Americans had a good grasp of the situation in Japan, which is why Hoover wrote what he did above. On May 28, Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew recommended the recognition of the right of the Japanese people to choose their own form of government of their own free will, including the Emperor System.



At a meeting to discuss the Kyushu Landing Operation (the planned "Operation Olympic") on June 18, Secretary of War Henry Stimson and Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal Leahy expressed the opinion that Japan should be encouraged to surrender on the condition that the Emperor System be maintained, rather than insisting on unconditional surrender.

Given numerous points of pressure concerning Japanese surrender, Truman agreed to a surrender that included a clause for the preservation of the Emperor System. However, the next day, Acting Secretary of State James Byrnes (later Secretary of State) opposed the clause and so it was not included in the Potsdam Declaration. By this time, both Byrnes and Truman had decided to use the atomic bomb as a trump card to push through with their demand for "unconditional surrender". At the conference to decide on the use of the atomic bomb on Japan, Secretary of War Stimson, a die-hard who was in charge of promoting the development of the atomic bomb from the very beginning, tried to avoid the use of atomic bomb.

When the Potsdam Declaration was issued on July 26, Japan hesitated in accepting it, partly because it did not cover preservation of the Emperor System, and partly because Japan was waiting for the results of mediation with the Soviet Union. However, Japan fell for the Soviet Union's delaying tactics; Japan's hopes for peace were dashed.

Dropping the Atomic Bomb

“Seventeenth. The seventeenth wandering of American statesmanship was Truman’s immoral order to drop the atomic bomb on the Japanese. Not only had Japan been repeatedly suing for peace but it was the act of unparalleled brutality in all American history. It will forever weigh heavily on the American conscience.”²

Considering the circumstances I just described, Rigg’s assertion, which does not doubt that the invasion of Japan planned for November 1945 was "absolutely necessary" and would have resulted in "millions of casualties," is extremely narrow-minded, one-sided, and foolish and does not grasp realities--hard to believe coming from a "scholar" who has been "considering" this issue for "25 years"!

Lies about Japanese massacres in order to rationalize the dropping of atomic bombs

"Japan exacted a higher cost in human lives during just two operations out of hundreds while destroying China (approximately 300,000 dead in the Nanking/Shanghai region in 1937–1938, and 250,000 in the Chekiang region in 1942) than the number of Japanese who died from the atomic bombs (Hiroshima claimed 140,000 and Nagasaki 70,000). Also unacknowledged are the 30 million Asians slaughtered by Japan, the millions of rape victims (including women, girls, and young boys) ..."

(Japan's Holocaust, Chapter 22, p. 276)

Thus, Rigg entirely justifies the nuclear attack on Japan, arguing that the "140,000" victims in Hiroshima and "70,000" victims in Nagasaki were insignificant compared to the massive number of victims massacred by Japan: "300,000" in Nanjing, "250,000" in Zhejiang (Chekiang), and "30 million Asians". Rigg's numbers, "300,000" in Nanking and "30 million" Asians, are completely unfounded as I demonstrated in Chapter 3 concerning the figures for Asia, in Chapters 4 and 5 concerning Nanking and in Chapter 6 concerning the "20 million" in China. The figure of 20 million Chinese killed is an exaggeration of more than 20-fold. It is also clear from *The New York Times* articles on Chiang Kai-shek's "Fortify and Burn" strategy that the majority of the victims were caused not by the Japanese army but by the Chiang's Nationalist army. The worst case, as

² *Ibid.*, p. 882.

I mentioned previously, was the Nationalist's Yellow River flooding operation. *Japan's Holocaust* stated that this operation caused 1 million Chinese deaths and 7 million Chinese casualties, but Rigg nonetheless praises this operation as a major blow against the Japanese army. In fact, the Japanese army made every effort to rescue Chinese farmers during this Nationalist-induced disaster, and, as a result, about 100,000 lives were saved by the Japanese army. I have explained this in Chapter 6 with pictures from contemporary newspapers and magazines.

Former President Hoover said that ordering of the dropping the atomic bomb was an "immoral order" and "will forever weigh heavily on the American conscience." Rigg, however, seems to have completely lost *his* conscience. Justifying inhuman and criminal acts by fabricating numbers of alleged Japanese atrocities is truly a sign moral depravity. Really, the root of this moral depravity lies in the rejection of reality and a distortion of the image of Japanese people caused by extreme racism.

Incendiary bombing of civilians

In Chapter 22 (p. 276), Rigg writes Japan **"targeted civilians in the bombing of Chinese cities,"** but the Japanese military did not target civilians at all. Why would the Japanese military, which suffered from a shortage of ammunition, waste bombs on civilians? This is completely absurd. The bombing of Chongqing is often cited as an example of indiscriminate Japanese aerial bombardment. However, the Kuomintang government placed anti-aircraft guns and military facilities within residential areas, so these areas were bombed, which was allowed under international law.

Deliberately targeting civilians was not a policy of the Japanese military but of the US military. A US military specialty was "carpet bombing," using B-29's, the most gruesome example of attacking civilians. The bombs used carpet bombings were not normal high explosive bombs that destroyed military facilities, weapons, armed soldiers, and so on, but "incendiary bombs." Although these bombs have almost no explosive force, incendiary bombs start intense fires and in densely populated cities burn people to death. The B-29 bombings of cities were clear violations of international law, as they specifically targeted civilians.

Major General Curtis LeMay became commander of the 20th Army Bomber Group on August 20, 1944, and launched bombing raids of Japan from Chengdu Base in China.

LeMay wanted to test the effectiveness of incendiary bombing and carried out a large-scale "incendiary bomb carpet bombing experiment" using 500 tons of incendiary bombs on December 19, 1944 on Hankou, which was occupied by the Japanese army; it was a great success. The largest number of victims were, of course, not Japanese army personnel, but Chinese civilians who made up the overwhelming majority of Hankou residents. In other words, LeMay used Chinese civilians as guinea pigs to carry out an experimental bombing, burning civilians to death with incendiary bombs.

The B-29 air raids on Japan were carried out by the 21st Bomber Group, based in the Marianas, but the commander, Major General Haywood Hansell, was wary of incendiary bombings and did not want to adopt them. On January 20, 1945, General "Hap" Arnold, commander of the US Army Air Forces, dismissed Hansell and appointed LeMay as commander of the 21st Bomber Group. The Great Tokyo Air Raid was launched on March 10, 1945. The operation, which involved dropping 381,300 bombs and 1,665 tons of incendiary bombs from 325 B-29s on densely populated areas such as Fukagawa, Tokyo, started numerous fires and resulted in over 100,000 dead and missing, over 1 million homeless, and 250,000 homes destroyed. Following the air raid, Prime Minister Koiso Kuniaki rebuked the Americans, calling them "the most cruel and barbaric Americans." It is an undeniable fact that before the atomic bombs were dropped, the Americans had committed mass murders of civilians that were no less cruel than the atomic bombings themselves, all in violation of international law.

Rigg, however, tries to hide behind LeMay to justify the carnage caused by the atomic bombings:

“For those who still feel the atomic bombs were immoral or against the laws of war, General Curtis E. LeMay had some further interesting analysis.

(Japan’ Holocaust, Chapter 22, p. 280)

Rigg goes on:

So, LeMay posited, what is more wicked, “to kill people with a nuclear bomb” or “to kill people by busting their heads with rocks.”

(Japan’s Holocaust, Chapter 22, p. 281)

Rigg is not a coherent at all. Is Rigg saying that we should regress back to the stone age?

Rigg simply shows himself as someone who knows nothing of the basic fact that humanity has developed “international laws” and “international standards during wartime” so that humanity does not regress to the tooth-and-claw stone age. So his level of thinking is extremely visceral. Can Rigg really be called a “scholar”?

The mass murders that Rigg repeatedly writes about are fabrications and falsified reporting, while incendiary bombings that burned and killed civilians were carried out in more than 50 cities, including Tokyo, with the total death toll of over 300,000. Japan at the time did not violate international law on such a large scale at all. This was made clear if we consider the Tokyo Trials. Except for the infamous "Nanking massacre," there were no charges of "mass murder" made against the Japanese army. Had the Japanese military committed numerous mass murders, the openly biased Trials would have made numerous charges of "mass murder." The fact is that the Allied tribunal could not find any such cases at all. The "Nanking massacre," though, was the tribunal's last attempt to pin something, even a baseless accusation, on Japan. Because the tribunal found Japan committed no massacres, the internationally well-known (thanks to Chinese propaganda) "Nanking Massacre" with its horribly flimsy basis is brought up as justification for the atomic bombing of Japan.

Thank God for the atomic bombing!?

"Knowing that the Nagasaki and Hiroshima bombings changed the mind of a Japanese god to surrender and prevent a staggering death toll, millions of weary GIs, Marines, and their families thanked their God for atomic bombs. ... Luckily for the Japanese citizenry, it took only two atomic bombs to do the trick."

(Japan's Holocaust, Chapter 22, p. 279)

Naturally, some people would thank their god that they were saved from death because of the atomic bomb. However, this thinking goes well beyond "justification". Rigg goes so far as to say that this is justification enough, going so far as to say that it **"only" took "two atomic bombs,"** as if Japan should be grateful to America. This is the true face of an anti-Japanese racist. As I have noted when introducing former President Hoover's statement from his acclaimed book *Freedom Betrayed*, there was no need to drop even one atomic bomb to end the war. In other words, Rigg, a "scholar," stubbornly believes that the war could not have ended without the atomic bombs. He is without knowledge of

open and key documents and information. Furthermore, not only does he rationalize a nuclear war against Japan, but also speaks condescendingly, as if Japan should be grateful that **it only took "two bombs"** to end their suffering.

"All those would-be victims had plenty of justification to thank their gods and the Americans for allowing the bombs to be dropped on Japan so that the war would end when it did."

(Japan's Holocaust, Chapter 22, p. 280)

But what god would sanction an extremely cruel and criminal act such as nuclear war? Reading Rigg, he believes his God forgave him for saying that nuclear bomb dropping is good. Who does he think he is? Rigg should reflect on the conscience of former President Hoover, who clearly stated, "The dropping of the atomic bomb was an immoral decision," and the words of Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, a senior official of the Catholic Church, at the Hiroshima Peace Ceremony in 2009, in which he "asks for forgiveness from the bottom of his heart."

Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, who was Nicaragua's Minister of Foreign Affairs and served as President of the 63rd United Nations General Assembly, stated the following in his speech at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on August 6, 2009:

As a Roman Catholic priest, and a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, I want also, from the depth of my heart, to seek forgiveness from all my brothers and sisters in Japan for the fact that captain of the fateful B-29 *Enola Gay*, Paul Tibbets, now deceased, was a member of my Church. I am consoled, to a certain degree, that Father George Zabrecka, the Catholic chaplain of the mission, recognized, after the event, that this was one of the worst imaginable betrayals of the teachings of Jesus. In the name of my church, I ask for your forgiveness.

Sixty-four years later, the gruesome reality of atomic destruction has lost none of its power to inspire grief and terror – and righteous anger.³

³ Remarks by H.E. Miguel D'escoto Brockman, President of the United Nations General Assembly, at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony, Hiroshima 6 August 2009. Press Release 09-038-E 07/08/2009.

The Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (*Nihon Hidankyo*) was selected as the recipient of this year's (2024) Nobel Peace Prize. On December 10, the Nobel Prize award ceremony was held in Oslo, the capital of Norway, and Mr. Tanaka Hiromi gave a 20-minute speech on behalf of the *Hidankyo*. Because it was long speech, we have shortened it to about one-half and present it below to close this chapter.

We strongly suggest that Rigg read this speech and think carefully again about what nuclear weapons have brought us. We should all reflect on how immoral it is to justify the atomic bombings based on the lie that the Japanese committed even more murders.

Rigg's book, which openly applauds the dropping of atomic bombs, shows that he is not only Japan's enemy but the enemy of humanity. I should say that Rigg's book is an unforgivably grim book.

Excerpt from a speech given by Mr. Hiromi Tanaka, Representative of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations at the Nobel Peace Prize Award Lecture.

... I am Terumi TANAKA, one of the three Co-Chairpersons of Nihon Hidankyo. I am honored to speak on behalf of Nihon Hidankyo, the Nobel Peace laureate this year.

We established Nihon Hidankyo, the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations, in August 1956. Having ourselves survived the inhumane impacts of the atomic bombings, damage unprecedented in history, we launched this movement to ensure such suffering would never be repeated, with two basic demands. The first demand is that the State which started and carried out the war should compensate victims for the damage caused by the atomic bombs, in opposition to the Japanese government's assertion that, "the sacrifice of war should be endured equally by the whole nation." The second is to demand the immediate abolition of nuclear weapons, as extremely inhumane weapons of mass killing, which must not be allowed to coexist with humanity.

Our movement has undoubtedly played a major role in creating the "nuclear taboo". However, there still remain 12,000 nuclear warheads on the Earth today, 4,000 of which are operationally deployed, ready for immediate launch. The nuclear

superpower, Russia, threatens to use nuclear weapons in its war against Ukraine, and a cabinet member of Israel, in the midst of its unrelenting attacks on Gaza in Palestine, even spoke of the possible use of nuclear arms. In addition to the civilian casualties, I am infinitely saddened and angered that the “nuclear taboo” threatens to be broken.

I am one of the survivors of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. At the time, I was 13 years old, at home, around 3 kilometers east of ground zero.

It was August 9, 1945. I suddenly heard the buzzing sound of a bomber jet, and was soon after engulfed in a bright, white light. Surprised, I ran downstairs and got down on the floor, covering my eyes and ears with my hands. The next moment, an intense shock wave passed through our entire house. I have no memory of that moment, but when I came to my senses, I found myself under a large, glass sliding door. It was a miracle that none of the glass was broken, and I was somehow spared injuries.

Three days later, I sought out the families of my two aunts who lived in the area near the hypocenter. It was then that I saw the full devastation of the bombing of Nagasaki. Walking with my mother, we went around a small mountain. Reaching a pass, we looked down in horror. Blackened ruins spread out as far as the port of Nagasaki, some three kilometers away. Urakami Cathedral, the largest brick church in the East, had collapsed to the ground, leaving no trace.

[...]

I found the charred body of one aunt at the remains of her house, 400 meters from the hypocenter, along with the body of her grandson, a university student.

The other aunt’s house had collapsed and become a pile of wood. My grandfather was crouched down, on the brink of death, with severe burns all over his body. My aunt had been severely burned, and died just before we arrived. We then cremated her remains with our own hands. My uncle, who was initially mostly unharmed, had left the area to seek help. Yet we later learned that he had collapsed at a rescue station, and died after suffering from a high fever for a week. Thus, one single atomic bomb transformed five of my relatives, so mercilessly, taking all of their lives in one fell swoop.

The deaths I witnessed at that time could hardly be described as human deaths. There were hundreds of people suffering in agony, unable to receive any kind of medical

attention. I strongly felt that even in war, such killing and maiming must never be allowed to happen.

The Nagasaki bomb exploded 600 meters above the city. Fifty percent of the energy released caused shock waves that crushed houses. Thirty-five percent caused heat rays that severely burned people who were outside, and ignited fires throughout the collapsed houses. Many people were crushed and burned to death inside their homes. The remaining fifteen percent penetrated the human body as neutron and gamma rays, destroying it from the inside, leading to death and causing atomic bomb sickness.

By the end of that year, 1945, the death toll in the two cities is thought to have been approximately 140,000 in Hiroshima and 70,000 in Nagasaki. 400,000 people are estimated to have been exposed to the atomic bombs, suffering injuries and surviving exposure to radiation.

[...]

The United States hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll on March 1, 1954 resulted in the exposure of Japanese fishing boats to deadly radioactive fallout, or the “ashes of death.” Among others, all 23 crew members of the Daigo Fukuryu Maru were exposed to radiation and developed acute radiation sickness, and the tuna they caught were discarded. This incident triggered a nationwide petition calling for a total ban on atomic and hydrogen bombs and tests, which spread like wildfire throughout Japan. This gained over 30 million signatures and in August 1955, the first World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was held in Hiroshima, followed by the second in Nagasaki the following year. Encouraged by this movement, A-bomb survivors who participated in the World Conference formed the Japan Confederation of A- and H-bomb Sufferers Organizations, Nihon Hidankyo, on August 10, 1956 in Nagasaki.

In our founding declaration, Nihon Hidankyo expressed our determination to “save humanity from its crisis through the lessons learned from our experiences, while at the same time saving ourselves.” We launched a movement demanding both “the abolition of nuclear weapons, and State compensation for the atomic bomb damage suffered.”

[...]

In April 2016, A-bomb survivors around the world launched the “International Signature Campaign in Support of the Appeal of the Hibakusha for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons,” as proposed by Nihon Hidankyo. This campaign grew significantly, and over 13.7 million signatures were collected and submitted to the United Nations. We are overjoyed that on July 7, 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted with the support of 122 countries.

[...]

Please try to imagine — there are 4,000 nuclear warheads, ready to be launched immediately. This means that damage hundreds or thousands of times greater than that which happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki could happen right away. Any one of you could become either a victim or a perpetrator, at any time. I therefore plead for everyone around the world to discuss together what we must do to eliminate nuclear weapons, and demand action from governments to achieve this goal.

[...]

Let not humanity destroy itself with nuclear weapons!

Let us work together for a human society, in a world free of nuclear weapons and of wars!