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Prior to the Cold War: US Nuclear Plans Entailed Blowing Up Hundreds of Chinese, Soviet and Eastern European Cities

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In-depth Report: Nuclear War

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On 30 August 1945, Major General Lauris Norstad dispatched a document to his superior, General Leslie Groves, outlining a total of 15 "key Soviet cities" to be struck with US atomic weapons, headed by the capital Moscow. This was followed by another 25 "leading Soviet cities" listed for annihilation, topping this latter group was Leningrad, almost destroyed during the Nazi siege finally lifted in late January 1944.

The above nuclear plans were being composed three days before the Second World War had even officially concluded (on 2 September 1945), and a mere two weeks following Japan's surrender.

These initiatives, targeting the USSR for destruction, were actually developing at least as early as March 1944, at a time when Moscow was a vital wartime ally. Due to ongoing Soviet intelligence reports, Stalin was privy to America's nuclear project most certainly by April 1942, but quite likely earlier.

Meanwhile, Japan's political leaders were compelled to surrender on 15 August 1945, after the US military threatened to drop more atomic weapons over the country. This would have just been feasible, with the Pentagon holding a further two atomic bombs in its stockpile during the latter part of 1945.

In the days stretching beyond late August 1945, Groves' and Norstad's schemes of ruin were enlarging. On 15 September 1945, a highly classified document relating to their plan expounded in stark tones that,

> "The immediate destruction of the enemy's will [USSR] and capacity to resist is the primary objective of the United States Army Strategic Air Forces", to be focused upon "the enemy centers of industry, transportation and population".

That same day, 15 September 1945, Groves and Norstad estimated that over five dozen Soviet metropolises, 66 altogether, should be obliterated with 204 atomic bombs – a "revolutionary" weapon which was "spectacularly successful" in desolating Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was calculated that these 66 cities held 100% of the Soviet Union's aluminium production, 97% of its tanks, 95% of its aircraft, 95% of its oil refining capacity, etc.

This declassified material – virtually ignored by commercial media and largely avoided by alternative news – is of particularly high importance, as it blows apart the long-purported myths that the so-called Cold War began in 1947. It further debunks claims that resumption of hostilities was due to Soviet antagonism.

A top secret Pentagon document, once more dated 15 September 1945, outlined explicitly that,

> "the destruction of the Russian capability to wage war has therefore been used as a basis upon which to predicate the United States' atomic bomb requirements".

Ever eastwards, more than 20 cities in Soviet-occupied Manchuria were also "investigated" for atomic attacks, but it was eventually decided this resource-rich region "is not an integral part of the USSR".

America's atomic arsenal unleashed over the Soviet Union would, preferably, be delivered by the upcoming B-36 "Peacemaker" six-engine bomber, with its remarkable 230 foot wingspan – and not, as thought, with the smaller B-29 "Superfortress" aircraft, fresh from discharging two bombs over Japan.

The B-29's roaming capacity was that of more than 5,000 miles without refuelling, but even this impressive distance had its limitations for what was now envisaged. By comparison, the B-36 boasted a flying range of 10,000 miles.

The B-36 could in fact fly from Washington to Moscow, drop its terrible load, and subsequently return to the American capital without having stopped once there or back (combined distance 9,700 miles). This feat would also have been achievable for the B-36 regarding other Soviet cities such as Leningrad, Kiev, Kharkov, and so on. Yet the B-36 would not be available for such operations until finally entering service during mid-1948, and even after that the aircraft necessitated further adjustment.

Failing the proposed deployment of 204 atomic bombs, a "minimum requirement" of 123 atomic weapons was contemplated, while at the opposite end of the spectrum an "optimum requirement" constituted an eye-watering 466 bombs.

In September 1945 the "minimum requirement" of 123 bombs was not realistic, let alone the 466 figure, and indeed the latter number was then not seriously considered. By June 1948, America's nuclear cache still consisted of a modest 50 atomic weapons. Moscow was now to be struck with eight bombs, Leningrad with seven.

From mid-1948, America's atomic numbers ballooned as the age of "nuclear plenty" was born. By the summer of 1949, Washington had the required 200-plus atomic bombs so as to deliver their Soviet apocalypse.

Yet Russia, recognizing the threat facing their state, had feverishly been constructing their own nuclear weapons. Just as the US arsenal was approaching requisite size, in August 1949 the Soviets detonated an atomic device over Semipalatinsk, in north-eastern Kazakhstan.

The USSR's nuclear explosion, near identical to that of America's Nagasaki bomb, was detected within days by the US Air Force. After they crosschecked the Soviets' atomic

debris, president Harry Truman, informed of the news, was appalled.

American intelligence had deduced that the Soviets would likely be unable to acquire atomic bombs until 1953, at the earliest. A CIA memorandum from 15 December 1947 insisted,

> "it is doubtful that the Russians can produce a bomb before 1953, and almost certain they cannot produce one before 1951".

In October 1948 General Curtis LeMay, a ruthless war leader, assumed control of Strategic Air Command, with Groves cast into obscurity early that year. LeMay promptly hammered out an Emergency War Plan, which called upon the USSR's evisceration with "the entire stockpile of atomic bombs, if made available, in a single massive attack".

The following year, October 1949, LeMay expanded strategies so as to include the destruction of over 100 Soviet urban regions with 292 atomic bombs. This significant total would not be available until 30 June 1950, by which time the success of Russia's nuclear project had been confirmed.

Yet by 1950, the Pentagon was churning out Nagasaki-type bombs on a production line. The Nagasaki weapon, "Fat Man", had a yield of 21 kilotons, making it considerably more powerful than the Hiroshima device, "Little Boy", which held 15 kilotons of explosive force.

America's military would not hold possession of the "optimum" 466 weapons until June 1951. This was scaled down to 400 bombs required for "killing a nation", and the Pentagon's nuclear stash was brimming with precisely 400 such devices on New Year's Day 1951.

From 1950, the program would undergo major enlargement in order to encompass the new communist China in its cross hairs, a country then home to over half a billion people. China, it may be noted, did not develop nuclear weapons until 1964.

At maps in US military headquarters throughout the great Pacific region, the USSR and Chinese land areas were laid out as a combined whole: One giant red mass with no defining borders to distinguish between either state. Both were to be decimated together, while suggestions in a bid to change the stratagem were met with firm opposition and "sent shudders down planners' spines".

These maps, obscured by a curtain or screen from unassuming visitors, were marked with pins and arrows highlighting which areas to be flattened with nuclear bombs; but it was indeed not possible, in certain regions, to safely discern Chinese territory from that of the southern Soviet Union, or parts of Russia itself.

By 1960, it was decided upon that every city in the USSR and China would be attacked with nuclear weapons; a total consisting of hundreds of urban centres. For example, each populated space in the Soviet Union – containing 25,000 people or more – was earmarked to be struck with a nuclear bomb. These programs would largely be implemented with the new long range, jet-powered bombers, the B-52 and B-58, with the obsolete B-36 sent into retirement in 1959.

In the early 1960s, this greatly increased level of destruction was possible, as the Pentagon's nuclear cargo reached about 18,000 bombs. The majority now consisted of the

infinitely more powerful hydrogen weapons. Moscow was to be hit with a yield of 40 megatons, about 4,000 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb.

Moreover, the USSR's Warsaw Pact allies in central and southern Europe were also designated for annihilation: such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania. These nations are today all members of the US-led NATO organization, with Czechoslovakia since dissolving into two separate countries belonging to NATO.

The US Joint Chiefs of Staff, a prestigious military body advising the president, calculated in 1961 that nuclear attacks against the USSR, China and Warsaw Pact states would kill around 600 million people. Even this mind-numbing figure was a conservative estimate, which did not fully take into account the aftermath of such intended actions.
The Soviet Union – with its nuclear cache pointed at America's NATO allies – would, in response to a US first strike, fire its warheads at NATO states in western Europe, wiping them from the face of the earth.

If there was lingering doubt, the resulting radioactive fallout from US nuclear assaults on European Russia and Warsaw Pact members, was expected to be blown on the wind towards the Atlantic. This would doubly eradicate much of western Europe, such as France, the Netherlands, Belgium, etc. To the north, Finland was thought to be one of the first to face immediate destruction, following close-range fallout from planned nuclear explosions over Leningrad's submarine pens.

Nor would the devastation from fallout be restricted to Europe, far from it. Further nuclear attacks on southern and eastern USSR, along with large-scale assaults across China, would thereafter affect many other states in Asia.

Radioactive poisoning was anticipated to spread southwards over India, whose population in 1960 comprised 450 million people.

Afghanistan, bordering both the USSR and China, faced extensive ruin from fallout – as too did Japan, whose southern reaches are located just a few hundred miles from eastern China. Mongolia, a large Asian country squeezed between Russia and China, could expect its fair share of radiation; though the Mongol state, centuries before one of the biggest empires in history, has been sparsely populated in modern times.

The combined death toll from all of the above would surely have been closer to one billion. However, unbeknownst to everyone concerned in the early 1960s, due to the extinction phenomenon of nuclear winter America would also have faced its end – even without retaliatory strikes reaching US soil. This doomsday scenario remains entirely relevant today, in an age of nuclear proliferation and environmental decline.

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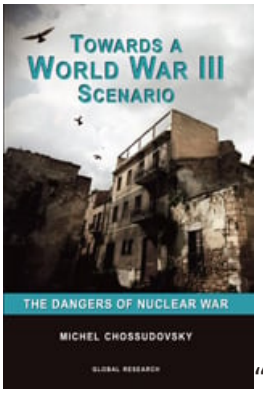
Shane Quinn obtained an honors journalism degree. He is interested in writing primarily on foreign affairs, having been inspired by authors like Noam Chomsky. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.



"Towards a World War III Scenario: The Dangers of Nuclear War"

by Michel Chossudovsky

Available to order from Global Research!

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Michel Chossudovsky is Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), which hosts the critically acclaimed website www.globalresearch.ca . He is a contributor to the Encyclopedia Britannica. His writings have been translated into more than 20 languages.

Reviews

"This book is a 'must' resource – a richly documented and systematic diagnosis of the supremely pathological geo-strategic planning of US wars since '9-11' against non-nuclear countries to seize their oil fields and resources under cover of 'freedom and democracy'."
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Michel Chossudovsky exposes the insanity of our privatized war machine. Iran is being targeted with nuclear weapons as part of a war agenda built on distortions and lies for the purpose of private profit. The real aims are oil, financial hegemony and global control. The price could be nuclear holocaust. When weapons become the hottest export of the world's only superpower, and diplomats work as salesmen for the defense industry, the whole world is recklessly endangered. If we must have a military, it belongs entirely in the public sector. No one should profit from mass death and destruction.
–Ellen Brown, author of 'Web of Debt' and president of the Public Banking Institute

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