The dropping of atomic bombs by the United States on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945 were the final acts of an Asian war that began in the 1930s. The bombings are the first and only instances of the use of nuclear weapons in combat. Historians have long debated whether the use of atomic weapons was necessary to bring about a swift end to the Pacific War—one of the most brutal wars in history. Even today there is no consensus on the necessity of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. What became clear from the bombings, however, is the harrowing destructive capacity of nuclear weapons. Today, groups in these cities are leading efforts to eliminate nuclear arms around the globe.

This exhibit, provided by the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, shows the impact and aftermath of the bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.