THE 'OTHER' BOMB

Written by John Hallam
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Å AUG 9 NAGASAKI DAY

PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT

THE 'OTHER' BOMB

AUST GOVT (AND GOVTS WORLDWIDE) SHOULD SIGN, RATIFY, TPNW (BAN TREATY)

NUCLEAR RISK REDUCTION A LIFE AND DEATH ISSUE

On 9th August 1945, the second, and last ever, use of nuclear weapons in war took place, as Nagasaki was bombed. The bomb used, 'Fat Man', was an implosion design in which a 'pineapple' of plutonium was imploded by precisely timed shaped charges, in itself quite a technical feat in 1945. The Hiroshima bomb had been of a much simpler 'gun' design that wasn't even tested.

The intended target of the Nagasaki bomb hadn't even been Nagasaki, but Kokura, which was obscured by dense smoke, causing the bombing plane to be diverted to Nagasaki.
On the way, the bomb started its own spontaneous countdown to explosion, a countdown that was halted at the last moment by the feverish efforts of technicians.

Finally, when the Nagasaki bomb was dropped it was significantly off-target, hitting the Mitsubishi works on the outskirts of Nagasaki rather than the main town.

The Nagasaki bomb is often forgotten: Its body — count, somewhere between 40 and 80,000 was just over half that of Nagasaki, so it is the 'other' bomb. Nonetheless it is important if only because the 'Fat Man' design is the design that underlies all subsequent nuclear weapon technology, US or Russian.

The human consequences of the Nagasaki bombing were every bit as horrific as those of Hiroshima, with an added poignancy that many of the victims were Japanese Christians who worshipped at the Nagasaki cathedral, close to ground zero.

On the 75th anniversary of the 'other' nuclear bombing,
it bears repeating that the Doomsday Clock, a measure of how close the world is to self-annihilation, is at an unprecedented 100 seconds to midnight, the end of civilization. This is a setting that was reached without reference to the coronavirus pandemic, which itself has done nothing to diminish nuclear risk.

The Australian and other Governments urgently need to commit themselves to measures that diminish the risk of an (accidental or otherwise) apocalypse.

With some 43 Governments having ratified the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), or Ban Treaty, and just 7 more required for entry-into-force, the Australian Government should reconsider its opposition to that treaty, sign it, ratify it, and strongly encourage other governments to do so. The arguments that the TPNW somehow undermines the NPT, or polarizes the
discussion between nuclear weapon states and non nuclear weapon states, or that it is 'feelgood' politics, are entirely without merit. The TPNW reinforces, and indeed helps to fulfill, the intent and spirit (and letter) of the NPT, and should be supported and fulfilled by every Government on the planet without exception. Weapons states above all.

Nagasaki may have been the 'other' bomb. But its 75th anniversary underlines the threat to civilization and to humans as a species posed by Hiroshima and Trinity.

And even in a world dominated by the coronavirus pandemic, the most immediate and most potent threat to humans remains the possibility of large
scale use of nuclear weapons, whose risk now is greater than it has ever been.

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