

Targeting the USSR in August 1945

By [Prof. Alex Wellerstein](#) and [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

Global Research, March 13, 2022

[Restricted Data](#) 27 April 2012

Region: [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

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Introductory Note

This article first published in April 2012 focusses on the “Special Relationship” between the US and the USSR. It is of utmost relevance to unfolding events in Ukraine.

While the US and the Soviet Union were allies during WWII, Prof. Alex Wellerstein documents U.S. “war preparations” against the USSR which took place in August 1945 “before the war was officially over”.

And then what happened:

The formulation of a diabolical project released by [the War Department \(declassified\) on September 15, 1945 which consisted in dropping atomic bombs on major cities of the Soviet Union.](#)



According to this secret (declassified) document, "[the Pentagon had envisaged blowing up the Soviet Union](#) with a coordinated nuclear attack directed against major urban areas.

All major cities of the Soviet Union were included in the list of 66 "strategic" targets. [The irony is that this plan was released by the War Department prior to onset of the Cold War.](#)

ADDRESS REPLY TO
COMMANDING GENERAL, ARMY AIR FORCES
WASHINGTON, D. C.

~~TOP SECRET~~
LIMITED

WAR DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY AIR FORCES
WASHINGTON, D. C.

15 September 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJOR GENERAL L. R. GROVES:

Subject: Atomic Bomb Production

1. The attached study has been directed toward establishing an official Army Air Forces' view as to the number of atomic bombs which should be available in order to insure our national security.
2. This paper is still on the working level. Prior to concluding this study and forwarding it to the CG, AAF, your comments are requested.

Incl:
Study abv
subj w/Tabs A,B,C.

Lauris Norstad
LAURIS NORSTAD,
Major General, U.S.A.
AC/AS-5.

THE DIVISION OF CLASSIFICATION, U.S. ENERGY
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION, HAS
DETERMINED THAT THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS NO
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VIEWED BY *John R. Norstad*

DATE *9/25/75*

FOR VICTORY



TOP SECRET
WAR DEPARTMENT
P. O. Box 2610
WASHINGTON, D. C.



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26 September 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJOR GENERAL LAURIS NORSTAD:

1. Answering your memorandum of 15 September 1945 on the subject "Atomic Bomb Production", the following general comments are submitted:

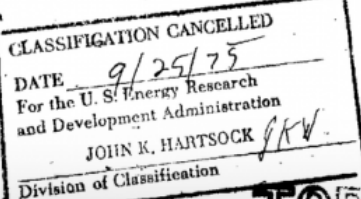
2. The number of bombs for the minimum M-Day stock and the optimum stock are high because of the following factors:

a. The estimates are based on an area of total destruction and amounted to four square miles with an outer bomb damage of 6,000 to 7,000 feet. An area at least twice that should be used. While the damaged area of Nagasaki was considerably less than that of Hiroshima it was because the target was not suitable in size or shape for the maximum effectiveness of the bomb.

b. It is not essential to get total destruction of a city in order to destroy its effectiveness. Hiroshima no longer exists as a city even though the area of total destruction is considerably less than total.

c. While at Hiroshima the frames of a number of reinforced concrete buildings remained intact the windows were blown out and the interiors were gutted. While the buildings could be rebuilt they were made unusable for a considerable period. The Nagasaki bomb did more damage to reinforced concrete buildings. While our studies are not completed it is believed the final results will show a greater radius of destruction for such buildings than is indicated in the report.

3. In the limited time available no detailed analysis has been made of the report but my general conclusion would be that the number of bombs indicated as required, is excessive.



L. R. GROVES,
Major General, U. S. A.

[Access all the documents of the September 15, 1945 Operation here](#)

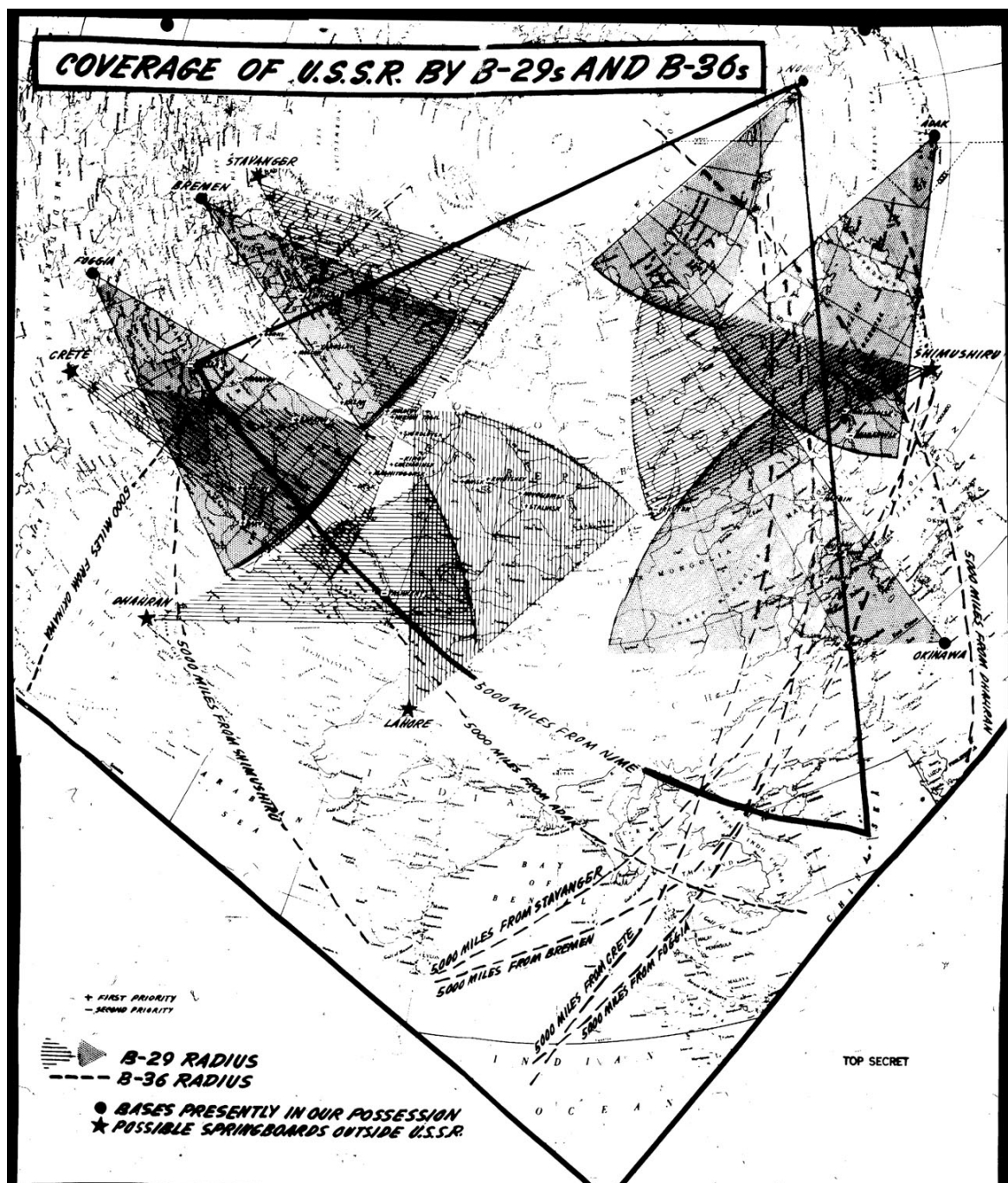
Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, March 13, 2022

Targeting the USSR in August 1945

by Prof. Alex Wellerstein

If the World War II alliance between the United States and the United Kingdom was the [special relationship](#), what was the alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union? The especially problematic relationship? The relationship that could really have used to go to counseling? A relationship forged out of extreme crisis that later seemed like a sketchy thing? (Easily abbreviated as the sketchy relationship, of course.) My wife suggests perhaps calling it the shotgun marriage.

Maybe *special* fits the bill there too, in the sense of it being *odd*. Case in point: by August 30, 1945 — before World War II was officially over — some part of the U.S. military force (I'm not sure what branch; the Army Air Corps are a likely suspect) had already taken the time to draw up a list of good targets for atomic bombs in the USSR... and even overlaid a map of the Soviet Union with the ranges of nuclear-capable bombers, along with "first" and "second" priority targets marked on it.¹



How many *other* war alliances end with one side explicitly plotting to *nuke the heck* out of

the other ally? Probably not too many.

This amazing map comes from General Groves' files, and was sent to him in September 1945 as part of a list of estimates for how many atomic bombs Curtis LeMay thought the US ought to have. I'll talk about that another time, but here's a hint: it was *so many* that even General Groves thought it was *too many*. Whoa.

A few things: the majority of these "dark" plots are B-29s (the same bombers that carried Fat Man and Little Boy), and they are going out of all kinds of "allied" bases (some currently in their possession, others labeled as "possible springboards") around the USSR (Stavanger, Bremen, Foggia, Crete, Dhahran, Lahore, Okinawa, Shimushiru, Adak, and Nome). Which is an interesting way to quickly conceptualize the Cold War world from a military standpoint.

The very large, empty plots are for B-36s, which didn't exist yet. They wouldn't get fielded until 1949, but were already in the planning stages during the war. The actual B-36s as delivered had somewhat longer ranges (6,000 miles or so, total, if [Wikipedia](#) is to be believed) than the ones estimated on here.

The target cities are a bit hard to make out (the next time I'm at NARA, I'll try to get them to bring me the original map), but the "first priority" cities include Moscow, Sverdlovsk, Omsk, Novosibirsk, Stalinsk, Chelyabinsk, Magnitogorsk, Kazan, Molotov, and Gorki. Leningrad appears to be listed as a "second priority" target, which surprises me, but it might just be the microfilm being hard to read. All in all, it's not the *most* interesting list of cities: they have literally just taken a list of the top cities in the USSR (based on population, industry, war relevance) and made those their atomic targets.

Stalin has a well-deserved reputation as a paranoid guy. But, as the old saying goes, *just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not after you*.

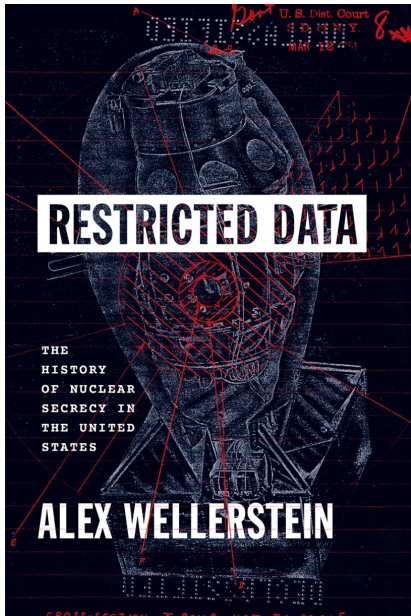
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[Alex Wellerstein](#) is a historian of science and nuclear weapons and a professor at the [Stevens Institute of Technology](#). He is also the creator of the [NUKEMAP](#). This blog [began in 2011](#). For more, follow [@wellerstein](#).

Notes

1. Citation: "A Strategic Chart of Certain Russian and Manchurian Urban Areas [Project No. 2532]," (30 August 1945), *Correspondence ("Top Secret") of the Manhattan Engineer District, 1942-1946*, microfilm publication M1109 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1980), Roll 1, Target 4, Folder 3, "Stockpile, Storage, and Military Characteristics." The microfilm image I had of this came in two frames, a top and a bottom, and I pasted them together in Photoshop. This took a *little* bit of warping of the bottom image in odd ways (using Photoshop's crazy "Puppet Warp" tool) because it didn't *quite* line up with the top one due to folds in the paper and things like that. So there is a tiny bit of manipulation here, though none of it affects the content.



Restricted Data

The History of Nuclear Secrecy in the United States

By Alex Wellerstein

ISBN: 9780226020419

The first full history of US nuclear secrecy, from its origins in the late 1930s to our post-Cold War present.

The American atomic bomb was born in secrecy. From the moment scientists first conceived of its possibility to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and beyond, there were efforts to control the spread of nuclear information and the newly discovered scientific facts that made such powerful weapons possible. The totalizing scientific secrecy that the atomic bomb appeared to demand was new, unusual, and very nearly unprecedented. It was foreign to American science and American democracy—and potentially incompatible with both. From the beginning, this secrecy was controversial, and it was always contested. The atomic bomb was not merely the application of science to war, but the result of decades of investment in scientific education, infrastructure, and global collaboration. If secrecy became the norm, how would science survive?

Drawing on troves of declassified files, including records released by the government for the first time through the author's efforts, *Restricted Data* traces the complex evolution of the US nuclear secrecy regime from the first whisper of the atomic bomb through the mounting tensions of the Cold War and into the early twenty-first century. A compelling history of powerful ideas at war, it tells a story that feels distinctly American: rich, sprawling, and built on the conflict between high-minded idealism and ugly, fearful power.

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