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It was the bomb that changed the history of mankind and the balance of power in the planet. From then on, war would be something different, and in the political vocabulary and in military strategy there would be new concepts like the 'doctrine of mutually assured nuclear destruction'.

The first ever atomic bomb dropped in early August 1945 practically erased the Japanese city of Hiroshima and caused 70,000 deaths in a few seconds. Death perhaps would have been better for the many more that suffered horrendous burns and the painful effects of radiation for years to come. It was the ultimate punishment for an obstinate nation that did not want to give up after starting its own war of aggression and terror in Asia years before Hitler's attack on Poland in September 1939. It was the only weapon that could convince the Japanese military



leaders of the futility of resistance. With the first atomic weapon and the warning that more were to come, the only alternatives for Japan were surrender or total destruction. And the Americans were

ready to drop more of these terrible weapons to end the war swiftly.

When the frail voice of Emperor Hiro Hito, of Japan was heard for the first time on the radio, the reasons for surrender

were clear: "The enemy has started using a new weapon that is the cruellest possible and one whose power to spread damage is really impossible to calculate. If we continue the fight the result would be not only the total collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation but the total extinction of human civilization".

The only way out for Japan was to reverse policy and declare total surrender.

The New York Herald Tribune, reporting on the event said that "the mightiest explosive force ever devised by man has hit Japan. Today Washington military authorities were convinced that this historic development of American and British science will shorten the war and that it marks the beginning of the atomic age, the future benefits of which civilization can only guess at present".

A new nightmare had been created for humankind.