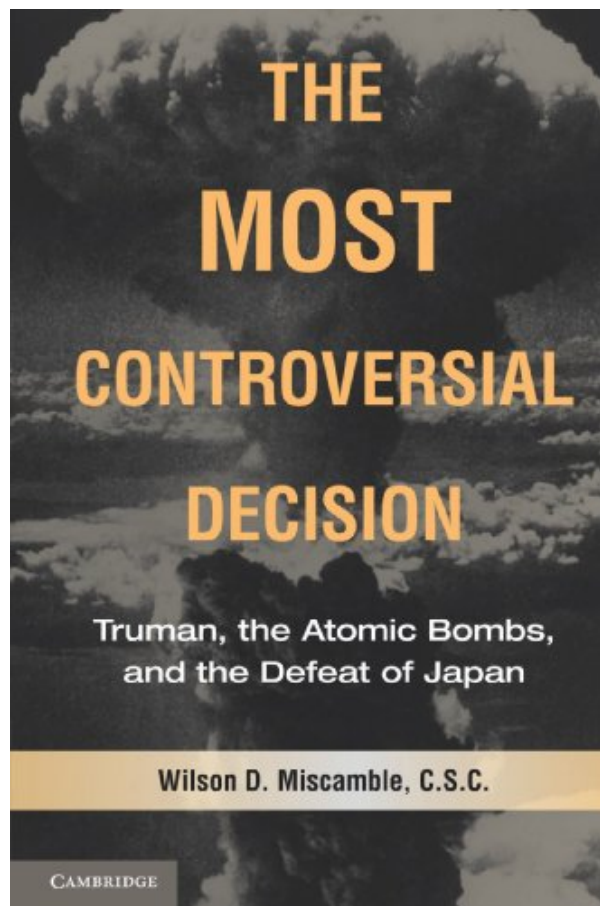
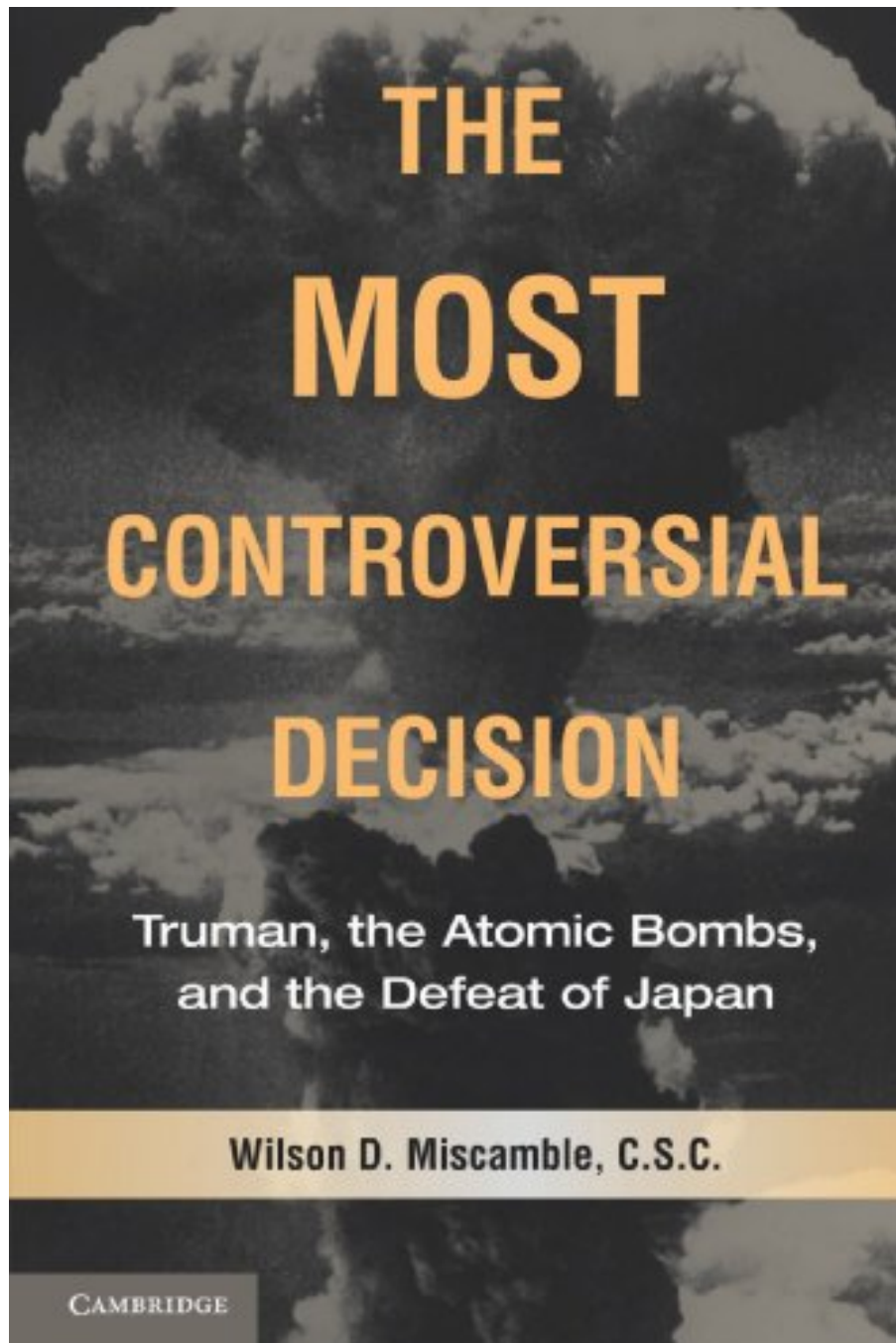


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Review

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This book explores the American use of atomic bombs, and the role these weapons played in the defeat of the Japanese Empire in World War II. It focuses on President Harry S. Truman's decision making regarding this most controversial of all his decisions. The book relies on notable archival research, and the best and most recent scholarship on the subject to fashion an incisive overview that is fair and forceful in its judgments. This study addresses a subject that has been much debated among historians, and it confronts head-on the highly disputed claim that the Truman administration practiced "atomic diplomacy." The book goes beyond its central historical analysis to ask whether it was morally right for the United States to use these terrible weapons against Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It also provides a balanced evaluation of the relationship between atomic weapons and the origins of the Cold War.

- Sales Rank: #322272 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Cambridge University Press
- Published on: 2011-04-11
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.98" h x .47" w x 5.98" l, .70 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 192 pages

Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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15 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

Not A Blast

By Alan Weiss

This is a well-researched book on this controversial topic. I found the author to be unbiased and interesting in his views. Having read extensively on the war in the Pacific, I've never doubted the rationale to drop the bomb, especially if one considers the prevailing zeitgeist in the US. We seem to engage in revisionist history too often, usually led by people with no understanding of history, sociology, psychology, or even geography, who focus on applying contemporary mores and values to periods in which they did not and could not exist.

I doubt this is a "spoiler," but I'll warn you not to read on just in case you want to read the book to find out how the author feels. I came away with the understanding that the use of the atomic bomb was thought to be in the best interests of our nation at the time (nations operate solely in their best interests if they are to survive) and the author concurs. The Cold War as an aftermath is discussed, and from then to now no one has used atomic weapons again. If anyone does, no doubt it will be by terrorists trying to destroy everyone who doesn't agree with them.

If you are truly interested in the history, this is a good book, though the writing isn't going to win a Pulitzer Prize. If you already have your mind made up that we shouldn't have used the bomb, then I doubt you'll be open to these facts and arguments.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

A look at the facts that were known at the time, not in hindsight

By Graves

In 1945 Japan was arming its civilian population with spears and old rifles to oppose the American force when it came but when it came, it was not from the beaches but from the sky: Unimaginable, Irresistible, mushroom shaped. Nearly 70 years after the event, some people still debate whether or not the United States needed to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Stepping into this is Wilson Miscamble.

Today there are lots of such debates using information now available on both sides of the divide but in 1945 there was much less known of the Japanese plans and much more doubt about the future and that is what Miscamble brings to the party. His work, although it does have a bit towards the end on the workings of the Japanese government that was unknown to Truman-and certainly would have encourage his use of nuclear weapons had he known- focuses predominantly on what the Americans knew and thought. What was going through their meetings and councils and what were the facts they had before them when they used the Atomic bombs.

The biggest elements were a fear of the Soviets-having seen how they were failing to keep their Yalta commitments on freedoms in areas they conquered, a soviet intervention in the east, something no one desperately needed, might well lead to a soviet expansion there and the fact that no one saw the atomic bombs as the game changers they were. They saw them as another weapon to be used along side conventional weapons, naval blockade and land forces. Anything that would stop the need for troops to land on Japan proper and suffer even more casualties like had been seen in places like Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

In the end Miscamble has written a book that gets a bit wordy at times, but is very needed for that decades old debate on the right or wrong of Hiroshima as he focuses not so much on what we know now, but what was known *then* and how that influenced the American government to make the choice it did.

12 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

A Clear View Of the End of WW II

By Peter Shire

This is a great book and an important one in these days of PC, where whole generations have disassociated themselves from the reality of WWII and what was needed to win. Extremely important to realize that in spite of the propaganda it is close to a certainty that FDR would have dropped the bomb on Germany had we had it in time, which puts the lie to the idea put forward by nay sayers that it was a racist action against the Japanese - which is only one of many misconceptions about the war. Recommended to everyone who is PC, and those who aren't who wish to clarify their arguments. Like Ike, it gets five stars.

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