



## Five Days in August: How World War II Became a Nuclear War

By Michael D. Gordin

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**Five Days in August: How World War II Became a Nuclear War** By Michael D. Gordin

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*Five Days in August* explores these and countless other legacies of the atomic bomb in a glaring new light. Daring and iconoclastic, it will result in far-reaching discussions about the significance of the A-bomb, about World War II, and about the moral issues they have spawned.

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## Five Days in August: How World War II Became a Nuclear War By Michael D. Gordin Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1925551 in Books
- Published on: 2015-08-18
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.10" h x .60" w x 6.00" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 232 pages

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Drawing on evidence that the atomic bomb was regarded as a weapon like any other before its first use, Princeton University's Gordin offers a concise and provocative reinterpretation of the beginning of the nuclear age. For the American military commanders in charge of the bomb, the main consideration was whether it would destroy enemy personnel and infrastructure as part of a "shock strategy" for winning Japan's unconditional surrender. Launching the nuclear missions from Tinian Island, the B-29 airplane base, further normalized the bomb's use within the matrix of Pacific island combat. Consideration of such special characteristics as radiation was muted until after the Japanese capitulation—indeed, discussions of a "Third Shot," with Tokyo the probable target, continued until the successful American occupation began in September 1945. The initially overwhelming support of the American public for the nuclear strikes reflected a belief that the war might have lasted more than another year. Even in that context, half the population opposed using gas in an attack—another indication, according to Gordin, that the atom bomb's special status was a postwar development. His worthy study concludes that the bomb's uniqueness has inappropriately encouraged Japan's reluctance to recognize and evaluate its war responsibility, and points toward the importance of examining nuclear weapons outside the familiar context of a nuclear standoff. (*Feb.*) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Review

"Michael D. Gordin's worthy study concludes that the bomb's uniqueness has inappropriately encouraged Japan's reluctance to recognize and evaluate its war responsibility, and points toward the importance of examining nuclear weapons outside the familiar context of a nuclear standoff."--**Publishers Weekly**

"Gordin has done an excellent job in surveying the diverse views on what happened during those momentous five days in August 1945."--**John Krige, Science**

"In this brief but impressive work, Gordin takes a fresh, unique look at a much-studied topic. Although he touches on the development of the atomic bomb, his main concern is how scientists, politicians, and military planners from the bomb's inception to the present have viewed this new weapon."--**J.L. Gall, Choice**

"In addition to lucid and careful summaries of the issues, a particular virtue of this book is the substantial and well-chosen collection of documents from American and Japanese sources."--**Lawrence D. Freedman, Foreign Affairs**

"*Five Days in August* is brief and accessible, effectively communicating even technical and scientific concepts, and would be of use to the history or international relations classroom. This reevaluation of 'nuclearism' is a timely study, worthy of consideration and discussion."--**Stephanie L. Trombley, Historian**

"This author has written a stimulating book that brims with insights and is based on an impressive amount of research. . . . Gordin has written a challenging book that ranges far beyond the five days mentioned in his title."--**Robert James Maddox, The Historian**

"This short book grips the general reader and leads the curious on to longer and more scholarly writings."--**Edwin R. McCullough, European Legacy**

"Refreshingly nonpolemical, *Five Days in August* is a must read for those interested in atomic history, the

final stages of World War II, and the future of nuclear weapons."--**William J. Astore, *Proceedings***

From the Back Cover

"Michael Gordin's *Five Days in August* is a gripping reconsideration of how the atomic bomb figured in the ending of World War II. Gordin recounts how the bomb came to be viewed soon after the unexpectedly swift surrender as a special, revolutionary weapon, and he ruminates upon the implications of that shift for weapons policy in the postwar world. In all, a remarkable, thought-provoking book."--**Daniel Kevles, author of *The Physicists: The History of a Scientific Community in Modern America***

"With stunning details grounded in a myriad of sources, Gordin captures the ethos of the first nuclear war--how it seemed back in the heat of war, before history revised its estimation of the bomb and made the twin bombings of August 1945 into a unique and self-evidently decisive event. No one can fully understand the end of World War II without taking on board Gordin's study."--**Peter Galison, author of *Einstein's Clocks, Poincaré's Map***

"Bold and provocative. No one has presented these arguments so coherently, so forcefully, and so intelligently with such gripping, dynamic style."--**Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, author of *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan***

"Powerful. *Five Days in August* vigorously proposes new ways of thinking about the World War II atomic bombings, their meanings, and their multiple legacies. It is a book that will provoke controversy and, ideally, help encourage new lines of research, argument, and emphasis. It has a deep critical knowledge and a subtle intelligence. The arguments are arresting and important."--**Barton Bernstein, Stanford University**

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**Wanda Pence:**

Five Days in August: How World War II Became a Nuclear War can be one of your basic books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this e-book has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The copy writer giving his/her effort to place every word into enjoyment arrangement in writing Five Days in August: How World War II Became a Nuclear War but doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource information that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can certainly drawn you into new stage of crucial pondering.

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