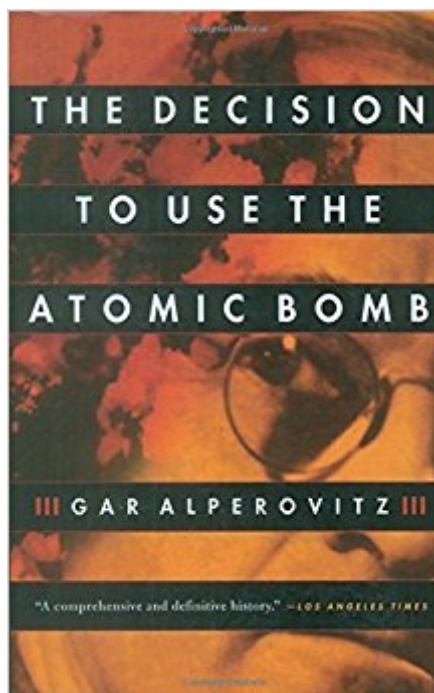


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The Decision To Use The Atomic Bomb



Synopsis

Controversial in nature, this book demonstrates that the United States did not need to use the atomic bomb against Japan. Alperovitz criticizes one of the most hotly debated precursory events to the Cold War, an event that was largely responsible for the evolution of post-World War II American politics and culture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Historian Alperovitz argues that America's use of the atomic bomb on Japan was motivated by politics rather than by military necessity. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The president of the National Center for Economic Alternatives argues that against all advice President Truman was persuaded to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima by incoming Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, who saw the bomb as an important tool for dealing with the Soviets after the war. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The truth can be painful; the evidence is overwhelming.

This well written and organized book is required reading if you truly want to know why the atomic bombs were used by the USA against Japan in 1945. It had very little to do with Japan. The author has done a remarkable job correlating a plethora of official documents, letters, diaries, and other factual information in such a way as to guide the reader thru the spring and summer of 1945, almost

on day by day. The author ties diverse sources together for indisputable corroboration of the facts in a way that allows the readers to make up their mind. The author then goes one step further to explain why the media and public falsely believed for decades that the USA used atomic bombs to end the war and saved millions of lives. The author also explores the relationship between the US, Great Britain, and Russia - winning allies against Germany, and how this relationship began to unravel with the surrender of Germany and the death of President Roosevelt leading to the Cold War. I highly recommend this book.

Relies too much on the writings of a few who knew of the bomb before it was dropped, mainly Admiral Leahy but also General Eisenhower. Have you ever heard the term 'hindsight is 20/20'? Seems like after the war a few old men were concerned with how they would be judged for their actions during WWII. Alperovitz spends the early chapters discussing how the Allies should've interpreted the Imperial Japanese' diplomatic cables, but provides little evidence that the Japanese were actually considering surrender. There is no doubt that the war could've ended without the a-bomb, however, in the context of 1945 with the U.S. considering the options of a massive ground invasion or a slow, protracted strangulation of the Japanese home islands, the bomb would've seemed like a popular alternative to avoiding any more American casualties.

This is a book that can make Americans understand why we should not have dropped the atomic bombs on Japan!

I deem Alperovitz's book best written on the nuclear bombing of Japan. History of World War II-serious reader knows -is riddled with myths, controversies. For a long time events building up to nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, Nagasaki were shrouded in mystery. However this book has shed lot of light on the subject thanks to author's access to some confidential documents, files, memos now declassified under FOIA. Based on this author has argued that nuclear bombing was wholly unwarranted in effecting Japan's surrender. Because Japan by July 1945-as expert opinion shows-was defeated. American land, naval forces were few hundred miles away from home islands. Situation was desperate; Tokyo initiated diplomatic moves to end the war. With Emperor's blessings Foreign minister Shigemitsu Togo tried to find out through Japanese ambassador in Moscow whether Russia was willing to help Japan bring about peace. Thanks to intelligence derived from Purple decrypts Americans knew Japan's plight. However they were few stumbling blocks. One was Tokyo's desire to preserve Emperor. If President Truman had clarified the

proposition that by unconditional surrender he meant Japanese armed forces and not the royalty, Tokyo would have capitulated. Such course of action apart from ensuring Japan's surrender would have stopped Soviet entry into Far Eastern war on its tracks. This makes ridiculous official claim that nuclear bombing was essential to hasten Japan's surrender. Paradoxically, [after nuclear bombing] US allowed Japanese to retain their emperor. If only President Truman guaranteed the safety, sanctity of the Emperor while issuing Potsdam declaration this terrible human tragedy could have been averted. Unfortunately coming under the baneful influence of his secretary of state Byrnes he botched it. Concomitantly it also implies despite nuclear bombing Tokyo would have continued to resist to the bitter end if Americans were to dissolve the Imperial House. So the theory that atomic bombing precipitated Japan's surrender is a myth. Rather it had more to do with American tussle with Soviet Union for the control of postwar Eastern Europe. By bombing Japan US wanted to send Moscow a strong lesson. Final section of the book makes a shocking reading. Here author has shown why American public blindly endorsed official version of events. Because during immediate post war years Government was engaged in a massive disinformation campaign. Facts which were not in consonance with official view were either distorted, fudged or suppressed. Striking demonstration of phenomena how facts of history can be molded to serve preconceived aims and objectives of ruling elites. Perhaps President wanted to cover up the fact that he committed dastardly crime that would put even Mongols to shame. This book is lavishly documented; scrupulously researched. Hence very thick and voluminous. But on the negative side exceedingly verbose replete with euphemisms. One requires abundant free time and exceptional interest to finish reading it. So I don't recommend it for casual readers.

There are two parts to this book, and, when it originally appeared, the least controversial part got the most attention. Alperovitz does not argue that he, or anyone, knows that the atomic bomb was used as a cynical move to keep the Soviet Union pliable after Yalta. He argues that such a conclusion is likely, only, in the absence of other explanations. His documentation is extensive, and the book has had revisions so that it is **obsessive** in contextualizing its primary sources. The second part of the book is the more interesting and the most relevant. Alperovitz wants to know where the notion of "one million American dead" in an invasion of the Japanese home islands came from. Trying to pinpoint this source in time and person is daunting. Trying to understand just how it came to be such sanctified common knowledge as to provoke a fire storm of controversy for even investigating it is even harder. This second part is vital. We must know where our myths get forged. Whether one regards Alperovitz as a "partisan" or not, the investigation must be had, and

intellectual honesty, as well as democratic health depend on such questions.

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