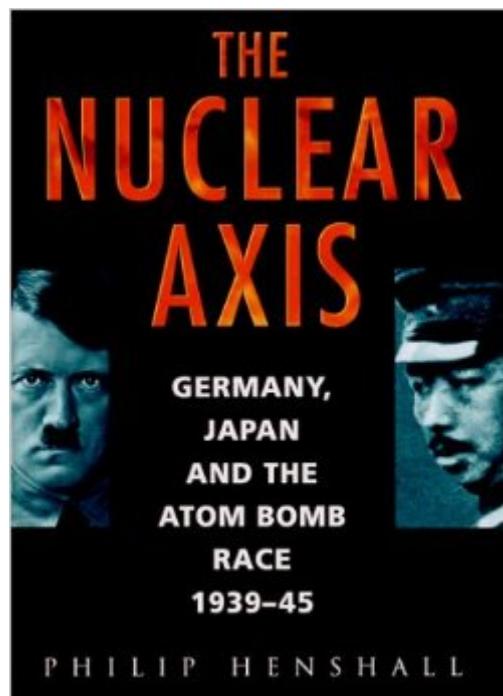


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The Nuclear Axis



Synopsis

It has been generally accepted that Germany and Japan were years behind the Allies in producing a nuclear weapon during World War II and that Japan in particular was technically incapable of doing so. The author argues that these assumptions are unfounded and reveals that an Axis nuclear weapon was a very real threat to the Allies. Philip Henshall begins by outlining how Germany's conventional military situation began to deteriorate from 1943 onwards, how interest was revived in secret long-range weapons, and how SS General Kammler assumed virtually complete control of all long-range weapons projects. The origin of weapons in Germany is examined, with parallel references to the USA's Manhattan Project and, Henshall puts forward his theory that the leading figure in German nuclear science, Heisenberg, knew what was required to build an atomic bomb and fully understood the physics of the device - contrary to the accepted version of events.

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Customer Reviews

"Nuclear Axis" is the third book by this author (a British missile engineer) on the theme of Axis secret weapons. Henshall began his research by visiting the remains of German missile bases in Northern France, but more recently has employed more traditional archival sources (e.g. ENIGMA decrypts). His general themes are 1) that the German V-weapons were originally intended for nuclear payloads; 2) both Germany and Japan were more advanced in nuclear weapons research than orthodox history allows; 3) that there was a high level of cooperation between the German and Japanese programs. These are radical views indeed, demanding hard evidence to back them up.

That evidence is just not there. Henshall actually retracts some of the most interesting claims in his earlier books (e.g. his "missile silos" west of Cherbourg turn out to be unfinished emplacements for old battleship guns!). The new evidence in this book is ambiguous at best. For instance, decoded messages show that the Japanese requested shipments of zirconium and beryllium from Germany. Henshall goes on at length about the uses of these elements in nuclear bombs and reactors, but never explores the non-nuclear uses they might have had in 1945. There is no evidence of the large facilities that would have been necessary for any serious A-bomb program anywhere in Germany or Japan. Finally, in the real world, there is no evidence for real collaboration between the four known Axis nuclear weapon programs (German Army, German Post Office, Japanese Army, and Japanese Navy). In totalitarian states, the political power to be gained by producing the magic weapon was too tempting to the various empire-builders for the kind of collaboration Henshall posits. I only gave the book two stars because it does have some interesting drawings of V-weapon bases that are hard to find today. For a serious academic study of the V-weapons, find a copy of Dieter Holsken's "V-Missiles of the Third Reich".

I looked forward to reading this book as the third part of Mr. Hensall's discussion of the Nazi and Japanese advanced weapons program. The first two books had appeared to be well-researched, and somewhat ground-breaking their thesis that the Nazis were quite intent on placing NBC warheads on the V1 and V2. I guess I was wrong. This book is a rather workman-like recital of site details from the first two books to which is appended rumor, conjecture, and leaps of faith about what took place in the respective nuclear programs. Facts are twisted and rumors made truths. The most glaring example of this is when Mr. Hensall recants a position from "Vengance"; namely that there were Bazi missile silos near Cherbourg. He now says that they were pre-war French designed bases for gun turrets. He passes on his mistake with a disingenuous, "well that's what they looked like to me" comment. What the author should be saying is "I misled you by allowing my imagination and desire for my beliefs were correct to outweigh a complete lack of evidence." Overall, a waste of time and money similar in scope to the tripe produced by folks like Henry Stevens and Joseph Farrell.

Apart from the detailed accounts of V weapon launch site, the book contains mostly circumstantial evidence and a staggering number of assumptions especially in the use of rare materials. It lacks credibility in the key areas particularly uncorroborated evidence of nuclear tests by the Japanese & the Germans. Credibility is also lost when the author starts discussing Nazi UFOs & underground

power plants running for 50 years. There is too much rehashing of information from previous books & not enough following up on interesting leads, this book will be improved by reworking for a second edition. As well as the lack of follow up on some sources, there are important additional sources that the author has omitted. At least one & possibly two, He177 bombers were modified to carry a large single bomb.

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