

# Debate on Dropping the Atomic Bomb

On August 6, 1945, a single bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, killing 80,000 people immediately and about 60,000 more within six months. On August 9, a second atomic bomb that ultimately killed about 70,000 people was dropped on Nagasaki.

## **1. Unanimous resolution of the League of Nations Assembly, Protection of Civilian Populations Against Bombing From the Air in Case of War, League of Nations, September 30, 1938**

Considering that on numerous occasions public opinion has expressed through the most authoritative channels its horror of the bombing of civilian populations;...

I. Recognizes the following principles as a necessary basis for any subsequent regulations:

- 1) The intentional bombing of civilian populations is illegal;
- 2) Objectives aimed at from the air must be legitimate military objectives and must be identifiable;
- 3) Any attack on legitimate military objectives must be carried out in such a way that civilian populations in the neighbourhood are not bombed through negligence.

## **2. Appeal of President Franklin D. Roosevelt on Aerial Bombardment of Civilian Populations, September 1, 1939**

...If resort is had to this form of inhuman barbarism [The ruthless bombing from the air of civilians in unfortified centers of population] during the period of the tragic conflagration with which the world is now confronted, hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings who have no responsibility for, and who are not even remotely participating in, the hostilities which have now broken out, will lose their lives. I am therefore addressing this urgent appeal to every government which may be engaged in hostilities publicly to affirm its determination that its armed forces shall in no event, and under no circumstances, undertake the bombardment from the air of civilian populations or of unfortified cities...

## **3. 7/25/45 Truman's Diary**

"We met at 11 A.M. today. That is Stalin, Churchill and the U.S. President. But I had a most important session with Lord Mountbatten & General Marshall before then. We have discovered the most terrible bomb in the history of the world. It may be the fire destruction prophesied in the Euphrates Valley Era, after Noah and his fabulous Ark....

"The weapon is to be used against Japan between now and August 10th. I have told the Sec. of War, Mr. Stimson, to use it so that military objectives and soldiers and sailors are the target and not women and children. Even if the Japs are savages, ruthless, merciless and fanatic, we as the leader of the world for the common welfare cannot drop this terrible bomb on the old capital or the new [*Kyoto or Tokyo*].

"He [*Stimson*] and I are in accord. The target will be a purely military one and we will issue a warning statement [*known as the Potsdam Proclamation*] asking the Japs to surrender and save lives. I'm sure they will not do that, but we will have given them the chance. It is certainly a good thing for the world that Hitler's crowd or Stalin's did not discover this atomic bomb. It seems to be the most terrible thing ever discovered, but it can be made the most useful."

#### **4. Potsdam Declaration, 1 August 1945, Proclamation Defining Terms for Japanese Surrender, July 26, 1945**

(1) We-The President of the United States, the President of the National Government of the Republic of China, and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, representing the hundreds of millions of our countrymen, have conferred and agree that Japan shall be given an opportunity to end this war.

(2) The prodigious land, sea and air forces of the United States, the British Empire and of China, many times reinforced by their armies and air fleets from the west, are poised to strike the final blows upon Japan. This military power is sustained and inspired by the determination of all the Allied Nations to prosecute the war against Japan until she ceases to resist.

(4) The time has come for Japan to decide whether she will continue to be controlled by those self-willed militaristic advisers whose unintelligent calculations have brought the Empire of Japan to the threshold of annihilation, or whether she will follow the path of reason.

(5) Following are our terms. We will not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay.

(6) There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world.

(7) Until such a new order is established and until there is convincing proof that Japan's war-making power is destroyed, points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall be occupied to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth.

(9) The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives.

(10) We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established.

(11) Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy and permit the exaction of just reparations in kind, but not those [industries] which would enable her to re-arm for war. To this end, access to, as distinguished from control of, raw materials shall be permitted. Eventual Japanese participation in world trade relations shall be permitted.

(12) The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government.

(13) We call upon the government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.

**5. (MEMORANDUM ON THE USE OF S-1 BOMB, Harrison-Bundy Files, RG 77, microfilm publication M1108, folder 77, National Archives, Washington, DC).**

On July 2, 1945, Sec. of War Henry Stimson and Truman discussed a proposal by Stimson to call for Japan to surrender. Stimson's memo to the President advised, "I personally think that if in saying this we should add that we do not exclude a constitutional monarchy under her present dynasty, it would substantially add to the chances of acceptance". Stimson's proposed surrender demand stated that the reformed Japanese government "may include a constitutional monarchy under the present dynasty" (U.S. Dept. of State, Potsdam 1, pg. 889-894).

However, the constitutional monarchy line was **not** included in the surrender demand, known as the Potsdam Proclamation, that was broadcast on July 26th, in spite of Stimson's eleventh hour protestations that it be left in (*Diary of Henry L. Stimson, 7/24/45, Yale Univ. Library, New Haven, Conn.*).

**6. John McCloy, (Assistant Sec. of War)**

"I have always felt that if, in our ultimatum to the Japanese government issued from Potsdam [in July 1945], we had referred to the retention of the emperor as a constitutional monarch and had made some reference to the reasonable accessibility of raw materials to the future Japanese government, it would have been accepted. Indeed, I believe that even in the form it was delivered, there was some disposition on the part of the Japanese to give it favorable consideration. When the war was over I arrived at this conclusion after talking with a number of Japanese officials who had been closely associated with the decision of the then Japanese government, to reject the ultimatum, as it was presented. I believe we missed the opportunity of effecting a Japanese surrender, completely satisfactory to us, without the necessity of dropping the bombs."

McCloy quoted in James Reston, *Deadline*, pg. 500.

**7. GENERAL DOUGLAS MacARTHUR**

MacArthur biographer William Manchester has described MacArthur's reaction to the issuance by the Allies of the Potsdam Proclamation to Japan: "...the Potsdam declaration in July, demand[ed] that Japan surrender unconditionally or face 'prompt and utter destruction.' MacArthur was appalled. He knew that the Japanese would never renounce their emperor, and that without him an orderly transition to peace would be impossible anyhow, because his people would never submit to Allied occupation unless he ordered it. Ironically, when the surrender did come, it was conditional, and the condition was a continuation of the imperial reign. Had the General's advice been followed, the resort to atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki might have been unnecessary."

William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur 1880-1964*, pg. 512.

**8. Leo Szilard, (The first scientist to conceive of how an atomic bomb might be made - 1933)**

After Germany surrendered, Szilard attempted to meet with President Truman. Instead, he was given an appointment with Truman's Sec. of State to be, James Byrnes. In that meeting of May 28, 1945, Szilard told Byrnes that the atomic bomb should not be used on Japan. Szilard recommended, instead, coming to an international agreement on the control of atomic weapons before shocking other nations by their use:

"I thought that it would be a mistake to disclose the existence of the bomb to the world before the government had made up its mind about how to handle the situation after the war. Using the bomb certainly would disclose that the bomb existed." According to Szilard, Byrnes was not interested in international control: "Byrnes... was concerned about Russia's postwar behavior. Russian troops had moved into Hungary and Rumania, and Byrnes thought it would be very difficult to persuade Russia to withdraw her troops from these countries, that Russia might be more manageable if impressed by American military might, and that a demonstration of the bomb might impress Russia." Szilard could see that he wasn't getting through to Byrnes; "I was concerned at this point that by

demonstrating the bomb and using it in the war against Japan, we might start an atomic arms race between America and Russia which might end with the destruction of both countries."

### **9. A PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, July 3, 1945**

.... We, the undersigned scientists, have been working in the field of atomic power for a number of years. Until recently we have had to reckon with the possibility that the United States might be attacked by atomic bombs during this war and that her only defense might lie in a counterattack by the same means. Today with this danger averted we feel impelled to say what follows:

The war has to be brought speedily to a successful conclusion and the destruction of Japanese cities by means of atomic bombs may very well be an effective method of warfare. We feel, however, that such an attack on Japan could not be justified in the present circumstances. We believe that the United States ought not to resort to the use of atomic bombs in the present phase of the war, at least not unless the terms which will be imposed upon Japan after the war are publicly announced and subsequently Japan is given an opportunity to surrender.

If such public announcement gave assurance to the Japanese that they could look forward to a life devoted to peaceful pursuits in their homeland and if Japan still refused to surrender, our nation would then be faced with a situation which might require a re-examination of her position with respect to the use of atomic bombs in the war.

Atomic bombs are primarily a means for the ruthless annihilation of cities. Once they were introduced as an instrument of war it would be difficult to resist for long the temptation of putting them to such use.

The last few years show a marked tendency toward increasing ruthlessness. At present our Air Forces, striking at the Japanese cities, are using the same methods of warfare which were condemned by American public opinion only a few years ago when applied by the Germans to the cities of England. Our use of atomic bombs in this war would carry the world a long way further on this path of ruthlessness.

Atomic power will provide the nations with new means of destruction. The atomic bombs at our disposal represent only the first step in this direction and there is almost no limit to the destructive power which will become available in the course of this development. Thus a nation which sets the precedent of using these newly liberated forces of nature for purposes of destruction may have to bear the responsibility of opening the door to an era of devastation on an unimaginable scale.

In view of the foregoing, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition that you exercise your power as Commander-in-Chief to rule that the United States shall not, in the present phase of the war, resort to the use of atomic bombs.

Leo Szilard and 58 co-signers (Dr. Leo Szilard, 62, is a Hungarian-born physicist who helped persuade President Roosevelt to launch the A-bomb project and who had a major share in it. In 1945, however, he was a key figure among the scientists opposing use of the bomb.)

### **10. Leo Szilard, Interview: President Truman Did Not Understand, U.S. News & World Report, August 15, 1960, pages 68-71.**

Q: In what way? [did the bombing boomerang?]

A: I think it made it very difficult for us to take the position after the war that we wanted to get rid of atomic bombs because it would be immoral to use them against the civilian population. We lost the moral argument with which, right after the war, we might have perhaps gotten rid of the bomb.

Let me say only this much to the moral issue involved: Suppose Germany had developed two bombs before we had any bombs. And suppose Germany had dropped one bomb, say, on Rochester and the other on Buffalo, and

then having run out of bombs she would have lost the war. Can anyone doubt that we would then have defined the dropping of atomic bombs on cities as a war crime, and that we would have sentenced the Germans who were guilty of this crime to death at Nuremberg and hanged them?

But, again, don't misunderstand me. The only conclusion we can draw is that governments acting in a crisis are guided by questions of expediency, and moral considerations are given very little weight, and that America is no different from any other nation in this respect.

### **11. Dwight Eisenhower, *Mandate For Change*, pg. 380**

"...in [July] 1945... Secretary of War Stimson, visiting my headquarters in Germany, informed me that our government was preparing to drop an atomic bomb on Japan. I was one of those who felt that there were a number of cogent reasons to question the wisdom of such an act. ...

"During his recitation of the relevant facts, I had been conscious of a feeling of depression and so I voiced to him my grave misgivings, first on the basis of my belief that Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary, and secondly because I thought that our country should avoid shocking world opinion by the use of a weapon whose employment was, I thought, no longer mandatory as a measure to save American lives. It was my belief that Japan was, at that very moment, seeking some way to surrender with a minimum loss of 'face'. The Secretary was deeply perturbed by my attitude..."

### **12. Admiral William D. Leahy (Chief of Staff to Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman)**

"It is my opinion that the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender because of the effective sea blockade and the successful bombing with conventional weapons.

"The lethal possibilities of atomic warfare in the future are frightening. My own feeling was that in being the first to use it, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children."

- William Leahy, *I Was There*, pg. 441.

### **13. Gar Alperovitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb***

- Intercepted cables showed Japan responding positively to a U.S. offer of a surrender based on the "Atlantic Charter" as put forward in an official July 21, 1945 American radio broadcast. The key clause of the Charter promised that every nation could choose its own form of government (which would have allowed Japan to keep its Emperor).
- On July 25 (reported in MAGIC on July 26), an intercepted message from Japanese Foreign Minister Togo to Ambassador Sato in Moscow cited the radio broadcast--and stated without reservation: The fact that the Americans alluded to the Atlantic Charter is particularly worthy of attention at this time. It is impossible for us to accept unconditional surrender, no matter in what guise, but it is our idea to inform them by some appropriate means that there is no objection to the restoration of peace on the basis of the Atlantic Charter. (See p. 399, Chapter 31)
- Rear Admiral L. Lewis Strauss, special assistant to the Secretary of the Navy from 1944 to 1945 (and later chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission....recalled:

"I proposed to Secretary Forrestal at that time that the weapon should be demonstrated. . . . Primarily, it was because it was clear to a number of people, myself among them, that the war was very nearly over. The Japanese

were nearly ready to capitulate. . . . My proposal to the Secretary was that the weapon should be demonstrated over some area accessible to the Japanese observers, and where its effects would be dramatic. I remember suggesting that a good place--satisfactory place for such a demonstration would be a large forest of cryptomaria [sic] trees not far from Tokyo. The cryptomaria tree is the Japanese version of our redwood. . . . I anticipated that a bomb detonated at a suitable height above such a forest . . . would [have] laid the trees out in windrows from the center of the explosion in all directions as though they had been matchsticks, and of course set them afire in the center. It seemed to me that a demonstration of this sort would prove to the Japanese that we could destroy any of their cities, their fortifications at will. . . . "(See p. 333, Chapter 26)

- In his "third person" autobiography (co-authored with Walter Muir Whitehill) the commander in chief of the U.S. Fleet and chief of Naval Operations, Ernest J. King, stated:

The President in giving his approval for these [atomic] attacks appeared to believe that many thousands of American troops would be killed in invading Japan, and in this he was entirely correct; but King felt, as he had pointed out many times, that the dilemma was an unnecessary one, for had we been willing to wait, the effective naval blockade would, in the course of time, have starved the Japanese into submission through lack of oil, rice, medicines, and other essential materials. (See p. 327, Chapter 26)

#### **14. Grayford C. Payne, Bataan Death March survivor**

In the latter part of June 1945, a note was posted in our camp. It was signed by Hideki Tojo. And it said, 'The moment the first American soldier sets foot on the Japanese mainland, all prisoners of war will be shot.' And they meant it. I hadn't been a prisoner for fifteen minutes before they bayoneted a fifteen-year-old Filipino kid right next to me - a kid so innocent he scraped together this little dirt dam with his last bit of energy so he wouldn't bleed on my uniform while he died. That is why all of us who were prisoners in Japan, or were headed for it to probably die in the invasion, revere the Enola Gay. It saved our lives.

Quoted in the September 26, 1994, *Washington Post*.

#### **15. The Great Atomic Bomb Debate by Bryan McNulty**

General of the Army George C. Marshall worried that even with the two atomic bombings, an invasion might be necessary. He had earlier observed that in a raid with conventional bombs five months before, "we had 100,000 people killed in Tokyo in one night and it had seemingly no effect whatsoever." In fact, it took another six days after the second atomic bombing - and the foiling of an attempted coup by military diehards who wanted the nation to fight to the end - before Emperor Hirohito, in an unprecedented personal radio broadcast to his nation, cited the "new and most cruel bomb" in announcing the surrender.

"The U.S. knew that the Japanese had given no indication that they were going to surrender," says Ohio University World War II historian Marvin Fletcher. "The use of the bomb to convince the Japanese of what was obvious - that they had lost the war - was a necessary choice. Truman would have been derelict if he had done otherwise. The number of Americans and Japanese who would have died if the invasions had gone as planned would have been, in my mind, higher than the number of Japanese who died at Hiroshima." . . . .

While the atomic deaths were horrific, Ohio University Professor of History Donald Jordan says the horror was not unrivaled. The 1937 Rape of Nanjing, in which Japanese troops took the Nationalist Army headquarters city and then spent seven weeks killing up to 300,000 men, women, and children, by hand, is arguably at least as horrific. If rational plans at high levels are the determinant of "evil barbarism," Jordan points out that the deaths from the two atomic bombs are pale shadows to the deaths resulting from the Japanese military's systematic abuse and killings of prisoners of war and slave laborers from Korea, China, and Southeast Asia. And Japan was the first country in any of the theaters of war to create a deliberate firestorm in an undefended city when it bombed Shanghai in 1932, says Jordan, the author of *Chinese Boycotts Versus Japanese Bombs...*

Hamby [author of *Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman*] says the historical record shows this: The Japanese had instructed their envoy in Moscow, Naotake Sato, to seek Soviet mediation for a negotiated settlement, not the unconditional surrender demanded by the United States and Britain at the July 16 Potsdam Conference. Truman knew of this from coded messages broken by the American military and from the Soviets themselves. Sato's intercepted cables from Tokyo left the impression of a Japan unwilling to surrender and preparing to wage a bitter, suicidal resistance that might last for months if the nation was unable to get the terms it wanted.

"A distraught Sato on July 12 vainly urged an apparently gridlocked government in Tokyo to be specific and embrace unconditional surrender," Hamby says. "But the curt Japanese rejection of the Potsdam ultimatum on July 28 reinforced the worst American expectations."

The April 1945 U.S. invasion of Okinawa spelled the collapse of Premier General Hideki Tojo's government. His replacement, Admiral Kantaro Suzuki, told the Japanese Cabinet in June 1945 that thousands of kamikaze pilots would fly against enemy ships even in training planes, that millions of soldiers would fight what was called the "Decisive Battle" by suicide banzai charges, and that civilians would strap on explosives and throw themselves under enemy tanks.

To secure the approval of senior Army officials to his accession to premier, Suzuki affirmed that Japan's only course was to "fight to the very end" even if it meant the death of 100 million Japanese.

".... if you go across to the Asian mainland, the Chinese and Koreans say, 'The rest of Asia were the victims, and the Japanese better get over that and quit looking at themselves as victims or we won't trust them.' There are museums all over China about the Japanese atrocities. The Chinese and Koreans have a very different view of who were the victims."

By contrast, Hamby says the Germans, particularly West Germans, "have practically wallowed in war guilt for two generations. There is a big contrast with the Japanese."

According to a report to President Roosevelt from the Joint Chiefs of Staff in September 1943, escaped prisoners had been providing accounts as early as April 1943 of malnutrition, cruel workloads, widespread torture, and murder of U.S. and other Allied prisoners of the Japanese. War planners worried about the fate of POWs in the event of a prolonged war or an invasion of the Japanese home islands. After the war, their fears proved well-founded: Of the 132,134 Americans, British, and Australians taken prisoner by the Japanese, 27 percent - 35,756 - died in captivity.

According to a 1995 book on the planned invasion, *Code-Name Downfall*, by Thomas B. Allen and Norman Polmar, Soviet troops who liberated a POW camp in Mukden, Manchuria, found 3,000 prisoners who, like prisoners in Japan, had thought they were about to be murdered as the Soviets approached their camp. A Japanese directive described how prisoners were to be killed: "mass bombing, or poisonous smoke, poisons, decapitation... . In any case, it is the aim not to allow the escape of a single one, to annihilate them all, and not to leave any traces." When Red Army troops in Manchuria approached the headquarters of Japan's infamous Unit 731, where POWs were subjected to germ warfare and other experiments, the lieutenant general in charge, Shiro Ishii, ordered all buildings, equipment, and the hundreds of human test subjects destroyed and burned.

Although there were isolated reports of prisoners of war being executed even after the surrender was announced, many believed the abrupt end to the war without invasion was their salvation.

**16. Tony Alessandro, former president of the U.S.S. Missouri Association, who joined the Navy in the middle of the war at the age of 17 and "as a 19 year old kid" was present when the Japanese surrendered aboard the U.S.S. Missouri on September 2, 1945.**

"All we wanted to do wanted to was to get home. A lot of us missed our childhood - those things kids like to do at 17 and 18. When I left the Navy in 1946 I seem to go back to my childhood and I began to play sports - baseball, football, basketball for longer than kids do today. We were trying to pick up that lost time.

"Then, I got married when I was 24 years old. It was hard to find work between 1946-1950. I finally got a good job in 1950, when the economy began to pick up after the war. It was still tough times.

"Regarding the Atom bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki - that caused a lot of loss of life at the time - but those bombs SAVED many, many, many more. The United States already had plans to invade Japan and had we done that, after we fought in Okinawa, where we faced Japanese suicide planes, it would have been much tougher if we had invaded Japan.

"If we had not dropped the Atom bombs, the Japanese people would have lost 3 million people and the Allies would have lost 1 million people. You are talking about 4 million people! We saved a lot of lives by dropping them."

**17. Mary Mostert "The Greatest Generation May Be Our Grandchildren," December 12, 2001**

In Hiroshima, 70,000 people died. In Nagasaki, 36,000 people died. However, in the German attacks on England during World War II, 62,000 people died. In the conventional bombing of Tokyo in 1945, 83,000 people died. And, in the Allied bombing of Dresden, Germany, 100,000 people died.

**18. FDR AND TRUMAN : CONTINUITY AND CONTEXT IN THE A-BOMB DECISION by HERMAN S. WOLK AND RICHARD P. HALLION**

...When Truman called his military chiefs to the White House on 18 June 1945, uppermost in his mind were the mounting American casualties in the Pacific island campaigns. Most revealing of Truman's mindset—and frequently neglected by historians—was Adm. William Leahy's memorandum of 14 June calling the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to this meeting. Leahy in-formed the JCS that Truman wanted

an estimate of the time required and an estimate of the losses in killed and wounded that will result from an invasion of Japan proper.

He wants an estimate of the time and the losses that will result from an effort to defeat Japan by isolation, blockade, and bombardment by sea and air forces. . . .

It is his intention to make his decisions on the campaign with the purpose of economizing to the maximum extent possible in the loss of American lives.

Economy in the use of time and in money cost is comparatively unimportant.

In the middle of June 1945, Okinawa was the one campaign that Truman had foremost in his mind. It had been a staggeringly bloody campaign that killed or wounded about 49,000 Americans. The ferocity of the Japanese defenders and the stunningly successful Japanese use of kamikaze suicide planes gave Truman and the military leadership pause concerning potential American casualties in an invasion of Kyushu (Operation Olympic), which Truman approved on 18 June for 1 November 1945. Based on the American casualty rate of 35 percent for Okinawa—emphasized to Truman during the meeting of 18 June 1945—the US could suffer approximately 268,000 casualties in a Kyushu invasion, given the size of the invading forces.

Also foreboding to Truman were the facts that some 6,000 to 8,000 kamikaze planes would be available to oppose a Kyushu landing and that the Japanese could count on more than 2 million troops to defend the home islands with great ferocity. Throughout World War II, the US Navy had 34 ships sunk, 368 damaged, 4,907 sailors killed, and 4,824 wounded from kamikaze attacks. For approximately every seven kamikazes encountered, the Navy had a ship sunk or damaged. The fact was that Japanese hard-liners in the military and the government were insisting on a fight to the finish, with the objective of forcing a negotiated peace that would modify or destroy the surrender policy of the Truman administration. They emphasized the losses that the Americans had suffered on Okinawa. The US Army's medical plan for Operation Olympic estimated that total battle and nonbattle casualties (not including dead) could be 394,859.

...Had the atomic bombs not been used, would Japan have surrendered prior to the invasion of Kyushu, scheduled for 1 November 1945? This answer, of course, cannot be determined. However, had the B-29 campaign continued for several more months, more Japanese would have been killed than at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine any other means whereby Japan could have surrendered with casualties equivalent to or less than those experienced at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan had been defeated but was not willing to surrender. The Japanese military and government were, in effect, holding their own people hostage.

Both Hiroshima and Nagasaki were, under the principles of international law, legitimate military targets for attack. Both had extensive armament factories as well as war-related industries, and both contributed significantly to Japanese military transportation networks. Further, both had robust military establishments. Hiroshima, for example, was the headquarters of the Japanese Second Army—virtually destroyed in the atomic bombing of the city. Beyond this rationale, the decision to drop the atomic bomb on both of these targets did not constitute an act of aggression against a foe already reduced to impotence by Allied attack. Indeed, in August 1945, fighting still raged across Asia: an invasion of Malaya was planned for later in the year. In particular, hundreds of thousands of Allied prisoners were in mortal danger. By this time, 43 percent of the prisoners in Japanese hands (almost 400,000 captives) had died—a clear measure of the brutality of Japanese rule overall. (The toll of Japanese rule is approximately 20 million dead.) As recent scholarship has shown, clear evidence exists that, had the Allies invaded, the Japanese would have slaughtered these prisoners of war.<sup>7</sup> Also worthy of note is the fact that Japan had under way a vigorous program to develop an atomic bomb.

## **19. President Harry S. Truman and the atomic bomb, *History Today*, August 1995, by Alonzo Hamby**

*History Today*, August, 1995, by Alonzo Hamby

On June 18th, the president met with his top military officials to discuss the possible scenarios for ending the war against Japan. They recommended an invasion of Kyushu no later than November 1st. The operation would be enormous: 766,000 American assault troops engaging an estimated 350,000 Japanese defenders. It would be followed in 1946 by a decisive campaign near Tokyo on the main island of Honshu.

Would the Kyushu operation, Truman asked, be 'another Okinawa closer to Japan'? With questionable optimism, the military chiefs of staff predicted the casualties would be somewhat lighter. Still their estimate for the first thirty days was 31,000 casualties. Truman gave his reluctant approval, but not without saying he hoped 'there was a possibility of preventing an Okinawa from one end of Japan to another'.

In fact, Pentagon planners were at work on estimates that projected 132,000 casualties (killed, wounded, missing) for Kyushu, another 90,000 or so for Honshu. Of these, probably a quarter would be fatalities. The figures were not wholly worked out by the June 18th, meeting but they would be given to Truman in due course and would constitute the estimates upon which he acted. In later years, he exaggerated them, but they required no magnification to make the atomic bomb a compelling option.

...The Japanese surrender offer put before Truman on August 10th, still insisted on retention of the emperor. Only Secretary of State Byrnes was reluctant to accept it. Truman opted for a response asserting that the Japanese message met American terms with the understanding that the emperor would be subject to the Allied supreme

commander. At a Cabinet meeting, he declared there would be no more atomic bombings. Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace recorded his attitude: 'He said the thought of wiping out another 100,000 people was too horrible. He didn't like the idea of killing, as he said, "all those kids"'.

...At the August 10th cabinet meeting, Truman declared ('most fiercely', according to Wallace) that he expected the Russians to stall on the surrender in order to grab as much of Manchuria as possible, and that if China and Britain agreed to the American terms, he would not wait for the Russians. Scholars of the Left invoke such bits and pieces of anti-Soviet rhetoric as proof that the bombs were dropped not to compel a Japanese surrender but to intimidate the USSR. Yet there is no credible evidence in Truman's personal contemporary writings or his later accounts that he saw the use of the bomb as a way of making a point to the Russians -- although he clearly thought its existence would strengthen the hand of the United States.

## **20. Martin J. Sherwin, Dartmouth College, *Oxford Companion to World War II***

Until they were used, until the power of the atomic bomb had been demonstrated, the nuclear option precluded all other options - modifying unconditional surrender - because it promised dividends. The shock of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki would not only be felt in Tokyo, American leaders calculated, they also would be noted in Moscow. The military use of atomic weapons was expected not only to end the war; it was assumed it would help to organize an American peace. While these expectations and decisions may be understandable in the context of four years of scientific secrecy and brutal war, they were not inevitable. They were avoidable. In the end, that is the most important lesson of Hiroshima for the nuclear age.

## **21. Minutes of the second meeting of the Target Committee Los Alamos, May 10-11, 1945**

### *Psychological Factors in Target Selection*

A. It was agreed that psychological factors in the target selection were of great importance. Two aspects of this are (1) obtaining the greatest psychological effect against Japan and (2) making the initial use sufficiently spectacular for the importance of the weapon to be internationally recognized when publicity on it is released.

B. In this respect Kyoto has the advantage of the people being more highly intelligent and hence better able to appreciate the significance of the weapon. Hiroshima has the advantage of being such a size and with possible focussing from nearby mountains that a large fraction of the city may be destroyed. The Emperor's palace in Tokyo has a greater fame than any other target but is of least strategic value.

## **22. Leaflets dropped on cities in Japan warning civilians about the atomic bomb, dropped c. August 6, 1945**

TO THE JAPANESE PEOPLE:

America asks that you take immediate heed of what we say on this leaflet.

We are in possession of the most destructive explosive ever devised by man. A single one of our newly developed atomic bombs is actually the equivalent in explosive power to what 2000 of our giant B-29s can carry on a single mission. This awful fact is one for you to ponder and we solemnly assure you it is grimly accurate.

We have just begun to use this weapon against your homeland. If you still have any doubt, make inquiry as to what happened to Hiroshima when just one atomic bomb fell on that city.

Before using this bomb to destroy every resource of the military by which they are prolonging this useless war, we ask that you now petition the Emperor to end the war. Our president has outlined for you the thirteen consequences of an honorable surrender. We urge that you accept these consequences and begin the work of building a new, better and peace-loving Japan.

You should take steps now to cease military resistance. Otherwise, we shall resolutely employ this bomb and all our other superior weapons to promptly and forcefully end the war.

EVACUATE YOUR CITIES.

Source: Harry S. Truman Library, Miscellaneous historical document file, no. 258.

**23. Recommendations on the Immediate Use of Nuclear Weapons, by the Scientific Panel of the Interim Committee on Nuclear Power, June 16, 1945.**

You have asked us to comment on the initial use of the new weapon. This use, in our opinion, should be such as to promote a satisfactory adjustment of our international relations. At the same time, we recognize our obligation to our nation to use the weapons to help save American lives in the Japanese war....

(2) The opinions of our scientific colleagues on the initial use of these weapons are not unanimous: they range from the proposal of a purely technical demonstration to that of the military application best designed to induce surrender. Those who advocate a purely technical demonstration would wish to outlaw the use of atomic weapons, and have feared that if we use the weapons now our position in future negotiations will be prejudiced. Others emphasize the opportunity of saving American lives by immediate military use, and believe that such use will improve the international prospects, in that they are more concerned with the prevention of war than with the elimination of this specific weapon. We find ourselves closer to these latter views; we can propose no technical demonstration likely to bring an end to the war; we see no acceptable alternative to direct military use

**24. Truman Speech, August 9, 1945 (excerpt)**

The world will note that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a military base. That was because we wished in this first attack to avoid, insofar as possible, the killing of civilians. But that attack is only a warning of things to come. If Japan does not surrender, bombs will have to be dropped on her war industries and, unfortunately, thousands of civilian lives will be lost. I urge Japanese civilians to leave industrial cities immediately, and save themselves from destruction.

**25. Excerpt from public statement by President Truman. This was the first time he publicly gave a reason for using the atomic bomb on Japan 8/6/45:**

"The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold.

"If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth."

*Public Papers of the Presidents, Harry S. Truman, 1945, pg. 197, 199.*

**26. Why Truman Dropped the Bomb by Richard B. Frank, author of *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire*.**

In complete secrecy, the Big Six agreed on an approach to the Soviet Union in June 1945. This was not to ask the Soviets to deliver a "We surrender" note; rather, it aimed to enlist the Soviets as mediators to negotiate an end to the war satisfactory to the Big Six--in other words, a peace on terms satisfactory to the dominant militarists. Their minimal goal was not confined to guaranteed retention of the Imperial Institution; they also insisted on preservation of the old militaristic order in Japan, the one in which they ruled.

The conduit for this initiative was Japan's ambassador in Moscow, Naotake Sato. He communicated with Foreign Minister Togo--and, thanks to code breaking, with American policymakers. Ambassador Sato emerges in the

intercepts as a devastating cross-examiner ruthlessly unmasking for history the feebleness of the whole enterprise. Sato immediately told Togo that the Soviets would never bestir themselves on behalf of Japan. The foreign minister could only insist that Sato follow his instructions. Sato demanded to know whether the government and the military supported the overture and what its legal basis was--after all, the official Japanese position, adopted in an Imperial Conference in June 1945 with the emperor's sanction, was a fight to the finish. The ambassador also demanded that Japan state concrete terms to end the war, otherwise the effort could not be taken seriously. Togo responded evasively that the "directing powers" and the government had authorized the effort--he did not and could not claim that the military in general supported it or that the fight-to-the-end policy had been replaced. Indeed, Togo added: "Please bear particularly in mind, however, that we are not seeking the Russians' mediation for anything like an unconditional surrender."

This last comment triggered a fateful exchange. Critics have pointed out correctly that both Under Secretary of State Joseph Grew (the former U.S. ambassador to Japan and the leading expert on that nation within the government) and Secretary of War Henry Stimson advised Truman that a guarantee that the Imperial Institution would not be eliminated could prove essential to obtaining Japan's surrender. The critics further have argued that if only the United States had made such a guarantee, Japan would have surrendered. But when Foreign Minister Togo informed Ambassador Sato that Japan was not looking for anything like unconditional surrender, Sato promptly wired back a cable that the editors of the "Magic" Diplomatic Summary made clear to American policymakers "advocate[s] unconditional surrender provided the Imperial House is preserved." Togo's reply, quoted in the "Magic" Diplomatic Summary of July 22, 1945, was adamant: American policymakers could read for themselves Togo's rejection of Sato's proposal--with not even a hint that a guarantee of the Imperial House would be a step in the right direction. Any rational person following this exchange would conclude that modifying the demand for unconditional surrender to include a promise to preserve the Imperial House would not secure Japan's surrender.

## **27. Surviving the Atomic Attack on Hiroshima, 1945**

Dr. Michihiko Hachiya lived through that day and kept a diary of his experience. He served as Director of the Hiroshima Communications Hospital and lived near the hospital approximately a mile from the explosion's epicenter. His diary was published in English in 1955.

Suddenly, a strong flash of light...

...Moving instinctively, I tried to escape, but rubble and fallen timbers barred the way. By picking my way cautiously I managed to reach the *roka* (an outside hallway) and stepped down into my garden. A profound weakness overcame me, so I stopped to regain my strength. To my surprise I discovered that I was completely naked How odd! Where were my drawers and undershirt?

What had happened?

All over the right side of my body I was cut and bleeding. A large splinter was protruding from a mangled wound in my thigh, and something warm trickled into my mouth. My cheek was torn, I discovered as I felt it gingerly, with the lower lip laid wide open. Embedded in my neck was a sizable fragment of glass which I matter-of-factly dislodged, and with the detachment of one stunned and shocked I studied it and my blood-stained hand.

## **28. Testimony of Hatchobori Streetcar Survivors**

*Seven hundred and fifty meters from ground zero, these are the testimonies of the passengers who were on the same streetcar in a Hatchobori area when the atomic bomb fell. A little after eight in the morning on August 6, the streetcar for Koi left Hiroshima Station. And at 8:15 it approached Hatchobori Station, 780 meters from the hypocenter and an intense flash and blast engulfed the car, instantly setting it on fire. It is said that seventy cars were running in the city at the same time. They were an important means of transportation for the citizens, and all the trains were packed with people since it was the morning rush hour. Nearly 100 passengers are said to have*

*been on board on the streetcar which was near Hatchobori. But the survival of only ten have been confirmed to date. Seven out of ten have recorded their testimonies on this video tape.*

*Tomiko Sasaki, 17 on that day, was on her way to her friend's house in Funairi with two classmates as it was their holiday from student mobilization labor. Approximately two weeks after the bombing, her two classmates died.*

INTERVIEWER: Were three of you on the same part of the car?

SASAKI: Yes. I was standing in front here and the others were next to me. There was the flash and darkness. I think I was unconscious for a while. We came to and called each other's names. My friends complained of the heat and terrible pain. I saw that one side of her body had been badly burned. There was a water tank for fire prevention, but the water wasn't clear due to all the dust. I put my handkerchief in the water and I put it over her burns, but she went on crying in pain. Both of my friends were burned. As for myself, flesh was hanging from my whole face was bloody. Fortunately I escaped from being burnt. I think it made a big difference that I was not burned. In fact, I think that saved my life.

*Eiko Taoka, then 21, was heading for Funairi with her one year old son to secure wagon in preparation for her move out of the building which was to be evacuated. Her son died of radiation sickness on August 28.*

TAOKA: When we were near in Hatchobori and since I had been holding my son in my arms, the young woman in front of me said, "I will be getting off here. Please take this seat." We were just changing places when there was a strange smell and sound. It suddenly became dark and before I knew it, I had jumped outside.

INTERVIEWER: What about your son?

TAOKA: I held him firmly and looked down on him. He had been standing by the window and I think fragments of glass had pierced his head. His face was a mess because of the blood flowing from his head. But he looked at my face and smiled. His smile has remained glued in my memory. He did not comprehend what had happened. And so he looked at me and smiled at my face which was all bloody. I had plenty of milk which he drank all throughout that day. I think my child sucked the poison right out of my body. And soon after that he died. Yes, I think that he died for me.

*Shizuno Tochiki, 23 at that time, was on her way to her office in Kogo. Immediately after the bombing, she had a high fever which lasted for ten days. She's suffered the symptoms of radiation sickness, the purple spots appeared all over her body and her hair fell out. It was only after one month that she was finally able to get up.*

TOCHIKI: I think the air-raid warning had been lifted, so I left for Hatchobori without worrying. Then, there was a flash and a big sound which is known as "Pika-don". The train shook and it seemed to me as if a flash had directly entered my eyes. It was extremely hot. Because of the jolt, people fell right on top of each other. I think I was at a very bottom. I thought I would be crashed to death in a little while because I was so small and had the weight of all those people on top of me. But one by the people on top finally left the car. They ran with all their might along the railroad tracks. I could hear someone shout, "Another hit and we're finished." But I could only see people's shadows. When I gained consciousness, I was in a bed. I don't remember how many days it took until I could walk again. One day I asked for a cane, but I couldn't walk straight since my legs were so thin and so shaky. I staggered towards a mirror and I fell utterly, completely miserable as I had no hair, all my hair was gone. But just being able to walk to the next room made me so happy.

*Keiko Matsuda, then 14, on her way to Miyajima with two friends since they had no mobilized labor on that day. One of her friends who had been closest to the front and received the worst burns died in the first-aid station in Nukushina.*

MATSUDA: It was very, very hot. I touched my skin and it just peeled right off. The driver of the streetcar was not in sight. I thought he had been quick to run away but now I think that he was probably hurled outside in the blast. It was around August 25 that a pile of my hair just fell off all at once. I had a high fever and maggots infested in my eyes.

INTERVIEWER: In your eyes?

MATSUDA: Yes. I was afflicted with erysipelas as well. I had two children, but I had not told them about this experience. And I don't want to talk about it. But this time many people are testifying together and since I've been asked, I will talk. But I have tried to avoid it until now.

*Akira Ishida, then a 17 year old junior air man in the army, had the day off and was going to Miyajima with his elder brother to pray for good luck in the war. His elder brother died in September 1945 of radiation sickness.*

ISHIDA: Several months later, I can remember, I remember a cold morning, I don't know why but my mother always kept a round hand mirror by my pillow, which I picked up without thinking. I looked at my face and I saw something so shiny on the corner of my head. Using all my energy, I called out to my mother who was in the kitchen, and I said, ``Mother! My hair is growing back!" She was so happy that she held me and she cried. I'll never forget that day and the feel of the tears that my mother shed for me while she held me in her arms. It still comes back to me even though the people here are of different ages, we are also all of the same age. On August 6th, 1945, all of us died once and then, we were brought back to life. We were all born again. And we're in our second life now. Everyone gathered here today is now 41 years old if you count the number the years from the bombing. It's like a class reunion. I feel that we must testify in the hope that our experience will help to keep mankind from perishing.

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Source: <http://home.att.net/~betsynewmark3/DebateonBomb.htm>