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### General Leslie Groves: Public Relations and Propaganda, Then and Now

The Manhattan Project and the subsequent bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have left their legacies not just in the United States and Japan, but also worldwide. Though initially well received and credited for ending the war, the bombings are a source of never ending debate between scholars and the general public alike. As more information has come to light in recent years, new arguments have emerged and opinions have changed. However, in August 1945, just after the bombings, very little information was available.

This limited amount of information was the work of General Leslie Groves, the head of the Manhattan Project and chief advocate for censorship both before and in the wake of the bombings. By limiting sources and carefully formatting all statements made by the United States government in regards to the atomic bombings, General Groves created an impressive public relations strategy capable of steering the press away from an initially negative reaction to the bombings. However, General Groves' methods were sometimes questionable, and perhaps, in retrospect, immoral. This paper aims to examine his methods by first taking a look at the business of public relations itself, including how it operates today and its history. From there, it will discuss the life of General Groves, his role in the Manhattan Project, and the public relations methods he employed to ensure a positive reaction from the American public. In the final sections, it will analyze the effectiveness of General Groves' strategy by looking at the initial reception of the bombings, and determine, from a modern public relations perspective, if the

same methods could be employed today, and whether or not the methods used can be categorized as propaganda.

To understand the nature of General Groves' tactics in preparation for the dropping of the atomic bombs, one must first have an understanding of public relations itself. "The use of communication to influence public opinion and human behavior is as old as civilization. Farm bulletins telling farmers how to grow their crops were being issued 1,800 years before Christ was born." (Cutlip, xiv). Though public relations has existed throughout history in one form or another, its origins as a vocation can best be traced to the United States. Due to the First Amendment, it was easy to advocate for one opinion or another without the interference of the government.

Not surprisingly, most opinions put forth by early public relations in the United States were political in nature. Leaders of the colonies convinced subjects of the British Empire to settle in what would become of the United States through the use of the pamphlets. Later, the American government would convince its people to settle the frontier with much the same method. By the mid-1800's, politicians had realized the importance of public relations in political campaigns, and thus integrated the practice. Teddy Roosevelt was the first president to use public relations not just in his campaign, but also to influence public opinion during his time in the White House. From there, public relations became much more widely used. By the mid-twentieth century, larger companies such as General Motors were using it to promote their own companies, thus creating a new, non-political branch of the vocation.

In the modern age, public relations agents perform several functions, but their main purpose is to "...ethically and effectively plead the cause of a client or organization in the free-wheeling forum of public debate." (Cutlip, xii). Companies today most commonly use public

relations to gain positive coverage in news publications about the product or service they are trying to sell, just as politicians use it to sell themselves. The primary responsibilities of a PR agent or firm can be categorized as follows:

1. Write pitches about the client in an attempt to gain news coverage on whatever the client is trying to sell or promote.
2. Facilitate communication between the client and the reporter by writing press releases, providing news materials, and enforcing press embargoes.
3. Advise the client on how its actions will affect public opinion.
4. If the client is drawn into an incident that throws its image into poor public favor, attempt to gracefully extinguish any metaphorical fires the client may have created and recover the client's image.

Public relations can be a challenging job, particularly if the client's action is so terrible that it risks ruining its image. The company British Petroleum has gone through such an incident as a result of the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. Though its public relations team worked tirelessly to assuage a distressed public's environmental concerns, it took months for the company to end the spill, tarnishing the image of the company much like it had tarnished the environmental integrity of the Gulf of Mexico. In the years since, the public relations team has labored to regain a better image for the company, but it is an uphill battle. The public does not forget such massively destructive events.

General Leslie Groves aimed to avoid such a disaster. Born into a military family, Groves pursued a career in the same field as his father's, to some extent—Leslie Richard Groves Sr. was a military chaplain, but Leslie Richard Groves Jr. was an engineer. After graduating fourth in his class from West Point, General Groves gradually worked his way up the military career ladder.

He traveled beyond the United States at several points, but ultimately returned to Washington, where he supervised the building of the Pentagon. Though Groves was more than competent in his task, he very much wished to leave Washington for a war theater, thinking it would somehow be less hectic than the stress he endured at the nation's capital.

However, this relocation was not to be the case. General Groves was reassigned to head the Manhattan Project in 1942, which kept him in Washington. He was promoted to brigadier general, and, from there, took control of one of the most ambitious projects in American history. The Manhattan Project consumed Groves' life even more than his work on the Pentagon had. The longer he worked at it, the more responsibilities arose. "Gradually, I had to take over other unforeseen responsibilities, such as security and counterintelligence. I also became responsible for military intelligence on atomic developments throughout the world, as well as for insuring that the postwar position of the United States in the field of atomic energy would not be unfavorable." (Groves, xii). With all these responsibilities looming over General Groves, it is no surprise that he did everything within his power to ensure the project would remain secret, and then, once revealed, be viewed in a favorable light.

General Groves' public relations policy had two phases. The first, carried out before the public had any knowledge of the bombs, had the ultimate goal of utmost secrecy. Groves was meticulous in ensuring no intelligence on the project leaked. He started with setting up his own security staff in 1943. Most vital was Groves' compartmentalization, or "stove-piping" of knowledge. "Compartmentalization of knowledge, to me was the very heart of security. My rule was simple and not capable of misinterpretation—each man should know everything he needed to know to do his job and nothing else." (Groves, 140). By ensuring that Manhattan Project employees were only given information essential to their jobs, Groves made it so most workers

had no clue as to what they were laboring to achieve. In addition, employees were prohibited from speaking to those from other divisions about the nature of their work, and anyone wishing to travel between research sites needed written permission from General Groves to do so. This “stove-piping” kept workers entirely in the dark, as they knew little about the purpose of their own jobs, and could not talk to others to piece together hints.

In addition to censoring his own employees, Groves also censored the press in the years leading up to the unveiling of the atomic bomb. He had three general rules for the censorship:

First, nothing should be published that would in any way disclose vital information. Second, nothing should be published that might attract attention to any phase of the project. Third, it was particularly important to keep such matters out of any magazine or newspaper that was likely to be read by an enemy agent or by anyone whose knowledge of scientific progress would enable him to guess what was going on. (Groves, 146).

Most concerning to Groves was the idea of “speculative articles”, which may have drawn the attention of the public or the enemy, particularly if printed in a widely read publication. As a precaution, Groves ordered a ban on the use of certain words in the press and on the radio, such as “atomic energy”, along with a few decoy words, such as “yttrium”. “The goal was preventative in nature—to keep things as secret as possible, to black out completely any news about the bomb that might reveal its existence.” (Norris, 430). The result was that the press steered clear of any subjects having to do with atomic energy, and the Manhattan Project remained under wraps. As biographer Robert S. Norris says, “Leslie Groves knew how to keep a secret.” (Norris, 253).

The second phase of General Groves’ public relations strategy was planned long before citizens became aware of the atomic bomb. Groves took control of and managed vast amounts of information in order to ensure his success. In short, the aims of the second phase were to (1) inform the public about the atomic bomb, and portray its use in a moral (or at least favorable)

light, and (2), explain the science behind the bomb without revealing any technical information useful to the enemy. To accomplish this, General Groves set up a public relations firm within the MED. During the spring and summer of 1945, he worked closely with this organization to anticipate the material that would be needed upon the bomb's reveal to the world. Groves assisted in drafting press releases, public statements, and reports.

In preparation for the bomb's unveiling, General Groves hired New York Times reporter William L. Laurence. Laurence was granted nearly full access to information pertaining to the Manhattan Project, and would serve as the reporter with the "inside scoop" to break the news of the bomb to the world. The ten stories he wrote were heavily edited by Groves and his PR committee before being cleared to publish, but the result was a Pulitzer Prize for Laurence in the following year. Groves even went so far to as send Laurence across the Pacific to witness the bombings. He arrived too late to witness Hiroshima, but flew in one of the aircraft accompanying the *Bockscar* on its mission to Nagasaki three days later. His firsthand account was read worldwide.

General Groves' hiring of Laurence proved to be his wisest public relations decision. While public relations aims to find coverage, reporters give coverage, making Laurence, in a sense, a foil to General Groves. As a *New York Times* reporter, Laurence was privy to knowledge of how the press might behave and interpret the dropping of the bombs. Thus, he was able to advise Groves and help manipulate the strategy to something acceptable to the public. In addition to writing news stories, Laurence also drafted statements for politicians such as Truman and Stimson, and contributed to the phrasing of press releases. His knowledge of what the press was looking for helped to ensure Groves' public relations success.

General Groves was wise in his treatment of Laurence. Before being taken on by the Manhattan Project, Laurence was already deeply interested in science. He served as the *New York Times*' science reporter, and so his skills transferred smoothly over to Groves' team. By giving Laurence nearly unlimited knowledge of the project, Groves fostered a relationship with him that essentially had the reporter eating out of his hand. The atomic bomb was a career-making story, and Laurence had exclusive access. It made him all the more eager to assist General Groves and his PR team, even if his work was being censored. In some cases, articles he wrote served more to quell the concern of the public rather than inform, and were largely false. "...Laurence had a front page story in the *Times* disputing the notion that radiation sickness was killing people." (Goodman and Goodman). Laurence also wrote a fictional account of the *Trinity* test, which he witnessed from Compañia Hill, in the case that the explosion killed everyone involved.

With a *New York Times* reporter in his pocket, General Groves was unstoppable. Laurence's articles largely affected public opinion in the years following. "Laurence won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on the atomic bomb, and his faithful parroting of the government line was crucial in launching a half-century of silence about the deadly lingering effects of the bomb." (Goodman and Goodman). By reaching out to the press beforehand, Groves preemptively ensured there would be no initial backlash against the bombings. He used his powerful position to a great advantage in terms of controlling Laurence. As for Laurence, his journalism was unethical. General Groves may have offered him the biggest story of his life, but the censorship he agreed to and the falsities he reported were a major lapse in journalistic integrity.

In addition to William L. Laurence, General Groves called upon the assistance of Professor Henry DeWolf Smyth of Princeton University to help him compile a report of the scientific details of the project. Groves knew that in order to satisfy the American public's curiosity, they would need another source, but, due to the secrecy of the Manhattan Project, could only give a superficial amount of knowledge. The report's primary purpose was to "...tell the American people what their government had been doing regarding this new weapon and source of energy, and prepare them for the future." (Norris, 436). However, the Smyth report served another purpose—to tell those who had worked on the Manhattan Project what they could and could not say in regards to their work. Not only did Groves release a controlled source, but he controlled those who could elaborate by doing so.

General Groves, in sum, essentially kept the news of the bombings controversy free in his manipulation of sources. The statements made by politicians had been heavily edited by the MED's public relations team. The press releases had undergone the same treatment, and so had the Smyth report. Even New York Times reporter William L. Laurence had been on the MED's payroll, and his articles had been heavily edited. "The essential strategy was to saturate what would be a huge market hungry for information with officially approved material from the only authoritative source available." (Alperovitz, 598). Groves had already covered a story that the press would be hungry for with nothing but his own sources. The media ate it right up.

The result was as expected. In the days following the bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the newspapers and radio were filled with coverage of the subject, but remained largely controversy free. Stories ranged from the test at Alamogordo three weeks prior to the actual bombings. Not ignored were details of the Manhattan Project itself, or, at least, what General Groves had authorized could be said about it. "The dropping on Japan of an atomic

energy bomb, developed by frantic and intensive work in secret American laboratories, comes as another and by far the greatest step in the campaign of military obliteration and political and psychological ultimatums that started soon after V-E Day,” New York Times reporter Hanson W. Baldwin wrote on August 7<sup>th</sup>.

If anything, news articles most commonly took on the tone of being impressed with the bomb’s great power, both in its equivalence to tons of TNT and in the massive effort that the United States had undertaken to build it. On August 7<sup>th</sup>, New York Times reporter Jay Waltz praised the genius of those in the Manhattan Project, citing the incredible effort of numerous workers.

But the greatest marvel is not the size of the enterprise, its secrecy, or its cost, but the achievement of scientific brains in putting together infinitely complex pieces of knowledge held by many men in different fields of science into a workable plan. And hardly less marvelous has been the capacity of industry to design, and of labor to operate, the machines and methods to do things never done before so that the brain child of many minds came forth in physical shape and performed as it was supposed to do. (Waltz, *The New York Times*)

The shock that something so large had operated without citizens’ knowledge was astounding to many, and, coupled with the power of the bomb, it is no surprise that many of the reports in the days following the bombing took on this tone.

Of great importance to the press was the Smyth report, as it described not only the Manhattan Project, but scientific details as to how the bomb worked. Reporters were easily able to deconstruct the details of the report and explain to their audience the technology of the bomb in simple terms. “The sun’s power is the sun’s heat,” one article read, “For years scientists have known that this heat could not come from ordinary fires like any known on the earth’s face.” (Blakeslee, *The New York Times*). The article goes on to explain the concept of ‘atom smashing’ in common terms.

Of course, the results of the bombings were also discussed. The front of the New York Times' August 8<sup>th</sup> paper, two days after Hiroshima, described the results of the bomb's power. "Atomic Bomb Wiped Out 60% of Hiroshima," it read, "Shock Awed Fliers; Tokyo Cabinet Meets; Carrier Planes Strike Near China Coast". (*The New York Times*, 8 August 1945). A lengthy article followed, describing the mission and the reactions of those involved. Also present were articles about the reaction of the Japanese, though there was little to describe. Train service was suspended to Hiroshima, but this was the only event the average Japanese person was aware of. Otherwise, news of Hiroshima on the home islands was slow to spread.

However, the bombings were not completely without controversy. The August 8<sup>th</sup> edition of *The New York Times* ran a front-page article on the Vatican 'deploring' the use of the atomic bombs. Though it quoted the Vatican Press Office's statement on the use of the bombs, it wrote of little else. The article did not even have an author. Instead, it was credited to the Associated Press.

Overall, the initial reception of the bombings was positive. Reporters focused on the positive qualities of the situation, such as the technological marvel of the bomb and the lives it saved, all released to them at General Groves' approval. The August 7<sup>th</sup> edition of *The New York Times* wrote of little else other than the atomic bomb. Contained within it were stories on the bomb, the Manhattan Project, and their results. It also included a blurb on William L. Laurence and his activities with the Manhattan Project, an article on General Groves himself, the printed text of both Truman and Stimson's original statements, and an article about the scientists, with Dr. Oppenheimer at the forefront. The combining of these articles gave one implication: America had created a bomb powerful enough to beat the Japanese into unconditional surrender, and the war would soon finally end.

To say Groves' strategy completely worked, however, would only be a half-truth. While his initial cautionary actions were effective in subduing a critical reception by the American people, the months that followed led to emerging controversy over the bombings, and the eventual birth of the revisionist view. Former War Secretary Stimson's article published in Harper's Magazine the following year served to quell growing concerns, and thus established the orthodox view. This article was, in some part, orchestrated by General Groves.

In addition, with the atomic bomb and the Manhattan Project coming into light, General Groves was forced to share power, something he was no longer used to. Discussion shifted to how atomic energy should be regulated. Many wanted it out of military control. In addition to the enemies he had made during his time as head of the Manhattan Project, General Groves made even more in his struggle to maintain some power over what had become of it, but he no longer had a final say in anything. The laboratory at University of California Berkeley no longer wished to manufacture the bombs on site, and so they were moved. Manhattan Project activities at the University of Chicago were also relocated. The universities did not wish to be associated with something as destructive as the atomic bomb.

The issue of who would be in charge of atomic energy also served to discredit Groves. The May-Johnson Bill proposed a committee of nine who would have to report only to the president, could continue to work in secret, and could be members of the military. While Groves desperately wished for this bill to pass, others were not so eager. The scientists of the Manhattan Project opposed it strongly. "With their new commitment to educating the public about nuclear energy and their rapid organizing effort, they soon became effective lobbyists against the bill... They found that senators and congressmen, the press, and the public listened to them when they identified themselves as scientists who had worked on the bomb." (Norris, 457). In some part

due to these scientists, President Truman changed his opinion on the bill. At the end of a lengthy hearing process that took months, it did not pass.

The bill that did pass was the McMahon Bill. It banned military control of atomic energy and quickly gained favor with both politicians and the public. Groves vehemently opposed it. He did not like Chairman McMahon, who had proposed the bill, but his qualms ran deeper than that. Banning military involvement with atomic energy in all its forms seemed extreme to Groves. While he didn't necessarily want complete military control, he thought it should have some stake in its management. Unfortunately, interpretations of his opinion, both in congress and in the press, were manipulated. "Groves's position on this issue was repeatedly misrepresented and distorted at the time... The view that Groves was a proponent of military control is false, as is the allegation that he wanted to run the program after the war." (Norris, 461). Groves' struggle for power was not for himself, but for the future of the Manhattan Project. Unfortunately, society did not view it as such.

If anything, Groves represented to many people the dangerous result of someone given too much power. Due to the secrecy of the Manhattan Project, Groves was entrusted with just about everything. There were not enough people superior or equal to him to check his power, and thus General Groves was given free reign in nearly every aspect of the Manhattan Project. In addition, in the months after the bombings, Groves lied to the public about the effects of radiation in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "The government did not want to admit that it was ignorant or confused about the effects of the bomb, but it had to project an image of certainty and competence." (Norris, 440). Wilfred Burchett's article in the *London Daily Express* told of the horrors of radiation sickness. Published on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1945, it began to sow seeds of doubt in public opinion about the bombs. Groves tried to fight it, and tried to censor it, but the

culmination of these acts, plus his struggles in Congress, were not good for his reputation. As his biographer wrote, "In just a few short months Groves had gone from a celebrated war hero to a figure that represented in many people's minds the dangers of military control." (Norris, 452). In his management of the Manhattan Project, Groves had been given too much power.

Despite General Groves' fall from war hero into something more complicated within the public opinion sphere, it can be said his efforts to manipulate initial public opinion of the bomb were successful. The public relations campaign he concocted was well thought out and well executed. In the 1940's, public relations was still a developing art, generally reserved for politics, but Groves proved to be adept at it anyway. However, in this modern era, in the age of the Internet, Groves' technique would not work.

Two summers ago I began to work for a small public relations firm based out of the California Bay Area. Though the company mainly focuses on promotional PR for Silicon Valley enterprises, our staff comes from all walks of life. Some have done PR their whole career, others transitioned over from reporting, but all are greatly experienced in the press and media field. After sending several members of our staff an outline of General Groves' public relations strategy, I asked their opinions about several aspects of it. I will integrate these opinions into my analysis of Groves' strategy in the text that follows.

In plain terms, had the atomic bombings occurred today, General Groves would have failed to pacify the American people with the same strategy he used in 1945. There are several reasons for this, but of the largest concern is the fact that people today, not just Americans, but worldwide, are far more informed than their mid twentieth century counterparts. Higher education is increasing, and, with that, people are less willing to believe information from a single source, particularly if that source comes from the government.

In addition, though information of the Hiroshima bombing spread slowly in 1945, technology today allows rapid sharing of information. One can receive breaking news as it happens simply by glancing at a smartphone. Not only does news spread quickly, but so do opinions. The Internet is a powerful weapon for revealing varying perspectives on an issue. When I asked my coworker Tim Hay if it was even possible to paint an atomic bombing in a favorable light in this age, he cited technology as one of the largest obstacles to overcome: "...People can upload pictures from their phones of dead bodies or other atrocities, so it's a lot tougher to put a happy spin on stuff like that," he said. This concept was seen in action during the Arab Spring of 2011. Those experiencing it were capable of uploading videos to the Internet, where the whole world could watch. These videos greatly affected public opinion on the issue, generally in favor for the oppressed and against the dictators.

If Hiroshima were to take place today, General Groves would not have been capable of limiting the press and the people to just government-approved sources. Within minutes of the attack, news of it would have already appeared online, along with the emergence of a growing database of graphic videos of the horror on the ground. From there, it would not be possible to cast a favorable light upon an atomic bombing, especially if it were dropped on civilians, as was the case with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In fact, opinion would likely be so unfavorable that it is no wonder that the United States government has not dropped an atomic bomb in the seventy years since the end of World War II. Our knowledge of its horror has only grown as time has passed, meaning that public reaction to witnessing such atrocities in real time would tarnish a nation for the rest of its existence. Hiroshima and Nagasaki have already left their legacy upon the United States government, so what would dropping an atomic bomb today do to its reputation?

In addition, the high level of secrecy at which General Groves operated at is not possible in this era. "There is so much more media these days, and quite a lot of this media is simply individuals or small groups that write whatever they want, and do not have to seek anyone's blessing before publishing," said coworker Tim Hay. The Manhattan Project's method of banning certain words from publications before the dropping of the bomb would not work, nor would its censoring of articles in the aftermath, such as those of William Laurence, be possible. The existence of these smaller publications, combined with the faster methods in which people communicate today, would likely upset General Groves' "stove-piping" strategy.

So, had General Groves employed different techniques to create a public relations campaign in support of the atomic bombings in this age, would it have worked? Tim Hay says yes, if done in the exact opposite manner, by providing an oversaturation of information instead of attempting to keep a secret. "...what you would need to do today is bury people in useless, half-true information. Today, the opposite approach might work: Act like you're being open and transparent, then just overwhelm people with data and charts and page after page of useless stuff. Most people will get bored reading that, and they move on. And the government gets to look transparent," he said.

At first, such a plan might work. The average person did not sit down and read the entirety of the Obamacare legislation, also known as the Affordable Care Act. It's thousands of pages long. However, some people did, and promoted an open discussion over the issue. Following this logic, the Manhattan Project would not remain a secret for long, eventually revealing its existence to the enemy.

So, not only would General Groves have been unable to pacify the American people with government-approved sources in this age of technology, but secrecy wouldn't have been

possible, either. Quite simply, no matter how he altered his plan, it would not be possible in today's world to secretly conceive an atomic bomb project, drop the bomb on innocent civilians, and then convince citizens to hold a favorable view of the situation. In the words of James Byrnes, doing so would result in a "crucifixion" by public opinion.

Granted, Americans at the time hated the Japanese, and seemed content to accept the bombings as retribution for the horrifying acts of the Japanese army. However, the revisionist school against the dropping of the bombs has only gained traction in the years following World War II. If presented immediately with atrocities such as what the Japanese of Hiroshima encountered on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945, it is hard to believe the American people would be immoral enough to not be upset by the act.

Webster's Dictionary defines propaganda as "The spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person." This is a remarkably broad statement. By this definition, a TV advertisement for dish soap falls into the category of propaganda. So does the business of public relations itself, especially General Groves' use of it. Does that make both General Groves' public relations plan and public relations in its plain form propaganda?

Luckily, books on the subject elaborate on the basic definition of propaganda. "To identify a message as propaganda is to suggest something negative and dishonest." (Jowett and O'Donnell, 15). However, in the United States, the lines of negativity and dishonesty are frequently blurred. The idea of promoting anything for one's own profit is, by default, dishonest, as one frequently has to stretch the truth about their product to make a sale. The practice of this has taken strong hold in the United States, and usually has a strong connection to public relations. "America's public relations practitioners wield major influence in the public opinion

game. Propagandist, press agent, public information officer, lobbyist—whatever their title, their aim is the same: to influence public behavior.” (Cutlip, xi). If there is a line that separates propaganda from public relations, it is hard to draw, and most certainly disputed.

However, there are some differences between common public relations and the practices of General Groves that make his actions easier to categorize. As a government agent, Groves was capable of censorship. He banned certain words from being printed in United States publications, and approved articles on the atomic bombings before they were allowed to be published. General Groves had control, which plays a huge role in propaganda. “...propaganda is associated with control and is regarded as a deliberate attempt to alter or maintain a balance of power that is advantageous to the propagandist.” (Jowett and O’Donnel, 15). Creating a public opinion favorable to the atomic bombs was beneficial to both General Groves and the United States government, and Groves had the power to guarantee that.

Public relations in its normal form, however, ultimately does not hold control. Public relations agents can flood a reporter’s inbox with product pitches, and write all the press releases they want, but they cannot be guaranteed coverage, nor can they guarantee that the coverage of their client will be positive. It is not just free speech included in the First Amendment, but also freedom of the press. In General Groves’ case, the press was not allowed to act freely, therefore creating an unnatural manipulation. This was due in no small part to Groves’ drafting of William L. Laurence into the Manhattan Project fold. The United States government needed a method to justify its actions, and General Groves ensured it happened. “Propaganda also has as its purpose to maintain the legitimacy of the institution or organization that it represents and thereby ensure the legitimacy of its activities.” (Jowett and O’Donnel, 155). General Groves was incredibly

effective in his work, but, because he forcibly manipulated the press into parroting a certain opinion, his actions go beyond ordinary public relations and stray into the realm of propaganda.

General Groves did a fantastic job as the head of the Manhattan Project. Not only did he maintain secrecy, but he managed to coordinate the making of an atomic bomb by employees who had very little knowledge of what they were doing. In addition, he created a public relations strategy meant to shape public opinion of the bombs after they were initially dropped, and was largely successful. However, in this technological age, such a strategy would not have worked. The public is no longer so easily convinced with evidence from a single source, nor is the secrecy at which Groves operated attainable. In addition, videos and evidence uploaded onto the Internet after the bombings would have been impossible to censor, thus altering public opinion.

Finally, Groves' actions also reveal what happens when one person is given too much power. With control over the entirety of the Manhattan Project, General Groves' actions went unchecked. Though such finite control contributed to the success of the project, it also allowed Groves to present the American people with propaganda in the form of a public relations strategy meant to show the atomic bombings in a favorable light. Today, we can garner two lessons from this experience. Firstly, it is unwise to grant one person unchecked power over such an important thing. Secondly, one must look at a situation from different viewpoints to gain a full perspective. World War II may have been the "good" war, but war is full of immoralities. In this case, convincing the American people of the benevolence of atomic bombings while others suffered in forced silence was immoral. If we, as global citizens, can remain informed and skeptical, then perhaps we will never be convinced of such things ever again.

## Bibliographical Essay:

Due to the unique nature of this topic, I drew from a wide variety of sources. Those sources were two biographies on Groves, two books on public relations, one book on propaganda, my own personal knowledge of public relations, the knowledge of my coworkers, and many articles in between.

The two biographies on General Groves were his autobiography, *Now It Can Be Told*, and Robert Norris' biography, *Racing For the Bomb*. These two books were essential in learning not just about the life of General Groves, but also his public relations techniques, and his extreme level of secrecy. As autobiographies are inherently biased in favor of the person writing them, Norris' work helped to clarify where Groves was a less than reliable narrator, and confirmed where he was telling the truth.

The two books on public relations were both by author Scott Cutlip. I requested both to be sent to Odegaard library through the online system, and did not realize they were by the same author. Had I known, I would have sought out a different author, but Cutlip's work was helpful nonetheless. He specializes in the history of public relations within the United States, and so his books gave me an idea of how the practice was viewed within this country in the years leading up to the Manhattan Project.

The book by Garth and O'Donnell helped deepen my knowledge of propaganda. Despite being an intern at a public relations firm, I did not have much understanding of the subject. *Propaganda and Persuasion* was easy to follow and categorized into informative sections, which made my research far easier. In addition, it was very quotable, and thus it helped to bolster my paper.

I should also mention that Gar Alperovitz's *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* was what initially piqued my interest in this topic. Alperovitz summarized Groves' public relations technique quite well, and thus made his book an invaluable source. If I ever felt lost in the information I had gathered from my other sources, a turn back to Alperovitz's chapter on Groves set me straight again.

I also used the knowledge I have gained in the past year and a half while working in the public relations field. As that knowledge is limited by the small amount of time I have been in the business, I also employed my coworkers to augment my sections on the interpretation of General Groves' PR technique. Unfortunately, out of the three coworkers I asked, only one managed to draft a physical reply to me, and thus his quotes are the only ones used in the paper. As the end of the year is busy for everyone, my two coworkers were unable to find the time to reply, having prioritized their work first.

This paper also led to my discovery of microfilms. I looked at the editions of *The New York Times* from August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1945 to August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1945. They proved to be an excellent primary source. There is no better way to find an interpretation of news media than interpreting that media by oneself. Unfortunately, I was very busy this quarter, and did not have the opportunity to view as many articles as I wanted to. Had I had more time, or had this paper been for a graduate level class instead of an undergraduate level class, I would have liked to view editions of *The New York Times* between the dates of August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1945 to October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1945. In addition, I would have liked to look at other newspapers to gain a broader knowledge of how the country interpreted the bombings.

Finally, "The Hiroshima Cover-Up" article by Amy and David Goodman was an excellent source for knowledge on reporter William L. Laurence. The biographies on General

Groves do speak about him, but "The Hiroshima Cover-Up" offered a harsher perspective of Laurence, and allowed me to lengthen the section on him in this paper.

Overall, I am very satisfied with my sources. Given more time, I would have loved to deepen my knowledge of General Groves and 1940's media. However, as this is an undergraduate class, I am pleased with the knowledge I attained. If I were to write a graduate thesis, I would consider elaborating upon this topic.

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