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Reclaiming Realism for the Left: Gar Alperovitz and the Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb

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Sixty-seven years after the decision to use the atomic bomb in World War II, controversy remains whether the United States was justified in using fission bombs in combat. Gar Alperovitz, the great revisionist historian, in his *Atomic Diplomacy* and *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* transformed our knowledge of the geopolitical motives behind the atomic attack against Japan at the end of World War II. These uranium and plutonium-core bombs were political, not primarily military in purpose and motive behind their deployment. His analysis will be compared to realists such as Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz, Henry Kissinger and George Kennan who for the most part questioned unrestrained violence and offered nuanced views on the wisdom of using such indiscriminate, savage weapons of war. The paper will explore Alperovitz's classic argument that out of the ashes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the A-bomb drove the incipient Cold War conflict. American national-security elites construed the bomb as a political-diplomatic lever to contain Soviet power as much as a military weapon to subdue Japan. The views of various political and military leaders, President Truman, Henry Stimson, James Byrnes, General George C. Marshall, Admiral William Leahy and General Dwight Eisenhower are assessed.

Keywords: A-Bomb; Alperovitz; Realism; Hiroshima; Truman

Realism and War

At 8:15 in the morning on August 6, 1945 the world changed forever when the United States launched the nuclear age with an air-burst atomic bomb that exploded in the skies over Hiroshima, Japan. The city-busting carnage was repeated on August 9 with the destruction of Nagasaki in the final days of World War II. The cataclysmic potential for mass destruction of humankind had not occurred on such a scale since the Columbian invasions and subsequent extermination of the Native American settlements beginning in the late fifteenth century (Crosby, 1987). The decision to use the atomic bomb raises questions ranging from its impact on international peace and security to whether the atomic bomb advanced the national interest.

Realism does not worship the use of force in all circumstances. Examples of realism shall be examined that explore with nuance in theory and direct examination the use of the A-bomb against a conventionally armed Japan. Realism emphasizes the use of power in pursuit of the national interest in a world of anarchy. Alperovitz's writings investigate many dimensions that are relevant to the realist critique that begin to emerge in Thucydides's epic history of the Peloponnesian War in the fifth century B.C.E.

Athens informed the Lacedæmonians in speeches before their assembly that they must submit to Athens' greater power and avoid rhetorical efforts to prevent domination. They are told that "the secret being that where force can be used, law is not needed." Thucydides, anticipating the anarchy of realism that requires a muscular approach in defending the national interest, quotes the Athenians, "that the weaker must give way to the stronger" (Thucydides, 1951). The militarily dominant Athenians, in their war against Sparta, subdue the neutral islanders of Melos who had complained they were "debar(red) from talking about justice and invite us to obey your interest" (Thucydides, 1951). Neither conditional surrender nor negotiation were permitted: surrender or die was the Athenian option.

The pursuit of the national interest by war and rejecting non-violent conflict resolution is morally repugnant. Pope Paul VI in his "World Day of Peace Message in 1976", described the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a "butchery of untold magnitude" (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1983). Atomic bombs are indiscriminate. They kill babies, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, children, hospital patients, doctors, trees and gardens. Classmates, books, animals in zoos, life savings, sidewalks, engagements, marriages, and highways are destroyed (Sebald, 2003).

It is instructive to apply America's launching of nuclear war to realism and its variants that developed between the wars and subsequently during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Realism is not a monolithic ideology and one may glean a broad spectrum of analysis that can be applied as a counter argument against the decision to use the atomic bomb at the end of World War II.

E. H. Carr was an anti-imperial, Marxist historian whose works on modern Russian history may endure as long as those

in the realm of international-relations theory (Ghosh, 2007). He was one of the early forerunners of classical realism and skeptical of a universality of moral principles that should govern humankind. His between the wars critique of Wilsonianism, a favorite target of realists determined to challenge lofty headed idealism, was less than absolute. While various critics described Carr's "scathing critique" of idealism, the "harmony of interests," and the search for a comprehensive moral code of justice, his writings are almost lyrical in their denunciation of the indiscriminate use of force unrelated to military necessity (Snow, 2000).

While Carr remains faithful to the tradition of classical realism that the pursuit of power and not international moral principles is essential for nation-state survival, he rejects the use of military force if arbitrarily and indiscriminately destructive. Carr's distinct manifestation of idealism emerges from the realist:

> All agree that there is an international moral code binding on states. One of the most important and most clearly recognised items in this code is the obligation not to inflict *unnecessary* death or suffering on other human beings… This is the foundation of most of the rules of war, the earliest and most developed chapter of international law (Carr, 1961).

Carr and Irving Critique

In a footnote, Carr observes with some conditionality that following World War I, modern warfare has blurred the distinction between combatant and non-combatant immunity. While attacking the latter might be "essential to... military purpose," Carr does not sanction a reckless or murderous disregard of avoiding non-combatant carnage in war (Carr, 1961). During World War II there was mass scale horrific destruction of non-combatant populations. Strategic bombing killed one and a half million civilians in urban areas across the globe including Dresden, Cologne, Hamburg, Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama, and London (Simic, 2003). As the violence mounted in a war without mercy, nations waged total war upon defenseless, non-combatant populations that were targeted along with military bases, armies in the field, and key naval staging areas. One's status had no bearing on whether a person would be targeted; only one's distance from a conventional or nuclear explosion would determine life or death (Rhodes, 2007). Even Secretary of War Henry Stimson's removal of Kyoto from the nuclear-target list was intended to preserve the ancient capital's historic treasures but not its population (Carr, 1961).

If nation states reject any obligation to accept international regimes, according to Carr, than international morality is impossible (Carr, 1961). Yet nations that attempt to universalize their values are equally repugnant. Carr compares nations that claim a universality of their principles to Hitler's assertion that Germany and the fittest are "the bearers of a higher ethic". Clearly referring to Wilsonian hubris, he eloquently denounces the bombast "that American principles are the principles of humanity" (Carr, 1961). Carr advocated some adherence to international norms but not if it rested on nationalistic fervor emanating from hegemonic ethnocentrism (Carr, 1961).

David Irving wrote in the opening sentence of *Hitler's War*: "To Historians is granted a talent even the gods are denied—to alter what has already happened!" (Irving, 1990). In addition to historians, nation-states and other ruling elites have unwarranted influence in selecting and defining the components of public memory. Race, class, and gender are powerful factors in determining whose history gets written, whose history is memorialized in museum display, and whose history is deemed important or relegated as nonhistory. While everything in the past is history, the historical record includes what influential elites—the press, the fawning professor-academic class, various ethnic groups, the government and the media—believe can advance their interests. Dominant groups control history by controlling the present and thus memory of a civilization.

Revisionism and the A-Bomb

Gar Alperovitz in his major revisionist works, *Atomic Diplomacy*: *Hiroshima and Potsdam, the Use of the Atomic Bomb and the American Confrontation with Soviet Power* and *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* avoids directly the moral question of whether the atomic bomb was justified as a weapon of war (Alperovitz, 1985, 1995). Yet his stunning analysis of transformative revisionist history argues convincingly that the Truman administration's decision to use the atomic bomb at the end of World War II was not militarily needed to defeat Japan and that the standard defense of the bomb's use is egregiously flawed.

Alperovitz has created a new past in challenging the architects of the atomic era and those who dominated its historical significance. His magisterial writings that appear in books and essays contain five major revelations: 1) In the months before the A-bombs were unleashed in August, 1945, the United States had several viable options to end the war without resorting to weapons of mass destruction; 2) These options were not created in postwar-revisionist New Left history but were known at the time at the highest levels of government. In particular, Japan was looking for a way to end the war and retain its emperor through intense diplomacy with Russia; 3) The atomic bomb was essentially a diplomatic weapon to contain and even roll back Soviet influence in Central and Eastern Europe in the early days of the Cold War (Alperovitz, 1985); 4) The weapons' principal military purpose was not to defeat an already defeated Japan, but to preempt greater Soviet influence in Asia that might result from a protracted, sustained role after it entered the Pacific War; 5) The atomic bomb was not necessary to defeat Japan or prevent a high-casualty invasion of its home islands (Alperovitz, 1985).

Manhattan Project and Targeting

The Joint Chiefs of Staff initially ordered that Hiroshima, Kyoto, Kokura, and Niigata escape conventional bombing to preserve pristine targets to measure and admire the destruction of atomic bombs. (Correspondence ("Top Secret") of the Manhattan Engineer District, 1945) Hiroshima and ultimately Nagasaki became urban-atomic experiments because conventional bombing had not reduced them to ashes. Major General Leslie R. Groves, the director of the Manhattan Project, ordered a post-attack assessment report. The report confirmed Hiroshima was chosen since it was "relatively untouched by previous bombing, in order that the effect of a single atomic-bomb could be determined" (Manhattan Engineer District, No Date). This was a strong indication that Hiroshima was not considered a high-value strategic military target.

While the Manhattan Project report stated atomic targets should have "high military strategic value," it was ignored with the indiscriminate atomic bombings of urban populations. The report emphasized that the A-bomb should have a "morale effect upon the enemy" (Manhattan Engineer District, No Date). It affirmed an advantage of fission weapons is the "sheer terror it struck into the people of the bombed cities," and "terror resulted in immediate hysterical activity" including "flight from the cities" (Manhattan Engineer District, No Date). Fission is a term borrowed from biological cell division and refers to the neutron splitting of a uranium or plutonium nucleus into two smaller and similar sized nuclei.

Clearly, the decision to use the atomic bomb was not to reduce Japan's capacity to wage war as two cities were marked for destruction because of revenge, racism, and a desire to field test these new weapons of mass destruction (Dover, 1986; Takaki, 1985). President Harry S. Truman's diary during the Potsdam Conference contained this entry: "The Japs are savages, ruthless, merciless and fanatic" (Bernstein, 1991). Many more targets were planned. One-hundred thousand persons had already been incinerated in fire-bomb raids of Tokyo during a single night in March, 1945 (Freedman, 2007). Because Tokyo was of "great psychological value," Thomas Farrell, deputy commanding general and chief of field operations of the Manhattan Project, urged its nuclear annihilation when more fission bombs became available (Farrell, 1945). On one level it was an inevitable escalation of conventional-strategic bombing.

The Target Committee meeting on April 27, 1945 had declared that the 20th Air Force conventional bombing of urban areas had "the prime purpose in mind of not leaving one stone lying on another" (Correspondence ("Top Secret") of the Manhattan Engineer District, 1945). Philip Morrison was one of several Manhattan Project nuclear physicists and engineers on Tinian who loaded the "Fat Man" Nagasaki implosion-triggered plutonium A-bomb onto *Bockscar*. This was the B-29 Stratofortress that carried the weapon to the skies over Nagasaki with the eponymous reference to Captain Frederick C. Bock. Ironically he switched aircraft just prior to takeoff and Major Charles Sweeney was at the controls of *Bockscar* (Rhodes, 1986). Morrison after the war reflected: "But I wondered: Is this the right thing to do… We knew a terrible thing had been unleashed… We obviously killed a hundred thousand people and that was nothing to have a party about… This would reduce a city of three hundred to four hundred thousand people to nothing but a sink for disaster relief, bandages and hospitals" (Terkel, 1984).

Realism's Approach to War

Realism's concern that worldwide anarchy requires a unilateralist pursuit of its national interest is not absolute. Realism is seen as rejecting economic, social, and human-rights violations in third countries as germane in developing a nation's strategic approach to foreign policy. Pragmatists tell us that realism is disciplined with a focus on limiting American foreign policy to pursuing the national interest through the use of power (Haas, 1997). While clearly less committed than internationalists or pacifists to defining how power might be used or enforcing the laws of war, its founding intellectuals questioned the ethics of atomic war at the beginning of the nuclear age.

Reinhold Niebuhr, the influential, realist theologian, drifted from Marxism to realism during his great career as a public intellectual. Such ideological musings are evident in his *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. Niebuhr alternated between opposition and support of various nuclear policies during the Cold War. He opposed publicly the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and was a signatory of a Federal Council of Churches statement that opposed the atomic detonations over Japan. James B. Conant was president at Harvard on leave during the war when he served as chair of the National Defense Research Committee. He was a major architect of the Manhattan Project and served on the pivotal Interim Policy Committee on Atomic Energy (Interim Committee). He complained to Niebuhr about his support of the anti-nuclear bomb petition and received an ambivalent apology that stated the atomic weapons were "evil… in order to do good" (Lears, 2012; Kirstein, 2009).

Hans Morgenthau attacked the hypocrisy of the Roosevelt administration's condemnation of indiscriminate warfare resulting from Japan's attack on Canton and Russia's assault on Finland in the 1930s when the United States and others perpetrated far more ruthless strategic bombing during World War II. He places the atomic attacks as the culmination of the progression toward total war:

> Hiroshima and Nagasaki are stepping stones… in the modern morality of warfare… The national interest in the destruction of enemy productivity… and the opportunity the modern technology presents of satisfying that interest, have had a deteriorating effect upon international morality (Morgenthau, 1985).

Contrast this analysis with Herman Kahn's graduated deterrence and the escalation-dominance catechism that would drive nuclear war-gaming scenarios during the Cold War. Morgenthau ruefully predicted that the incorporation of nuclear weapons as "normal instruments of warfare would mean the destruction of… viable societies." To construe their utility as a super weapon that can decisively determine the outcome of war "would not be a rational means to the rational ends of foreign policy but instruments of desperation denoting suicide and genocide" (Morgenthau, 1985).

A-Bomb and Diplomacy

Avoiding a final invasion of Japan and the myth of saving a million American casualties have been the most enduring defense of the decision to use the atomic bomb. The preliminary invasion, Operation Olympic, was not scheduled to begin until November 1, 1945 on the southern island of Kyushu. The full-scale Operation Coronet invasion across the Tokyo Plain would not commence until March 1, 1946, almost seven months after the Hiroshima bombing (Alperovitz, 1985). Other military or diplomatic options could have been pursued during the intervening period. Alperovitz believes the United States hastily used the bombs just before and after the Soviet Union decided to end its neutrality in the Pacific War.

The US deployed the atomic bombs not as a winning weapon but as a preemptive nuclear war to deter Soviet influence in Manchuria and Japan (Alperovitz, 1985). Months before the Olympic and Coronet ground invasions would occur, the United States dropped uranium and plutonium-core nuclear weapons over Japan. It was a geopolitical decision to effectuate a strategic advantage over the Soviet Union in America's expanding Northeast Asian empire, dominate the peace in occu-

pied Japan, and strengthen its yet to be named "containment" policy in Eastern Europe.

At the Moscow Foreign Ministers Conference in October 1943, almost two years before the Manhattan Project would produce combat-ready nuclear weapons, the Roosevelt administration pressured the Soviets, then engulfed in epic conflict with the Wehrmacht and sustaining the majority of the war's casualties, to enter the Pacific War (Alperovitz, 1985; Baker, 1976). Joseph Stalin was more preoccupied with national survival after the Nazi "Barbarossa" invasion of June 22, 1941, but agreed with Hitler's defeat in sight at the Yalta Crimea Conference in February, 1945 to terminate its state of non-belligerency with Japan. Russia would end its state of neutrality with Japan within two to three months after its defeat of German forces. It surrendered on May 8 and, ninety-two days later on August 8, Russia invaded Japanese-occupied Manchuria from its bases in Siberia. The Truman administration chose not to allow the impact of the devastating loss of Russian non-belligerency to register fully with Japan. It was fighting alone without an ally in what was suddenly a conflict against the two greatest powers on Earth. Truman also chose not to allow Japan ample time to comprehend its atomic vulnerabilities following the "Little Boy" Hiroshima attack (Horowitz, 1971). The day after the Soviet Union initiated its Yalta pledge to enter the war and three days after the first atomic bombing, "Fat Man" destroyed Nagasaki.

Truman postponed the Potsdam Conference that was held in a suburb outside bomb-ravaged Berlin during the summer of 1945 hoping that a nuclear test might allow a unilateralist approach in dominating post-war Japan (Alperovitz, 1985). The conference began July 17 the day after the successful atomic-bomb "Gadget" explosion at the Trinity site in New Mexico. Truman wanted confirmation that the A-bomb worked before suddenly reversing long-term American policy that ending the Pacific War required a Soviet-American coalition (Alperovitz, 1970). The "Little Boy" gun assembly, uranium Hiroshima bomb was then shipped to Tinian in the Marianas as Truman anticipated a nuclear ending to World War II would preempt a sustained Russian entry into the war. The 1945 Russo-Japanese conflict was a six-day war from August 8 to August 14 when Emperor Hirohito announced a surrender.

Russia and the Bomb

James Byrnes, Truman's personal representative on the Interim Committee, dominated policy formulation on how and not whether the atomic bomb would be used. Byrnes becomes secretary of state in July while still serving on the Interim Committee. Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, in the spirit of allied transparency, suggested at a May 31, 1945 Interim Committee meeting that two Russian scientists attend the New Mexico A-bomb test and observe its unprecedented power. Byrnes rejected any sharing of information with the Soviets on S-1, the codename for the Manhattan Project (Correspondence ("Top Secret") of the Manhattan Engineer District, 1945).

After Trinity, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill endorsed the American abandonment that urged Russian entry into the Pacific War: "we should not need the Russians" and "European problems" would be more manageable with a "far happier prospect in Europe" (Churchill, 1953). Cold War power-maximizing thinking took precedence over preserving the solidarity of the wartime alliance. Nuclear weapons were the great equalizer that would preempt Russian influence in post-war Japan and manage its domination of Red Army liberated Central and Eastern Europe. P. M. S. Blackett's classic observation stated, "the dropping of the atomic bomb was not so much the last military act of the Second World War, as the first major operation of the cold diplomatic war with Russia" (Steiner, 1977).

At Potsdam there was a brief exchange when Truman obliquely informed Stalin that the United States had developed a new weapon against Japan. The words "atomic" and "nuclear" were not used (Alperovitz, 1985). Henry Kissinger a realist scholar-statesperson stunningly states that Truman revealed to Stalin "the existence of the atomic bomb" (Kissinger, 1994). Kissinger without documentation claims that "undoubtedly" Stalin's "paranoia" induced the Soviet leader to construe this atomic revelation as "intimidation" (Kissinger, 1994). Kissinger's depiction of the exchange contrasts sharply with that of Churchill who observed intently the Truman-Stalin conversation from a distance of five yards. Churchill described Stalin as "delighted" but "had no idea of the significance" of Truman's vague reference to a more destructive weapon (Churchill, 1953).

The prime minister and Truman agreed they no longer "needed" Soviet intervention in the Pacific War. Two days after the July 16 plutonium A-bomb test in a New Mexico desert, Churchill composed a note for his War Cabinet that Truman told Stalin only "the simple fact" of a new weapon but "at all costs refused to divulge any particulars" (Churchill, 1981). Truman told Churchill after the July 24 conversation with Stalin that he asked no questions and Churchill believed had "no special knowledge of the" atomic bomb (Churchill, 1981). Unlike the expansive Churchill, the laconic Truman devotes a mere three sentences in his memoirs on his encounter with Stalin. Yet he confirms a "casually" delivered account of a "new weapon of unusual destructive force" and corroborates Churchill's observation that the Soviet leader appeared pleased (Truman, 1951).

Kissinger makes another speculative but interesting assertion that Stalin knew about the existence of S-1 before Truman did (Kissinger, 1994). Stalin probably was aware of the Manhattan Project based on Soviet intelligence prior to Secretary of War Henry Stimson's comprehensive April 25 S-1 briefing of the new president after the death of Franklin Roosevelt (Harrison-Bundy Files, 1942-1946). F. D. R. was aware of likely Soviet intelligence assets during the developmental stage of the atomic bomb. Stimson had alerted Roosevelt as early as September, 1943 of its wartime ally's penetration of the Manhattan Engineer District (Sherwin, 1973). Yet Stalin had little conception of the atomic bombs' magnitude of scale before the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Patterson, 2000). Kissinger's air of authority that Stalin was fully informed about the atomic bomb through a combination of espionage and Truman's alleged atomic revelation at Potsdam is highly speculative. He ignores the Anglo-American determination to retain indefinitely an atomic monopoly as the Grand Alliance was beginning to unravel with Cold War division and competing imperial overstretch. The ethnocentric belief that the Russians were not capable of developing an atomic bomb for several decades fed the arrogance of atomic monopoly amidst a world of inferior technological actors (Sherwin, 1975).

Kissinger avoids any citation of Alperovitz's work and relies

instead upon counter-revisionist scholars such as John Lewis Gaddis. While presenting himself as a Metternichian acolyte committed to realism and pragmatism in external affairs, Kissinger actually confirms Alperovitz's revelation that the A-bomb's use was intended in large measure to intimidate the Russians into accepting containment and America's technological mastery in the postwar period. Kissinger supported Byrnes's objective to use American atomic might to pressure the Soviet Union to embrace free elections in Poland and throughout Eastern Europe (Maier, 1978; Alperovitz & Messer, 1991-1992; Bernstein, 1991). The "awesome power of the atom bomb… would have strengthened the American bargaining position" (Kissinger, 1994). Kissinger laments the failure of Byrnes's atomic diplomacy to control Soviet behavior yet strikingly avoids any lamentation much less referencing of the atomic bomb's impact on the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Military Leaders and A-Bomb

Classical realism emphasizes "the central role of power, the primacy of national interest, and the pervasiveness of conflict" (Spanier & Hook, 1998). Military leaders orchestrate the use of power in war. They are intimately involved in decision making as it pertains to strategy and tactics. They literally defend the putative national interest and participate in defining it. In World War II, senior military officials were widely respected and admired. General Dwight Eisenhower would follow Truman as the thirty-fourth president and General George C. Marshall would serve as secretary of state and defense.

Opposition to a unilateral nuclear war was not limited to liberal-internationalist scientists working at the Metallurgical Laboratory (Metlab) of the University of Chicago (Kirstein, 2001). Alperovitz demonstrates that many senior military leaders opposed abandoning conventional warfare in the final days of World War II. Eisenhower told Stimson before the nuclear assaults that "he had a feeling of depression… that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary… as a measure to save American lives" (Alperovitz, 1970). Eisenhower later proclaimed, "It wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing" (Alperovitz, 2011). In March 1945, General Curtis LeMay directed B-29 indiscriminate, low-altitude, nighttime burnings of some sixty-three Japanese cities prior to Hiroshima. He declared after Japan's surrender: "The war would have been over in two weeks… The atomic bomb had nothing to do with the end of the war at all" (Alperovitz , 2011). Admiral William D. Leahy was the nation's senior military officer serving as chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and chief of staff to Truman. He "believed war is not to be waged on women and children." Leahy stated "they went ahead and killed as many women and children as they could which was just what they wanted all the time." Elsewhere in his memoirs he refers to the atomic attacks as "barbarous" (Alperovitz, 1985, 1995).

Arguments over Bomb Use

Truman's declared revenge was a motive in his announcement of the bombing of Hiroshima: "the war from the air at Pearl Harbor… has been repaid many fold." Yet the "Little Boy" bomb was a nuclear Pearl Harbor with a sneak attack on an unsuspecting nation (Harrison-Bundy Files, 1945). While Pearl Harbor was horrific and tragic, it was tactical and directed against battleships and airplanes. Supporters of the decision to use the A-bomb dismiss the necessity of announcing the existence of the weapon prior to attack; Japan deserved no sparing of suffering that American technological prowess might deliver. Advocates of an atomic warning believed it was a moral imperative prior to atomic ruin. No atomic warning was contained within the Potsdam Declaration that Truman, Churchill, and nationalist China Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek signed on July 26, 1945. The exclusion of Russia from signing the declaration was a clear signal to Stalin that the United States was attempting now to bypass previous entreaties to enter the war. The use of the atomic bombs without warning to Japan or Russia indicate the desire on the part of the United States to contain Soviet power in Asia (Hasegawa, 109).

Morrison also witnessed the plutonium-gadget test at Trinity in the appropriately named desert, Jornada del Muerto (Journey of Death). In a postwar interview he said: "I was of the opinion that a warning to the Japanese might work. I was disappointed when the military said you don't warn… Now, of course, I don't think the bombing was justified" (Terkel, 1984).

Probomb advocates also opposed a non-lethal demonstration, as Marshall advocated, for fear it might be a dud or if conducted in Japan, American POW might be brought into a pre-announced ground-zero site (Steiner, 1977). The Truman administration rejected a demonstration of the atomic bomb off Tokyo bay, in the United States, or in some sparsely populated area to stun Japan into surrender. Several scientists from Metlab issued the Franck Report on June 11, 1945, which recommended a demonstration on a "desert or a barren island" to forestall widespread "horror and revulsion" (Kirstein, 2001). Physicist Edward Teller, a strong supporter of nuclear weapons and a major figure in the development of the hydrogen bomb, noted in his memoirs that a demonstration over Tokyo Bay might have convinced Japan that ending the war was necessary for its survival (Teller, 2001).

Japan was defenseless. American naval assets surrounded and effectuated a "strangling blockade" of Japan (Stimson, 1947). The war of burning cities had reduced the nation to rubble. Its navy was virtually destroyed and air force and air defense incapable of retarding attack. Truman and Byrnes, however, opposed any modification of unconditional surrender terms that would allow Japan to retain its emperor in exchange for surrender. Japan's emperor was considered a deity and the incarnation of perfection. The evidence, while not conclusive, strongly suggests a Japanese surrender prior to Hiroshima if guaranteed the preservation of its monarchy (Alperovitz, 1995). Alperovitz demonstrates American intelligence in breaking the Japanese code was privy to its frantic démarche with Russia to conclude a mediated settlement of the war with the preservation of the chrysanthemum throne. Only Byrnes among senior civilian officials rejected outright any modification of unconditional surrender that Roosevelt had declared in an almost impromptu manner at a press conference during the first allied-war conference at Casablanca in January 1943 (Alperovitz, 1995).

Truman's rejection of conditional surrender through diplomacy prevented a possible shortening of the war without the introduction of nuclear weapons (Sherwin, 1975). If a belligerent believes that surrendering could have the most egregious consequences for state survival, there are no inducements to end the fighting other than abject surrender to a more technologically advanced and remorseless enemy. After Japan's surrender the United States preserved the emperor within the framework of a constitutional monarchy (Alperovitz, 1995).

The use of the A-bomb and the Soviet decision to intervene occurred at virtually the same time. August 6 and 9 were the fateful days of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Soviet Union attacked Manchuria on August 8. Yet Alperovitz believes it was the Soviet entrance into the war that was the decisive event leading to Japan's surrender. The Russian declaration of war was a crushing failure for Japanese diplomacy and that alone might have ended the war. Emperor Hirohito informed senior Army officers and soldiers on August 14, the day he declared surrender, that "The military situation has changed suddenly. The Soviet Union entered the war against us… Now that the Soviet Union has entered the war, to continue under the present condition… would only result in further useless damage… Therefore … I am going to make peace" (Alperovitz, 2011).

Defenders of the decision to use the atomic bomb claim it hastened the end of the conflict and was responsible for sparing over a million American and Japanese lives. Numerous documents and Alperovitz's revisionist history suggest strongly the decision to use the atomic bomb did not shorten the war. The United States Strategic Bombing Survey stunningly concluded in July 1946, "that certainly prior to December 31, 1945, and in all probability prior to November 1, 1945, Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated" (Feis, 1970). It concluded the "atomic bombs did not defeat Japan" (Bernstein, 1976).

Supporters of the decision to use the atomic bomb assert that the horrific atomic ending of World War II served notice that nuclear war was too dangerous and has deterred subsequent use of these weapons. Opponents of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki claim it launched a nuclear arms race. America's nuclear ending of World War II created even greater international instability with vertical and horizontal nuclear proliferation. Atomic bombs were replaced in many arsenals with thermonuclear weapons in the 1950s and eventually were deployed on a lethal triad of bombers, ICBMs, and SSBN submarines. The United States during the Cold War manufactured 70,000 nuclear weapons that stole $5 trillion that might have been used for vital domestic programs (Connelly et al., 2012). It's been estimated that the destructive yield of the world's nuclear arsenals approached an equivalence of 1.5 million Hiroshima bombs (Stone & Kuznick, 2012). Nine nations now possess either atomic or hydrogen-nuclear weapons. Eight are declared nuclear weapons states: the United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom, France, India, Pakistan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Only Israel has refused to acknowledge officially its nuclear weapons' status. There are still thousands of strategic nuclear weapons in the world's arsenals on hair-trigger alert status, despite some reductions in the START I (1991), START II (1993) and New Start (2010) treaties. The latter will "limit" Russia and America to 1550 deployed strategic warheads and 700 launchers within seven years (Baker, 2010).

Neo-Realism and Nuclear Weapons

Kenneth N. Waltz's neo-realism describes the international-state system as adrift in anarchy and "interdependence among them is low" (Waltz, 2010). Imposing on the state system a strongly suggestive Marxian materialist conception of history, Waltz argues the structure of the world order governs external state behavior regardless of national preference. Marx's dialectical materialism also minimizes human consciousness and volition in determining inevitable progressive cataclysmic change. Forces of revolutionary and societal tumult unfold independently from human will as substructural productive forces and productive relations undergo seismic inevitable transformation (Feuer, 1959). Robert Keohane also identifies elements of Marxian theory in realism's deterministic analysis of hegemonic domination and state behavior (Keohane, 1989).

Waltz believes nation-states, independently of their will, create balances of power to prevent hegemonic subjugation. The United States according to Waltz rearmed after World War II despite "a strong wish not to" (Waltz, 2010). He argues that Hiroshima and the development of nuclear weapons did not create a "new world" since "the perennial forces of politics are more important than the new military technology" (Waltz, 2010).

The global order, however, is structurally dynamic and America "has played a leading role in transforming the international system over the past sixty-five years" (Department of Defense, 2012). The nuclear era was revolutionary and created a new world out of "a world destroyed" (Sherwin, 1975). Our capacity to attain global annihilation reached a new level of terror and magnitude. Whether or not a structural realist determinism conditions interstate behavior, human-made institutions consist of sentient beings. They can adopt new strategies of self-preservation to cope with the present danger of a nuclear Armageddon. This is the challenge that lies ahead. Hiroshima led to nuclear proliferation as states attempted to either balance their power or pursue a mindless strategy of nuclear dominance. Yet the old tactics of power and the pursuit of the national self-interest in a world of thermonuclear warheads are hopelessly inadequate and must challenge the determinism of realism and neorealism.

Waltz, a structural theorist desires the spread of nuclear weapons. He welcomes the expansion of the nuclear club in the post-Hiroshima world as a stabilizing deterrent that mitigates anarchy and reduces armed conflict. Waltz described the fission bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki as "Model-T bombs" and noted inaccurately they were small because they could fit into a B-29 (Sagan & Waltz, 2003). "Fat Man", the larger of the two fission bombs, was eleven feet in length, weighed 4.5 tons, and had a yield of about twenty-one kilotons (Kirstein, 2003). They could barely fit into the bomb bay of the *Enola Gay* and *Bockscar* B-29 strategic bombers (Rhodes, 1986). They were large and B-29s had to be modified to fit them into the bomb bay. The modifications included the removal of all four bomb bay doors and the outer fuselage section between the two bomb bays (*Washington Times*, 2011).

Waltz believed, however, the nuclear climax of World War II demonstrated that nuclear weapons were small, hard to preempt, and useful in restraining additional war. He argued nuclear-weapon states through deterrence will always refrain from initiating a first-strike nuclear attack due to the uncertainty they could avoid a second-strike retaliatory nuclear response (Waltz, 2003). Nations will keep their nuclear-powder dry for fear they cannot escape retaliation. In Waltz's world nuclear proliferation contributes to strategic stability as "the gradual spread of nuclear weapons is better than either no spread or rapid spread" (Waltz, 2003). Horizontal proliferation according to Waltz' neo-realism preserves the peace as more nations grow increasingly wary of initiating a nuclear exchange (Waltz, 2003). Mu-

tual Assured Destruction (MAD) preserves the peace and averts nuclear destruction.

Strategic Bombing

In the pre-Hiroshima era, nations were eager to introduce more deadly and destructive weaponry onto the battlefield. World War II's nuclear ending reflected this conventional mindset when the United States used its fission bombs as the latest version of strategic bombing. Waltz claims poison gas and chemical weapons were not introduced in the war due to an informal deterrence in the absence of a monopoly of these systems. When both sides to a conflict possess weapons of mass destruction, conflict is avoided and peace through mutual assured destruction is maintained (Waltz, 2003). Even a few nuclear weapons can go a long way in preserving a state of non-war according to Waltz. Whether a nuclear-tipped world can permanently avert the use of these weapons places undue faith in theory and a belief that the structural dynamics of the interstate system are indefinitely predictable.

George Kennan, the architect of containment, represented a softer side of realism in asserting that World War II in particular and the use of violence in general retards the advancement of civilization and inhibits the spread of democratic values:

> But, basically, the democratic purpose does not prosper when a man dies or a building collapses or an enemy force retreats… And this is why the destructive process of war must always be accompanied by, or made subsidiary to, a different sort of undertaking aimed at widening the horizons and changing the motives of men and should never be thought of in itself as a proper vehicle for hopes and enthusiasms and dreams of world improvement (Kennan, 1951).

The unrestrained, intimidating rhetoric of the Potsdam Declaration is palpable: "We call upon… Japan to proclaim… the unconditional surrender of its armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction." Thucydides described a similar statement from the Athenians prior to attacking the island of Melos. In their colloquy with the Melians, the Athenians reject their plea for justice and conflict resolution: "Then you do not adopt the view that expediency goes with security, while justice and honor cannot be followed without danger" (Thucydides, 1951). The Melians are told they have a choice between "war and security," the latter meaning survival by surrendering to Athens (Thucydides, 1951).

Potsdam Declaration and Truman Threat

As Truman returned across the Atlantic from Potsdam on the USS *Augusta*, the White House released a written statement announcing the bombing of Hiroshima and the existence of the nuclear age (Truman, 1955). As seen with Athens and the Potsdam Declaration, the strong order the weak to surrender or die:

> We are now prepared to obliterate more rapidly and completely every productive enterprise the Japanese have above ground in any city. We shall destroy their docks, their factories, and their communications… If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth (Harrison-Bundy Files, 1945).

Newly elected British Labour Prime Minister Clement Attlee also announced the Hiroshima bombing and released a statement Churchill had prepared prior to his General Election defeat and abrupt departure from Potsdam (Harrison-Bundy Files, 1945). It also threatened continued nuclear annihilation of Japan: "It is now for Japan to realize in the glare of the first atomic bomb which has smitten her what the consequence will be of an indefinite continuance" of the conflict (*New York Times*, 1945). Indeed three days after Hiroshima "Fat Man" produced 75,000 casualties in Nagasaki.

The Potsdam Declaration in thirteen paragraphs of threats and frenzied rhetoric proclaimed that "stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners" (National Diet Library, 2011). Yet on August 6 and August 9, American prisoners of war were knowingly sacrificed in the atomic attacks. American POW were known to be held in Kokura but it made no difference where their camps were in Japan because the Target Committee did not want Japan to have a prisoners' veto over US target selection (Farrell, 1945).

American POW were also nuclear casualties in Nagasaki. General Farrell tersely described the killing of American prisoners of war in Nagasaki: "There was a prisoner of war camp in Nagasaki and that some few prisoners were made casualties by our bombing" (Farrell, 1945). LeMay admitted after the war, "I suppose if I had lost the war, I would have been tried as a war criminal" (Rhodes, 1995).

Alperovitz was determined to reexamine the past and develop a new history of understanding acts of violence with such great import. The realist perspective in no small measure contributes to the revisionist assault on the standard history of the bomb. It supports the use of force to advance the national interest and some realists supported the atomic attacks. Yet realism as seen above frequently requires reasonable moral restraint and yes, overarching ethical standards before resorting to the use of force that invariably destroys so many lives.

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