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Obama to be first sitting US president to visit Hiroshima

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The May 27 visit to the site alongside Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe instead aims "to highlight his continued commitment to pursuing the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons," the White House said in a statement.

"He will not revisit the decision to use the atomic bomb at the end of World War II. Instead, he will offer a forward-looking vision focused on our shared future," Deputy National Security Adviser Ben Rhodes wrote in a separate blog.

Obama's visit comes as part of a visit May 20-28 to Japan to attend a Group of Seven summit as well as Vietnam, his 10th to the region that has played a large role in the president's strategic "pivot" toward Asia.

The Japanese national flag flutters at half-mast in the foreground of the atomic bomb dome at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, in western Japan August 6, 1998. REUTERS/Kimimasa Mayama/File Photo

A U.S. warplane dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima 71 years ago at the end of World War Two, and there have been concerns that a U.S. presidential visit would be controversial in the United States if it were seen as an apology. [nL3N17P1Z2]

The bomb dropped on Aug. 6, 1945 killed thousands of people instantly and about 140,000 by the end of that year. Nagasaki was bombed on Aug. 9, 1945, and Japan surrendered six days later.

(Reporting by Megan Cassella and Susan Heavey; Editing by Chizu Nomiya)

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