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Another Hiroshima Is Coming — Unless We Stop It Now

By John Pilger
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In-depth Report: Nuclear War

When I first went to Hiroshima in 1967, the shadow on the steps was still there. It was an almost perfect impression of a human being at ease: legs splayed, back bent, one hand by her side as she sat waiting for a bank to open.

At a quarter past eight on the morning of August 6, 1945, she and her silhouette were burned into the granite.

I stared at the shadow for an hour or more, then I walked down to the river where the survivors still lived in shanties.

I met a man called Yukio, whose chest was etched with the pattern of the shirt he was wearing when the atomic bomb was dropped.

He described a huge flash over the city, "a bluish light, something like an electrical short", after which wind blew like a tornado and black rain fell.

> "I was thrown on the ground and noticed only the stalks of my flowers were left. Everything was still and quiet, and when I got up, there were people naked, not saying anything. Some of them had no skin or hair. I was certain I was dead."

Nine years later, I returned to look for him and he was dead from leukaemia.

> "No radioactivity in Hiroshima ruin" said The New York Times front page on 13 September, 1945, a classic of planted disinformation. "General Farrell," reported William H. Lawrence, "denied categorically that [the atomic bomb] produced a dangerous, lingering radioactivity."

Only one reporter, Wilfred Burchett, an Australian, had braved the perilous journey to Hiroshima in the immediate aftermath of the atomic bombing, in defiance of the Allied occupation authorities, which controlled the "press pack".

> "I write this as a warning to the world," reported Burchett in the London Daily Express of September 5,1945. Sitting in the rubble with his Baby Hermes typewriter, he described hospital wards filled with people with no visible injuries who were dying from what he called "an atomic plague".

For this, his press accreditation was withdrawn, he was pilloried and smeared. His witness to the truth was never forgiven.

The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was an act of premeditated mass murder that unleashed a weapon of intrinsic criminality. It was justified by lies that form the bedrock of America's war propaganda in the 21st century, casting a new enemy, and target – China.

During the 75 years since Hiroshima, the most enduring lie is that the atomic bomb was dropped to end the war in the Pacific and to save lives.

> "Even without the atomic bombing attacks," concluded the United States Strategic Bombing Survey of 1946, "air supremacy over Japan could have exerted sufficient pressure to bring about unconditional surrender and obviate the need for invasion. "Based on a detailed investigation of all the facts, and supported by the testimony of the surviving Japanese leaders involved, it is the Survey's opinion that … Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war [against Japan] and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated."

The National Archives in Washington contains documented Japanese peace overtures as early as 1943. None was pursued. A cable sent on May 5, 1945 by the German ambassador in Tokyo and intercepted by the US made clear the Japanese were desperate to sue for peace, including "capitulation even if the terms were hard". Nothing was done.

The US Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, told President Truman he was "fearful" that the US Air Force would have Japan so "bombed out" that the new weapon would not be able "to show its strength". Stimson later admitted that "no effort was made, and none was seriously considered, to achieve surrender merely in order not to have to use the [atomic] bomb".

Stimson's foreign policy colleagues — looking ahead to the post-war era they were then shaping "in our image", as Cold War planner George Kennan famously put it — made clear they were eager "to browbeat the Russians with the [atomic] bomb held rather ostentatiously on our hip". General Leslie Groves (image on the right), director of the Manhattan Project that made the atomic bomb, testified:

> "There was never any illusion on my part that Russia was our enemy, and that the project was conducted on that basis."

The day after Hiroshima was obliterated, President Harry Truman voiced his satisfaction with the "overwhelming success" of "the experiment".

The "experiment" continued long after the war was over. Between 1946 and 1958, the United States exploded 67 nuclear bombs in the Marshall Islands in the Pacific: the equivalent of more than one Hiroshima every day for 12 years.

The human and environmental consequences were catastrophic. During the filming of my documentary, *The Coming War on China*, I chartered a small aircraft and flew to Bikini Atoll in the Marshalls. It was here that the United States exploded the world's first Hydrogen Bomb. It remains poisoned earth. My shoes registered "unsafe" on my Geiger counter. Palm trees stood in unworldly formations. There were no birds.

I trekked through the jungle to the concrete bunker where, at 6.45 on the morning of March 1, 1954, the button was pushed. The sun, which had risen, rose again and vaporised an entire island in the lagoon, leaving a vast black hole, which from the air is a menacing spectacle: a deathly void in a place of beauty.

The radioactive fall-out spread quickly and "unexpectedly". The official history claims "the wind changed suddenly". It was the first of many lies, as declassified documents and the victims' testimony reveal.

Gene Curbow, a meteorologist assigned to monitor the test site, said,

> "They knew where the radioactive fall-out was going to go. Even on the day of the shot, they still had an opportunity to evacuate people, but [people] were not evacuated; I was not evacuated… The United States needed some guinea pigs to study what the effects of radiation would do."

Like Hiroshima, the secret of the Marshall Islands was a calculated experiment on the lives of large numbers of people. This was Project 4.1, which began as a scientific study of mice and became an experiment on "human beings exposed to the radiation of a nuclear weapon".

The Marshall Islanders I met in 2015 — like the survivors of Hiroshima I interviewed in the 1960s and 70s — suffered from a range of cancers, commonly thyroid cancer; thousands had already died. Miscarriages and stillbirths were common; those babies who lived were often deformed horribly.

Unlike Bikini, nearby Rongelap atoll had not been evacuated during the H-Bomb test. Directly downwind of Bikini, Rongelap's skies darkened and it rained what first appeared to be snowflakes. Food and water were contaminated; and the population fell victim to cancers. That is still true today.

The Wilson cloud from test Baker, situated just offshore from Bikini Island at top of the picture.
(Source: U.S. Army Photographic Signal Corps/Public Domain)

I met Nerje Joseph, who showed me a photograph of herself as a child on Rongelap. She had terrible facial burns and much of her was hair missing.

> "We were bathing at the well on the day the bomb exploded," she said. "White dust started falling from the sky. I reached to catch the powder. We used it as soap to wash our hair. A few days later, my hair started falling out."

Lemoyo Abon said,

> "Some of us were in agony. Others had diarrhoea. We were terrified. We thought it must be the end of the world."

US official archive film I included in my film refers to the islanders as "amenable savages". In the wake of the explosion, a US Atomic Energy Agency official is seen boasting that Rongelap "is by far the most contaminated place on earth", adding, "it will be interesting to get a measure of human uptake when people live in a contaminated environment."

American scientists, including medical doctors, built distinguished careers studying the "human uptake'. There they are in flickering film, in their white coats, attentive with their clipboards. When an islander died in his teens, his family received a sympathy card from the scientist who studied him.

I have reported from five nuclear "ground zeros" throughout the world — in Japan, the Marshall Islands, Nevada, Polynesia and Maralinga in Australia. Even more than my

experience as a war correspondent, this has taught me about the ruthlessness and immorality of great power: that is, *imperial* power, whose cynicism is the true enemy of humanity.

This struck me forcibly when I filmed at Taranaki Ground Zero at Maralinga in the Australian desert. In a dish-like crater was an obelisk on which was inscribed: "A British atomic weapon was test exploded here on 9 October 1957". On the rim of the crater was this sign:

> WARNING: RADIATION HAZARD
>
> Radiation levels for a few hundred metres
>
> around this point may be above those considered
>
> safe for permanent occupation.

For as far as the eye could see, and beyond, the ground was irradiated. Raw plutonium lay about, scattered like talcum powder: plutonium is so dangerous to humans that a third of a milligram gives a 50 per cent chance of cancer.

The only people who might have seen the sign were Indigenous Australians, for whom there was no warning. According to an official account, if they were lucky "they were shooed off like rabbits".

Today, an unprecedented campaign of propaganda is shooing us all off like rabbits. We are not meant to question the daily torrent of anti-Chinese rhetoric, which is rapidly overtaking the torrent of anti-Russia rhetoric. Anything Chinese is bad, anathema, a threat: Wuhan …. Huawei. How confusing it is when "our" most reviled leader says so.

The current phase of this campaign began not with Trump but with Barack Obama, who in 2011 flew to Australia to declare the greatest build-up of US naval forces in the Asia-Pacific region since World War Two. Suddenly, China was a "threat". This was nonsense, of course. What was threatened was America's unchallenged psychopathic view of itself as the richest, the most successful, the most "indispensable" nation.

What was never in dispute was its prowess as a bully — with more than 30 members of the United Nations suffering American sanctions of some kind and a trail of the blood running through defenceless countries bombed, their governments overthrown, their elections interfered with, their resources plundered.

Obama's declaration became known as the "pivot to Asia". One of its principal advocates was his Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, who, as WikiLeaks revealed, wanted to rename the Pacific Ocean "the American Sea".

Whereas Clinton never concealed her warmongering, Obama was a maestro of marketing.

> "I state clearly and with conviction," said the new president in 2009, "that America's commitment is to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

Obama increased spending on nuclear warheads faster than any president since the end of

the Cold War. A “usable” nuclear weapon was developed. Known as the B61 Model 12, it means, according to General James Cartwright, former vice-chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that “going smaller [makes its use] more thinkable”.

The target is China. Today, more than 400 American military bases almost encircle China with missiles, bombers, warships and nuclear weapons. From Australia north through the Pacific to South-East Asia, Japan and Korea and across Eurasia to Afghanistan and India, the bases form, as one US strategist told me, “the perfect noose”.

A study by the RAND Corporation – which, since Vietnam, has planned America’s wars – is entitled *War with China: Thinking Through the Unthinkable*. Commissioned by the US Army, the authors evoke the infamous catch cry of its chief Cold War strategist, Herman Kahn – “thinking the unthinkable”. Kahn’s book, *On Thermonuclear War*, elaborated a plan for a “winnable” nuclear war.

Kahn’s apocalyptic view is shared by Trump’s Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, an evangelical fanatic who believes in the “rapture of the End”. He is perhaps the most dangerous man alive. “I was CIA director,” he boasted, “We lied, we cheated, we stole. It was like we had entire training courses.” Pompeo’s obsession is China.

The endgame of Pompeo’s extremism is rarely if ever discussed in the Anglo-American media, where the myths and fabrications about China are standard fare, as were the lies about Iraq. A virulent racism is the sub-text of this propaganda. Classified “yellow” even though they were white, the Chinese are the only ethnic group to have been banned by an “exclusion act” from entering the United States, because they were Chinese. Popular culture declared them sinister, untrustworthy, “sneaky”, depraved, diseased, immoral.

An Australian magazine, *The Bulletin*, was devoted to promoting fear of the “yellow peril” as if all of Asia was about to fall down on the whites-only colony by the force of gravity.

As the historian Martin Powers writes, acknowledging China’s modernism, its secular morality and “contributions to liberal thought threatened European face, so it became necessary to suppress China’s role in the Enlightenment debate …. For centuries, China’s threat to the myth of Western superiority has made it an easy target for race-baiting.”

In the *Sydney Morning Herald*, tireless China-basher Peter Hartcher described those who spread Chinese influence in Australia as “rats, flies, mosquitoes and sparrows”. Hartcher, who favourably quotes the American demagogue Steve Bannon, likes to interpret the “dreams” of the current Chinese elite, to which he is apparently privy. These are inspired by yearnings for the “Mandate of Heaven” of 2,000 years ago. *Ad nausea.*

To combat this “mandate”, the Australian government of Scott Morrison has committed one of the most secure countries on earth, whose major trading partner is China, to hundreds of billions of dollars’ worth of American missiles that can be fired at China.

The trickledown is already evident. In a country historically scarred by violent racism towards Asians, Australians of Chinese descent have formed a vigilante group to protect delivery riders. Phone videos show a delivery rider punched in the face and a Chinese couple racially abused in a supermarket. Between April and June, there were almost 400 racist attacks on Asian-Australians.

> "We are not your enemy," a high-ranking strategist in China told me, "but if you [in the West] decide we are, we must prepare without delay."

China's arsenal is small compared with America's, but it is growing fast, especially the development of maritime missiles designed to destroy fleets of ships.

> "For the first time," wrote Gregory Kulacki of the Union of Concerned Scientists, "China is discussing putting its nuclear missiles on high alert so that they can be launched quickly on warning of an attack… This would be a significant and dangerous change in Chinese policy…"

In Washington, I met Amitai Etzioni, distinguished professor of international affairs at George Washington University, who wrote that a "blinding attack on China" was planned, "with strikes that could be mistakenly perceived [by the Chinese] as pre-emptive attempts to take out its nuclear weapons, thus cornering them into a terrible use-it-or-lose-it dilemma [that would] lead to nuclear war."

In 2019, the US staged its biggest single military exercise since the Cold War, much of it in high secrecy. An armada of ships and long-range bombers rehearsed an "Air-Sea Battle Concept for China" – ASB – blocking sea lanes in the Straits of Malacca and cutting off China's access to oil, gas and other raw materials from the Middle East and Africa.

It is fear of such a blockade that has seen China develop its Belt and Road Initiative along the old Silk Road to Europe and urgently build strategic airstrips on disputed reefs and islets in the Spratly Islands.

In Shanghai, I met Lijia Zhang, a Beijing journalist and novelist, typical of a new class of outspoken mavericks. Her best-selling book has the ironic title *Socialism Is Great!* Having grown up in the chaotic, brutal Cultural Revolution, she has travelled and lived in the US and Europe.

> "Many Americans imagine," she said, "that Chinese people live a miserable, repressed life with no freedom whatsoever. The [idea of] the yellow peril has never left them… They have no idea there are some 500 million people being lifted out of poverty, and some would say it's 600 million."

Modern China's epic achievements, its defeat of mass poverty, and the pride and contentment of its people (measured forensically by American pollsters such as Pew) are wilfully unknown or misunderstood in the West. This alone is a commentary on the lamentable state of Western journalism and the abandonment of honest reporting.

China's repressive dark side and what we like to call its "authoritarianism" are the facade we are allowed to see almost exclusively. It is as if we are fed unending tales of the evil super-villain Dr. Fu Manchu. And it is time we asked why: before it is too late to stop the next Hiroshima.

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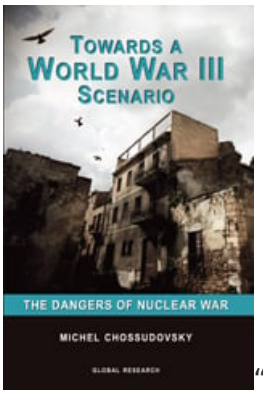

"Towards a World War III Scenario: The Dangers of Nuclear War"

by Michel Chossudovsky

Available to order from Global Research!

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PDF Edition: $6.50 (sent directly to your email account!)

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'."
–John McMurtry, Professor of Philosophy, Guelph University

"In a world where engineered, pre-emptive, or more fashionably "humanitarian" wars of aggression have become the norm, this challenging book may be our final wake-up call."
-Denis Halliday, Former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations

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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About the author:

John Pilger is an award-winning journalist and filmmaker whose articles and documentaries have been published worldwide. For more information on John Pilger, visit his website at www.johnpilger.com

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