

**DID THE UNITED STATES PLAN TO DROP MORE THAN TWO
ATOMIC BOMBS ON JAPAN?**

WERE THERE MORE AVAILABLE?

WHY WERE SOME DECISIONS MADE? WHY WAS THE PRESIDENT LEFT OUT?

THE "BLACKLISTING" OF J. ROBERT OPPEHHEIMER

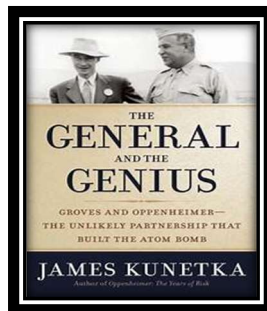
AND MORE

345



AUGUST 4, 2020

**SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN THE SUMMER OF 1945, THE UNITED STATES PLANS FOR UNLEASHING ITS
ATOM BOMBS WENT BEYOND HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI.**



If atomic bombs are to be added as new weapons to the arsenals of a warring world, or the arsenals of nations preparing for war, then the time will come when mankind will curse the names of Los Alamos and Hiroshima. The people must unite or they will perish. *J. Robert Oppenheimer*



*Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves, head of the Manhattan Project (on the left)
Physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the director of the Los Alamos Laboratory and so-called "father
of the atom bomb," (on the right)*

Warfare changed forever in the summer of 1945 when the United States detonated the world's first atomic bombs. *One was tested in the New Mexico desert, and the other two devastated the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.*

Entire cities and their populations could now be wiped out with one strike. But until Japan's final surrender offer, five days after the Nagasaki bombing, the atomic bomb's reputation as a "war ender" would not take hold. *During that time, the question of how the next atomic bomb would be used was a real one.*

One of the most persistent claims about the end of World War II is that the United States had no more atomic bombs after the second attack and that President Harry Truman was bluffing when he promised to drop more on Japan if it did not unconditionally surrender. But this is a myth: *It was no bluff.*

In the closing months of World War II, the United States was producing as many atomic bombs as it could. Days away from having another bomb for a third attack, the United States was close to preparing it for deployment before the Japanese surrendered. Just hours before hearing of Japan's final surrender on August 14, 1945, Truman had ruefully told a British diplomat that he had "no alternative" but to order a third atomic bomb attack. *Had World War II lasted a few more days, the odds of a third bomb—and several more—were very high.*

THE POTSDAM CONFERENCE

On July 16, 1945, the world's first atomic bomb exploded. One day later, the president of the United States learned of the Trinity test as the Potsdam Conference was beginning. Allied leadership—U.S. President Harry Truman, Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill—were meeting in the Soviet zone of now-occupied Germany to determine their next steps in Europe in the postwar era. Truman told Stalin that the United States possessed a "new weapon of unusual destructive force," to which Stalin replied that he hoped Truman would make "good use of it against the Japanese." Ten days after Trinity, the United States, Great Britain, and China issued a declaration calling for the unconditional surrender of Japan (the U.S.S.R. had not yet declared war on Japan, so it did not participate). The Potsdam Declaration promised "prompt and utter destruction" if Japan rejected their ultimatum.

BUILDING THE BOMBS

The first atomic weapons were built by the *Manhattan Project*, a top-secret effort authorized by President Franklin Roosevelt in late 1942. Hundreds of sites and facilities spanned the country (and a few were in other countries), all collaborating to build this new weapon.

The most difficult part of the process, making the fuel for the bombs—enriched uranium and plutonium—consumed almost all of the expense and labor. In July 1945 the United States had produced enough fuel for three complete bombs — "Gadget" (plutonium), "Little Boy" (uranium), and "Fat Man" (plutonium)— *with almost enough plutonium left over for a fourth.* The Manhattan Project's factories could produce enough *fuel for a little under three and a half bombs per month*, but tweaks to the designs of the bombs were being considered that would allow them, if the war continued, to produce several more bombs per month.

THE MANHATTAN PROJECT

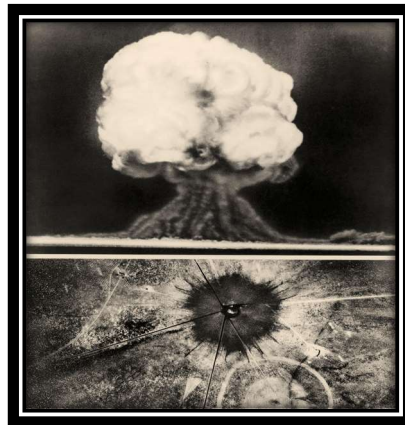
On July 16, 1945, Gadget was detonated in the New Mexico desert in a test called Trinity. It was an unambiguous success.

The explosion was several times more powerful than scientists had predicted.

Just after Trinity, Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves, the military head of the Manhattan Project, predicted to J. Robert Oppenheimer, the scientific director of the project, that it would probably require **dropping not just two bombs but a third**, "per our original plans." He even thought that perhaps as many as **four bombings could be necessary**.

General Groves' view was not unusual. *The U.S. plans never projected that two atomic bombs would end the war; officials felt they would need to use atomic warfare.*

They believed that the atomic bomb would be a potent new weapon, but it was unclear whether it would be viewed as a decisive one. How the atomic bombs would affect the Japanese cabinet's will to fight was a complete unknown.



After the Trinity test, the two men heading up the Manhattan Project were pleased by its success yet awed by its power. General Groves, the military head of the Manhattan Project, recalled the moment in his 1962 memoir, *Now It Can Be Told*: "I planned to discuss and settle many matters involved in our operations in Japan . . . these plans proved utterly impracticable, for no one who had witnessed the test was in a frame of mind to discuss anything. The reaction to success was simply too great." Robert Oppenheimer, the scientific director of the project, remembered: "We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried, and most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita: Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty and to impress him takes on his multi-armed form and says, **'Now, I have become Death, the destroyer of worlds.'** ***I suppose we all felt that one way or another.***

The Americans knew from intercepted Japanese foreign intelligence communications that the Japanese high cabinet was divided. The Japanese militarists, who held a cabinet majority in mid-1945, believed that they should "bleed" the Americans, in the vain hope that the U.S. public would tire of war. A "peace" faction saw this tactic for the folly it was, and that it would mean the destruction of Japan.

If the United States wanted Japan to surrender, it had to find a way to overcome the militarist domination. Conventional bombing alone would not do the trick. U.S. firebombing had routinized the destruction of Japanese cities since March 1945. The first massive nighttime raids against Tokyo killed more than 100,000 and left a million people homeless throughout one night.

By July the United States had bombed more than 60 other Japanese cities in this way, with no appreciable change in the Japanese stance on surrender. If the atomic bomb would have an immediate effect, it had to be understood as a revolutionary weapon.

CHOOSING A TARGET

The cover sheet of the April 1945 document (below) outlines an initial list of Japanese targets to be attacked with the atomic bomb and the criteria for selection. (Variant spellings of city names were due to alternate translations,) National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES		TOP SECRET	
ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET		TALLY	
SUBJECT: Target Information		By author: C.C. Lee, Lt. Col. Air Force	
TO: Director, Joint Target Group		DATE 28 Apr 1945	
FROM: Chief of Staff, Twentieth Air Force		COMMENT NO. 1	
DECLASSIFIED E.O. 11652 NND 730039		MIA/SC/1h 72993	
1. In connection with contemplated operations using high explosive "tall boy" (12,000 lb.) bombs detonated above the ground (about 200 feet altitude), it is requested that this Headquarters be furnished suitable target information of targets having the following specifications: a. They should be located in a reasonably large urban area but the target itself should not be less than three miles in diameter. b. They should lie on the Japanese main island area between Tokyo and Nagasaki. c. They should possess high strategic value. 2. The following are suggested as possible appropriate areas: a. Tokyo Bay b. Kawasaki c. Yokohama d. Nagoya e. Osaka f. Kobe g. Kyoto h. Hiroshima i. Kure j. Yamata k. Kokura l. Shimosenka m. Yatsuguchi n. Kumamoto o. Fukuoka p. Nagasaki q. Sasebo 3. The destruction will primarily be accomplished by the air blast effect and the selection should be made with this thought in mind. 4. It will be appreciated if this information can be furnished to this Headquarters by no later than Saturday 5 May. LAURIS NOESTAD Brigadier General, U. S. Army Chief of Staff Authority: NND 730039 SP: 1A 1000 1000 1000 TOP SECRET 3-1109 A.F.			

The American planners wanted the first use of the atomic bomb to make its implications clear, so they gave careful consideration to how it would first be used. The Manhattan Project's Target Committee, led by U.S. scientists and key members of the military, met in the spring of 1945 to discuss the cities that might become the first targets. At the first meeting in late April 1945 (about a week before Germany's surrender), they defined candidates as "large urban areas of not less than 3 miles in diameter existing in the larger populated areas . . . between the Japanese cities of Tokyo and Nagasaki . . . [and] should have high strategic value." Specifically, they considered 17 possibilities: Tokyo Bay, Kawasaki, Yokohama, Nagoya, Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Kure, Yamata, Kokura, Shimosenka, Yamaguchi, Kumamoto, Fukuoka, Nagasaki, and Sasebo.

In early May 1945 after another Target Committee meeting, the list had been amended and revised. It now included just five cities: Kyoto, Hiroshima, Yokohama, Kokura, and Niigata (in order of interest). Kyoto was the top pick as it was a large city and as yet untouched by bombing. Hiroshima, another untouched city, was added for the large military base in its center and its geography: The surrounding hills would "focus" the blast and increase its destructive power.

By the end of June, the Committee put Kyoto, Hiroshima, Kokura, and Niigata on a list of "reserved targets" to "protect" them from any future fire-bombing raids (firebombed at the end of May, Yokohama was no longer eligible). Kyoto was removed as a candidate for any attack—atomic or otherwise—shortly afterward because Secretary of War Henry Stimson, for reasons both strategic and sentimental, decided to save the former Japanese capital. Groves protested vigorously, repeatedly arguing that Kyoto was a valid and important target, but Stimson ultimately convinced Truman to agree with him. List. Kyoto was off the list.

SEE MAPS OF NINE KEY MOMENTS THAT DEFINED WW2

Copy and paste the below link into your browser.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2020/06/map-shows-nine-moments-that-defined-world-war-ii-feature/>

THE POTSDAM CONFERENCE

As the Potsdam conference began in July 1945, Allied forces continued a firebombing campaign against the Japanese several months earlier.

At the Potsdam Conference in July 1945, Truman and Stimson learned of the Trinity test, which electrified the president. Previously he had been fairly disinterested in the scientific tinkering taking place in New Mexico, but he now saw this new weapon as a means of waging war against Japan and sending a message to the Soviet Union.

The target list was being finalized in encrypted communications between Stimson, at Potsdam, and Groves, in Washington, D.C. Groves decided each primary target had to have viable backups in case of foul weather or other complications. Maj. Gen. Lauris Norstad, head of target planning for the Army Air Forces, supplied them. With Kyoto removed, they needed another backup in the area of Hiroshima and Kokura. Though it had unfavorable topography and a POW camp, Nagasaki, a port city on the Japanese island of Kyushu that was home to two munitions factories, was added to the list.

The final target order was drafted by Groves, shown to Truman, approved by Stimson and Gen. George Marshall, chief of staff of the U.S. Army, and issued on July 25.

A directive was sent from Lt. Gen. Thomas Handy, deputy chief of staff, to Gen. Carl Spaatz, commander of the Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific.

It said that "after about August 3, 1945," the 20th Air Force would deliver its first "special bomb" on Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata, or Nagasaki (an earlier draft made it clear this was the order of priority). The bombing would be done visually (not by radar), and the bomber would be accompanied only by a few observation aircraft.

Furthermore, "additional bombs will be delivered on the above targets as soon as made ready by the project staff." New targets would be chosen once the first four were eliminated.

It was not an order to drop one atomic bomb; it was an order to permit the dropping of as many atomic bombs that were or would become available. '

THE FIRST ATTACK

Some information is duplicated from previous articles - the same subject. Included for continuity

The launching point for the massive bombing attacks against Japan, including both the atomic and firebombing raids, was the small island of Tinian in the Northern Marianas. *Captured from the Japanese in the summer of 1944, Tinian was turned into an island-size airbase, the largest in the entire war.*

Starting in May 1945, around the same time that target planning had begun, infrastructure to assemble atomic bombs was set up on Tinian. Plans were drawn up to get the valuable bomb components to the island without mishap. On July 16, the day of the Trinity test, components of Little Boy began their journey to Tinian. All arrived by July 29, and the bomb was ready to drop at the end of the month. The Fat Man materials all arrived by August 2, and the assembly of the second bomb was finished on August 7. Orders specified that the targets needed to be sighted visually, out of fear that errors could be introduced by radar targeting. (It intuitively does not seem like one could "miss" with an atomic bomb, but for weapons the size of those used in World War II, being off by several miles—very easy with radar guidance—could but mean the difference between hitting or grazing a target.)

Visual sighting meant that the skies had to be relatively clear, so every day lone B-29s would fly to targets and radio back weather reports. On August 5, skies were finally deemed clear enough for a bombing run the next day. That night, Little Boy was loaded into a B-29 bomber, the Enola Gay, and sent to bomb a city, either Hiroshima, Kokura, or Nagasaki.

Around 1 a.m. on August 6, the plane took off. Cloud cover was light over Hiroshima, and shortly after 8:00 a.m., the city came into sight. At 8:15, Little Boy dropped, fell for 44 seconds, and then detonated with the force of roughly 15,000 tons of TNT. Almost instantly, Hiroshima erupted in a maelstrom of fire and destruction; tens of thousands would die within minutes, and perhaps 100,000 more would succumb in the aftermath. The Enola Gay observed this from 32,700 feet, circled for less than an hour, and headed back to Tinian.

THE SECOND ATTACK

Some information duplicated from previous articles -the same subject included for continuity

When Truman heard about the run on Hiroshima, he was traveling home from Potsdam on the battleship U.S.S. Augusta.

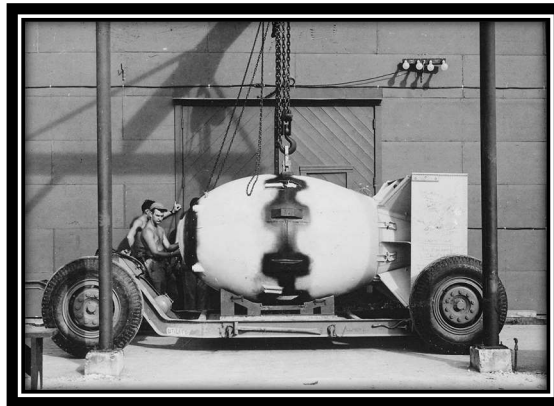
He was overjoyed at its success, announcing that it was "the greatest thing in history." The news of the atomic bomb was almost immediately released to the press, and a radio announcement was broadcast to Japan itself.

The Japanese military knew that Hiroshima had come under some kind of major attack on August 6, but did not know its special nature. After hearing about the American radio announcement, the high command met and agreed that they should send a scientific team to investigate. A top Japanese nuclear physicist, Professor Yoshio Nishina, reported back from Hiroshima on August 8 that there were "almost no buildings left standing," and that, from what he could tell, "the so-called new type bomb is an atomic bomb."

As the Japanese were confirming what happened in Hiroshima, the next bombing mission was already beginning. On August 8, weather forecasters were predicting that August 10, the planned date for the second attack, was going to be unfavorable. Instead, U.S. officials on Tinian, without consulting anyone in Washington, D.C. (including Truman or even Stimson), decided that they had the authority under the launch order to use the next weapon. So in a marathon session, they assembled Fat Man, loaded it into another B-29, the Bockscar, and sent it on its way.

Kokura, an arsenal town on the northern end of the southern Japanese island of Kyushu, was the primary target. Visibility there was terrible, as Kokura was covered in clouds or smoke (it may have been both: The nearby city of Yawata had been firebombed the day before). After spending 45 minutes fruitlessly searching for Kokura, the Bockscar proceeded to Nagasaki.

At 11:02 a.m. on August 9, 1945, Fat Man exploded over Nagasaki with the violence of 20,000 tons of TNT. More than 70,000 people were killed in the immediate attack. Bockscar briefly surveyed the damage and then headed back to base.



The massive plutonium "Fat Man" bomb is lowered to a carriage on Tinian Island before being loaded onto the B-29, Bockscar. The United States dropped Fat Man on the Japanese city of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945.

The Japanese high command was meeting on August 9 to discuss the Soviet Union's recent declaration of war on Japan and its subsequent invasion of Manchuria when they learned of the attack on Nagasaki. It is hard to know if the Japanese believed more atomic attacks would be coming. Certainly, the use of a second bomb dashed any hopes that the United States only had one. But neither the second atomic bomb nor the Soviet invasion was enough to push the Japanese to unconditional surrender: Japanese officials were prepared to offer only a conditional surrender to the Americans, preserving the role and power of the emperor.

WAITING AND PREPARING

In the U.S. capital, things were chaotic. On August 10, Japan's offer of conditional surrender was scrutinized closely by Truman and his Cabinet, while General Groves sent a letter to General Marshall, the chief of staff, reporting that "the next bomb" would be ready earlier than expected. In Los Alamos, New Mexico, scientists were working around the clock to finalize the components for the next bomb to ship to Tinian. They would be shipping the final components from New Mexico on August 12 or 13 and would be ready to drop them off in a Japanese city in about a week.

Truman was informed of this, and his response was immediate. As Marshall wrote back to Groves: "It is not to be released over Japan without express authority from the President." Truman may have had a very peripheral role in the ordering of the use of the atomic bomb—his main role, as Groves later put it, was not to interfere with plans already in motion—but he played a direct role in the stopping of the use of further bombs.

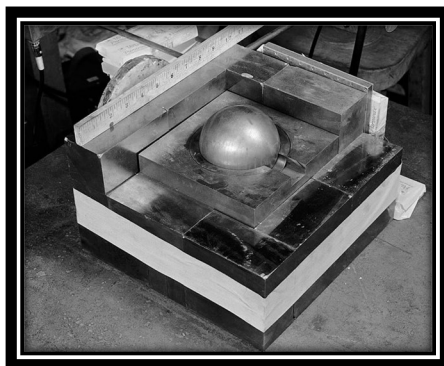
Why did Truman, who had proclaimed the Hiroshima attack to be "the greatest thing in history," suddenly order the stoppage? Some believe he was worried that another atomic bomb would disrupt efforts to end the war, not speed them along. Other historians believe Truman wanted to stop the carnage. He told his Cabinet that morning, as recounted in the diary of Henry Wallace, his secretary of commerce and the former vice president that he ordered the stoppage because "the thought of wiping out another 100,000 people was too horrible. He didn't like the idea of killing, as he said, 'all those kids.'" (See note on correspondence, next page)

Either way, Truman was seeking to regain control, having permitted, perhaps without realizing it, the military to consider itself totally in control of how these new weapons would be used. He had known the first atomic attack was happening, but not the second. If a third was to happen, it would come from his direct order.

A THIRD BOMB?

Japan's initial surrender offer was a promising sign, but not enough for Truman and his Cabinet. Only unconditional surrender would do, Truman replied. Several days of waiting—from August 10 to August 14—followed. Speculation in the American press and military was rampant about if and where more atomic bombs would fall.

After being told not to use the bomb, Groves called Oppenheimer in New Mexico the next day and told him not to ship the next plutonium core to Tinian. In the same discussion, though, Oppenheimer told Groves that he could report on their progress on a new weapon design, a "composite" implosion bomb that would use both plutonium and enriched uranium in one bomb, allowing them to improve their production rate dramatically.



After being forged at Los Alamos in August 1945, the last core did not travel to Japan. The core, which some accounts claim was nicknamed "Rufus," or even "Dirty Gerty," stayed in New Mexico and would be used in experimental work before earning its new nickname: the demon core.

THE THIRD BOMB

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~~TOP SECRET~~

WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 11652, Sec. 1(c) and 1(d)
UNCLAS 730039
By: [signature] DATE: 4/7/77

10 August 1945.

MEMORANDUM TO: Chief of Staff.

The next bomb of the implosion type had been scheduled to be ready for delivery on the target on the first good weather after 24 August 1945. We have gained 4 days in manufacture and expect to ship from New Mexico on 12 or 13 August the final components. Providing there are no unforeseen difficulties in manufacture, in transportation to the theatre or after arrival in the theatre, the bomb should be ready for delivery on the first suitable weather after 17 or 18 August.

L. R. Groves
L. R. GROVES,
Major General, USA.

8/10/45
It is not to be released on Japan without express authority from the President.
W. H. R. [signature]

FOR VICTORY
BUY
UNITED STATES
WAR
BONDS
AND
STAMPS

~~TOP SECRET~~

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED
ORDER SEC ARMY BY TAG PER 41602

A third bomb, Chief of Staff George Marshall informs General Groves, cannot be deployed without the president's authority.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Even though Truman had put a hold on atomic bombing, the leaders of the U.S. Army Air Forces still thought that more bombs would be needed. On August 10, General Spaatz telegraphed General Norstad, in target planning, to “strongly recommend” that the next atomic bomb target be Tokyo. “More destruction would be obtained from using a clean target,” he wrote, “but it is believed that the psychological effect on the government officials [there] is more important at this time than destruction.

The same day he learned that his suggestion was “being considered on a high level.” It promised that “final decisions” would be made in the next two days. The same day, Maj. Gen. Curtis LeMay, the architect of the firebombing campaigns, put forward an urgent request to install facilities capable of assembling atomic bombs at Okinawa, perhaps anticipating the use of the weapon for the invasion of Japan.

On August 14, Spaatz continued to push Tokyo as the next target, recommending with “utmost urgency” that they transfer the third atomic bomb to Tinian “to be dropped on Tokyo.” Again, he was told that the decision was still pending. Groves was told that the decision about whether to use another atomic bomb would be made the next day. On August 13, Secretary of War Stimson indicated that perhaps the “shipments” of nuclear materials to Tinian should resume. Groves was tasked with getting the most up-to-date information on the schedule of future bombings and making sure it was passed along to General Marshall. Marshall was wondering whether it made sense to use the bombs as they were ready, or whether they should be collected and used for the invasion. The number of possibly dropped atomic bombs in such a situation was about a dozen. In any case, a third bomb, a representative of Groves’ told a representative of Marshall’s, was “ready to be shipped—waiting on order now.”

Later that afternoon, Truman met with the British ambassador and “remarked sadly” that since the Japanese seemed unwilling to surrender unconditionally, “he now had no alternative but to order an atomic bomb to be dropped on Tokyo.” If he made the order, the operation would have taken place within days.

THE WAR’S END

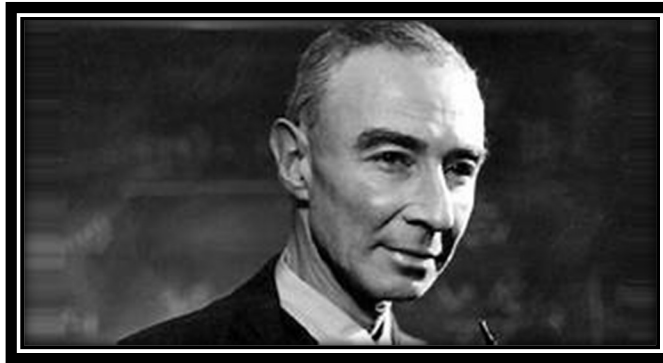
But fortunately, it did not come to that. Not long after Truman talked with the British ambassador, on August 14, 1945, Japan announced its embrace of unconditional surrender. Historians still argue today about what exactly caused their change of heart, as the relative roles of the atomic bombs, the Soviet declaration of war, and internal Japanese forces are very difficult to disentangle, and all likely played a part.

The third bomb, and the others that may have followed, were a definitive part of the American strategy to end World War II. Although hopeful that nuclear weapons might end the war, American officials—from President Truman to his commanding officers—did not expect the war to end right away. Signs indicated that more atomic weapons were necessary, and U.S. leaders were rapidly moving to order more atomic strikes. Had the war continued, more atomic bombs would very likely have been used.

If they had been, would atomic bombs still be considered “war enders”? If not, would they have been more likely to have been used in the Cold War? Of course, there’s no way to know for sure. But the third bomb was closer to being used than most realize.

**FATHER OF THE ATOMIC BOMB WAS BLACKLISTED
FOR OPPOSING THE H-BOMB AND ACCUSED COMMUNIST TIES**

**AFTER CREATING THE FIRST ONE, J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER CALLED FOR
INTERNATIONAL CONTROLS ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS**



If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once in the sky that would be like the splendor of the mighty one. I have become death, the shatterer of the world.



UPDATED
AUG 31, 2018

On July 16, 1945, a team of scientists and engineers watched the first successful atomic bomb explosion at the Trinity test site in Alamogordo, New Mexico. The team, dubbed "The Manhattan Project," had been secretly developing the weapon at the Los Alamos Laboratory during World War II.

By the time it was ready, the Allies had already declared victory in Europe but were still fighting in Japan.

Physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the director of the laboratory and so-called "father of the atomic bomb," watched from afar that morning as the bomb released a mushroom cloud 40,000 feet high. His description of that moment has since become famous:

"I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture the Bhagavad Gita," he said. "Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.' I suppose we all thought that, one way or another.

On August 6, the U.S. dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, wiping out 90 percent of the city and killing 80,000 people. Three days later, the U.S. killed 40,000 people in Nagasaki with another bomb. Tens of thousands more would die from radiation exposure. Japan surrendered a few days after the second bombing, ending World War II.

As details of the horrific destruction reached the Manhattan Project scientists, many began to question what they had done. In late October, Oppenheimer visited President Harry S. Truman, who had okayed the use of the first bomb, not the second, to talk to him about placing international controls on nuclear weapons. *Truman, worried about the prospect of Soviet nuclear development, dismissed him.*

When Oppenheimer said he felt compelled to act because he had blood on his hands, *Truman angrily told the scientist "The blood is on my hands, let me worry about that." He then kicked him out of the Oval Office.* writes author Paul Ham in Hiroshima Nagasaki: The Real Story of the Atomic Bombings and Their Aftermath.



The mushroom cloud was produced by the first explosion by the Americans of a hydrogen bomb at Eniwetok Atoll in the South Pacific. Known as Operation Ivy, this test represented a major step forward in terms of the destructive power achievable with atomic weapons.

Ham isn't convinced that Oppenheimer felt remorse specifically for the bombing of Japan, which the scientist may have viewed as a necessary evil. Rather, he thinks that Oppenheimer was more concerned about the devastation that future nuclear war could bring.

After the war, Oppenheimer took steps to prevent such a future. He began working with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission to control the use of nuclear weapons. In 1949, when Truman approached the commission about creating a hydrogen bomb, Oppenheimer opposed it.

Despite his opposition, the U.S. developed an H-bomb and tested it in 1952. But Oppenheimer's resistance ended up costing him his job. During the McCarthy era, the government stripped him of his job with the commission, citing his opposition to the hydrogen bomb as well as his purported Communist ties.

Oppenheimer's blacklisting had more to do with his stance on the H-bomb than his Communist friends. Still, it created a scandal that followed him until he died in 1967. For decades afterward, people continued to speculate about whether he was a Soviet spy.

Today, Oppenheimer is mostly remembered as a scientist who was persecuted for trying to address the moral problems of his creation. Though there have been some close calls, no country has used nuclear bombs as weapons since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This means that, so far, we've been able to avoid the nuclear future Oppenheimer feared he'd already set in motion.



COMMENTS

People who talk of outlawing the atomic bomb are mistaken - what needs to be outlawed is war. [Leslie Groves](#)

Tragically, the forces for destruction that we unleashed are stronger than man's present ability to control them. [Leslie Groves](#)

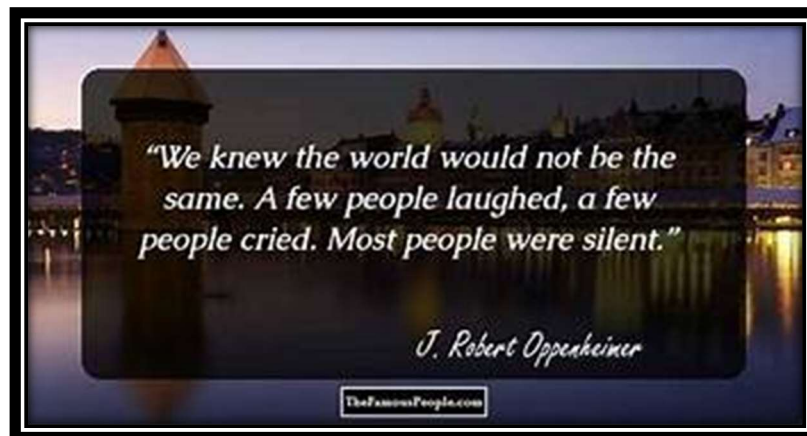
This weapon [the atomic bomb] has added responsibility - or, better, an additional incentive - to find a sound basis for lasting peace. It provides an overwhelming inducement for the avoidance of war. It emphasizes the crisis we face in international matters and strengthens the conviction that adequate safeguards for peace must be found. [Leslie Groves](#)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER EXTRACTED FROM VARIOUS OTHER SITES

Some believed the entire process that led to Oppenheimer's firing was merely a famous US Government "Witch Hunt". Others thought it was justified. We need to remember that this was the McCarthy era when it was very easy to call the elite communists.

Throughout the development of the atomic bomb, Oppenheimer was under investigation by both the FBI and the Manhattan Project's internal security arm for his past left-wing associations. He was followed by Army security agents during a trip to California in June 1943 to visit his former girlfriend, Jean Tatlock, who was suffering from depression. Oppenheimer spent the night in her apartment. Tatlock committed suicide on January 4, 1944, which left Oppenheimer deeply grieved. In August 1943, he volunteered to Manhattan Project security agents that George Eltenton, whom he did not know, had solicited three men at Los Alamos for nuclear secrets on behalf of the Soviet Union. When pressed on the issue in later interviews, Oppenheimer admitted that the only person who had approached him was his friend Haakon Chevalier, a Berkeley professor of French literature, who had mentioned the matter privately at a dinner at Oppenheimer's house. *Brigadier General Leslie R. Groves, Jr.,* the director of the Manhattan Project, thought Oppenheimer was too important to the project to be ousted over this suspicious behavior. On July 20, 1943, he wrote to the Manhattan Engineer District:

Under my verbal directions of July 15, it is desired that clearance be issued to Julius Robert Oppenheimer without delay irrespective of the information which you have concerning Mr. Oppenheimer. He is essential to the project.



COMMENTS CONCERNING J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER FROM OTHER VARIOUS SITES

He opposed the development of the hydrogen bomb during a 1949-50 governmental debate on the question and subsequently took stances on defense-related issues that provoked the ire of some factions in the U.S. government and military. During the Second Red Scare, those stances, together with past associations Oppenheimer had had with people and organizations affiliated with the Communist Party, *led to him suffering the revocation of his security clearance in a much-written-about hearing in 1954.* Effectively stripped of his direct political influence, he continued to lecture, write, and work in physics. *Nine years later, President John F. Kennedy awarded (and Lyndon B. Johnson presented) him with the Enrico Fermi Award as a gesture of political rehabilitation.*

He graduated summa cum laude from Harvard in three years.

Oppenheimer was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Physics three times, in 1946, 1951, and 1967, Oppenheimer since but never won.

The FBI under J. Edgar Hoover had been following him before the war, when he showed Communist sympathies as a professor at Berkeley and had been close to members of the Communist Party, including his wife and brother. He had been under close surveillance since the early 1940s, *his home and office bugged, his phone tapped and his mail opened.* The FBI furnished Oppenheimer's political enemies with incriminating evidence about his Communist ties. These enemies included Strauss, an AEC commissioner who had long harbored resentment against Oppenheimer both for his activity in opposing the hydrogen bomb and for his humiliation of Strauss before Congress some years earlier; regarding Strauss's opposition to the export of radioactive isotopes to other nations, Oppenheimer had memorably categorized these as "less important than electronic devices but more important than, let us say, vitamins".

On June 7, 1949 Oppenheimer testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee, *where he admitted that he had associations with the Communist Party in the 1930s.*

The triggering event for the security hearing happened on November 7, 1953,^[188] when William Liscum Borden, who until earlier in the year had been the executive director of the United States Congress Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, sent a letter to Hoover which said *that "more probably than not J. Robert Oppenheimer is an agent of the Soviet Union. Eisenhower never exactly believed the allegations within the letter but felt compelled to move forward with an investigation, and on December 3 he ordered that a "blank wall" be placed between Oppenheimer and any government or military secrets.*

On December 21, 1953, Strauss told Oppenheimer that his security clearance had been suspended, pending resolution.

Ernest Lawrence refused to testify because he was suffering from an attack of ulcerative colitis, but an interview transcript in which he condemned Oppenheimer was presented as evidence in his absence.

Groves, threatened by the FBI as having been potentially part of a coverup about the Chevalier contact in 1943, likewise testified against Oppenheimer. Many top scientists, as well as government and military figures, testified on Oppenheimer's behalf.

Inconsistencies in his testimony and his erratic behavior on the stand, at one point saying he had given a "cock and bull story" and that this was because he "was an idiot", convinced some that he was unstable, unreliable, and a possible security risk.

Oppenheimer's clearance was revoked one day before it was due to lapse anyway. Isidor Rabi commented that Oppenheimer was merely a government consultant at the time anyway and that if the government "didn't want to consult the guy, then don't consult him".

Wernher von Braun summed up his opinion about the matter with a quip to a Congressional committee: "In England, Oppenheimer would have been knighted."

In a seminar at the Woodrow Wilson Institute on May 20, 2009, based on an extensive analysis of the Vassiliev notebooks taken from the KGB archives, John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr, and Alexander Vassiliev confirmed that Oppenheimer never was involved in espionage for the Soviet Union. Soviet intelligence tried repeatedly to recruit him, but was never successful; Oppenheimer did not betray the United States. In addition, he had several persons removed from the Manhattan Project who had sympathies with the Soviet Union. Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev also state Oppenheimer "was, in fact, a concealed member of the CPUSA in the late 1930's. According to biographer Ray Monk: "He was, in a very practical and real sense, a supporter of the Communist Party. Moreover, in terms of the time, effort, and money spent on Party activities, he was a very committed supporter".

Late in 1966, he fell into a coma and on February 15, 1967, died at his home in Princeton, New Jersey. Oppenheimer was a chain smoker who was diagnosed with throat cancer in late 1965. After inconclusive surgery, he underwent unsuccessful radiation treatment and chemotherapy

A memorial service was held a week later at Alexander Hall on the campus of Princeton University. The service was attended by 600 of his scientific, political, and military associates including Bethe, Groves, Kennan, Lilienthal, Rabi, Smyth, and Wigner. His brother Frank and the rest of his family were also there, as was the historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., the novelist John O'Hara, and George Balanchine, the director of the New York City Ballet. Bethe, Kennan, and Smyth gave brief eulogies. Oppenheimer's body was cremated and its ashes were placed into an urn. His wife Kitty took the ashes to St. John and dropped the urn into the sea, within sight of the beach house.

In October 1972, Kitty died at age 62 from an intestinal infection that was complicated by a pulmonary embolism. Oppenheimer's ranch in New Mexico was then inherited by their son Peter, and the beach property was inherited by their daughter Katherine "Toni" Oppenheimer Silber. Toni was refused security clearance for her chosen vocation as a United Nations translator after the FBI brought up the old charges against her father. In January 1977 (three months after the end of her second marriage), she committed suicide at age 32; her ex-husband found her hanging from a beam in her family beach house. She left the property to "the people of St. John for a public park and recreation area". The original house was built too close to the coast and succumbed to a hurricane. Today the Virgin Islands Government maintains a Community Center in the area.

Two days before the Trinity test, Oppenheimer expressed his hopes and fears in a quotation from the Bhagavad Gita:

In battle, in the forest, at the precipice in the mountains,
On the dark great sea, in javelins and arrows,
In sleep, in confusion, in the depths of shame,
The good deeds a man has done before defend him.

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