



## Hiroshima in History: The Myths of Revisionism

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When President Harry Truman authorized the use of atomic weapons against Japan, he did so to end a bloody war that would have been bloodier still had the planned invasion of Japan proved necessary. Revisionists claim that Truman's real interest was a power play with the Soviet Union and that the Japanese would have surrendered even earlier had the retention of their imperial system been assured. Truman wanted the war to continue, they insist, in order to show off America's powerful new weapon.

This anthology exposes revisionist fallacies about Truman's motives, the cost of an invasion, and the question of Japan's surrender. Essays by prominent military and diplomatic historians reveal the hollowness of revisionist claims, exposing the degree to which these agenda-driven scholars have manipulated the historical record to support their contentions. They show that, although some Japanese businessmen and minor officials indicated a willingness to negotiate peace, no one in a governmental decision-making capacity even suggested surrender. And although casualty estimates for an invasion vary considerably, the more authoritative approximations point to the very bloodbath that Truman sought to avoid.

Volume editor Robert Maddox first examines the writings of revisionist Gar Alperovitz to expose the unscholarly methods Alperovitz employed to support his claims, then distinguished Japanese historian Sadao Asada reveals how difficult it was for his country's peace faction to prevail even after the bombs had been dropped. Other contributors point to continuing Japanese military buildups, analyze the revisionists' low casualty estimates for an invasion, reveal manipulations of the Strategic Bombing Survey of 1946, and show how even the exhibit commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the bombing at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum hewed to the revisionist line. And a close reading of Tsuyoshi Hasegawa's acclaimed *Racing the Enemy* exposes many grave discrepancies between that recent revisionist text and its sources.

The use of atomic bombs against Japan remains one of the most controversial issues in American history. Gathered in a single volume for the first time, these insightful readings take a major step toward settling that controversy by showing how insubstantial Hiroshima revisionism really is—and that sometimes history cannot proceed without decisive action, however regrettable.



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