

The Dropping of the Atomic Bomb: A Military Measure?

Instructions:

Use what skills you have developed thus far in the course. For this assignment, the research has been completed. As you read the following documents, pay close attention to what is being said and how each document might be used to construct an answer to the prompt below. Be sure to note the source of each document often who is speaking is as important as what is being said.

Minimum Requirements

- The assignment must be a minimum of 750 words. I will deduct ten points for every 50 words below the limit.
- Assignment should be properly formatted with a heading.
- You should cite your sources with footnotes. (There are guides in Canvas). You will be citing this document, not the original source material.

Evaluate the prompt:

The United States' decision to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima was a diplomatic measure calculated to intimidate the Soviet Union in the post-Second World War era rather than a strictly military measure designed to force a Japanese surrender.

Documents

Here is a collection of documents that pertain to the decision to drop the atomic bomb.

Document A

Source: *Memoirs of Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson (1947)*

The principal political, social, and military objective of the United States in the summer of 1945 was the prompt and complete surrender of Japan. Only the complete destruction of her military power could open the way to tasting peace.

In the middle of July 1945, the intelligence section of the War Department General Staff estimated Japanese military strength as follows: in the home islands, slightly under 2,000,000; in Korea, Manchuria, China proper, and Formosa, slightly over 2,000,000; in French Indo-China, Thailand, and Burma, over 200,000; in the East Indies area, including the Philippines, over 500,000; in the bypassed Pacific islands, over 100,000. The total strength of the Japanese Army was estimated at about 5,000,000 men. These estimates later proved to be in very close agreement with official Japanese figures.

As we understood it in July, there was a very strong possibility that the Japanese government might determine upon resistance to the end, in all the areas of the Far East under its control. In such an event, the Allies would be faced with the enormous task of destroying an armed force of five million men and five thousand suicide aircraft, belonging to a race which had already amply demonstrated its ability to fight literally to the death.

The strategic plans of our armed forces for the defeat of Japan, as they stood in July, had been prepared without reliance upon the atomic bomb, which had not yet been tested in New Mexico. We were planning an intensified sea and air blockade, and greatly intensified strategic air bombing, through the summer and early fall, to be followed on

November 1 by an invasion of the southern island of Kyushu. This would be followed in turn by an invasion of the main island of Honshu in the spring of 1946. The total U. S. military and naval force involved in this grand design was of the order of 5,000,000 men; if all those indirectly concerned are included, it was larger still.

We estimated that if we should be forced to carry this plan to its conclusion, the major fighting would not end until the latter part of 1946, at the earliest. I was informed that such operations might be expected to cost over a million casualties to American forces alone.

Document B

Source: Memoirs of General H. H. Arnold, Commander of the American Army Air Force in the Second World War (1949)

The surrender of Japan was not entirely the result of the two atomic bombs. We had hit some 60 Japanese cities with our regular H. E. (High Explosive) and incendiary bombs, and, as a result of our raids, about 241,000 people had been killed, 313,000 wounded and about 2,333,000 homes destroyed. Our B-29's had destroyed most of the Japanese industries and, with the laying of mines, which prevented the arrival of incoming cargoes of critical items, had made it impossible for Japan to carry on a large-scale war...

...Accordingly, it always appeared to us that, atomic bomb or no atomic bomb, the Japanese were already on the verge of collapse.

Document C

Source: Dwight D. Eisenhower, recollections of a July 19th meeting with President Harry S Truman (1948)

Another item on which I ventured to advise President Truman involved the Soviet's intention to enter the Japanese war. I told him that since reports indicated the imminence of Japan's collapse, I deprecated the Red Army's engaging in that war. I foresaw certain difficulties arising out of such participation and suggested that, at the very least, we ought not to put ourselves in the position of requesting or begging for Soviet aid. It was my personal opinion that no power on earth could keep the Red Army out of that war unless victory came before they could get in.

Document D

Source: Agreements of the Yalta Conference (February 11, 1945)

Agreement Regarding Japan

The leaders of the three Great Powers-the Soviet Union. The United States of America and Great Britain-have agreed that in two or three months after Germany

has surrendered and the war in Europe has terminated, the Soviet Union shall enter into the-war against Japan on the side of the Allies on condition that:

1. The status quo in Outer Mongolia (The Mongolian People's Republic) shall be preserved;
2. The former rights of Russia violated by the treacherous attack of Japan in 1904 shall be restored, viz.:
 - (a) the southern part of Sakhalin as well as all the islands adjacent to it shall be returned to the Soviet Union,
 - (b) the commercial port of Dairen shall be internationalized, the preeminent interests of the Soviet Union in this port being safeguarded and the lease of Port Arthur as a naval base of the U.S.S.R. restored,
 - (c) the Chinese-Eastern Railroad and the South Manchurian Railroad which provides an outlet to Dairen shall be jointly operated by the establishment of a joint Soviet- Chinese Company, it being understood that the preeminent interest of the Soviet Union shall be safeguarded and that China shall retain full sovereignty in Manchuria.

The Heads of the three Great Powers have agreed that these claims of the Soviet Union shall be unquestionably fulfilled after Japan has been defeated.

For its part the Soviet Union expresses its readiness to conclude with the National Government of China a pact of friendship and alliance between the U.S.S.R. and China in order to render assistance to China with its armed forces for the purpose of liberating China from the Japanese yoke.

Document E

Joseph V. Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston S. Churchill

Source: British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's recollections of news received during the Potsdam Conference, July 1945 (1953)

On July 17, world-shaking news had arrived. The atomic bomb is a reality Here

then was a speedy end to the Second World War, and perhaps too much else besides. Up

to this moment we had shaped our ideas towards an assault upon the homeland of Japan by terrific air bombing and by the invasion of very large armies....

Now all this nightmare picture had vanished. In its place was the vision-fair and bright indeed it seemed-of the end of the whole war in one or two violent shocks....

Moreover, we should not need the Russians. The end of the Japanese war no longer depended upon the pouring in of their armies for the final and perhaps protracted slaughter. We had no need to ask favours of them. A few days later I mentioned to Mr. Eden: "It is quite clear that the United States do not at the present time desire Russian participation in the war against Japan' The array of European problems could therefore be faced on their merits and according to the broad principles of the United Nations. We seemed suddenly to have become possessed of a merciful abridgment of the slaughter in the East and of a far happier prospect in Europe. I have no doubt that these thoughts were present in the minds of my American friends.

Document F

Source: Nuclear physicist Leo Szilard's recollection of a 1945 meeting between Secretary of State James Byrnes and a group of concerned atomic scientists (1949)

The question of whether the bomb should be used in the war against Japan came up for discussion. Mr. Byrnes did not argue that it was necessary to use the bomb against the cities of Japan in order to win the war. We knew at that time, as the rest of the Government knew, that Japan was essentially defeated and that we could win the war in another six months. At that time Mr. Byrnes was much concerned about the spreading of Russian influence in Europe Mr. Byrnes' concern about Russia I fully shared, but his view that our possessing and demonstrating the bomb would make Russia more manageable in Europe I was not able to share. Indeed I could hardly imagine any premise more false and disastrous upon which to base our policy, and I was dismayed when a few weeks later I learned that he was to be our Secretary of State.

Document G

Source: Report of a Scientific Panel (composed of nuclear physicists A. H. Compton, Enrico Fermi, E. O. Lawrence and J. R. Oppenheimer) to the Secretary of War (June 16, 1945)

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 special weapon.

Document H

Source: Harry S Truman, radio address (August 1945)

I realize the tragic significance of the atomic bomb.

Its production and its use were not lightly undertaken by this Government. But we knew that our enemies were on the search for it. We know now how close they were to finding it. And we know the disaster which would come to this nation, and to all peaceful nations, to all civilizations, if they had found it first.

That is why we felt compelled to undertake the long and uncertain and costly labor of discovery and production. We won the race of discovery against the Germans.

Having found the bomb, we have used it. We have used it against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbor, against those who have starved and beaten and executed American prisoners of war, against those who have abandoned the pretense of obeying international laws of warfare. We have used it in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans.

We shall continue to use it until we completely destroy Japan's power to make war. Only a Japanese surrender will stop us.

Document I

Source: Admiral William D. Leahy, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, William Leahy, I Was There, pg. 441 <http://www.doug-long.com/leahy.htm>

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.

...on Aug. 8, 1945 he wrote in his diary:

There is a certainty that it [the a-bomb] will in the future be developed by potential enemies and that it will probably be used against us. In being the first to use it, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages.

Document J

Draft Rules of Aerial Warfare, The Hague, February 1923

RULES OF AERIAL WARFARE The Hague, February 1923

[Although drafted as the basis for an international treaty, the enactment of which was supported by the United States, these rules were never formally adopted]

[excerpts]

ARTICLE XXII

Aerial bombardment for the purpose of terrorizing the civilian population, of destroying or damaging private property not of military character, or of injuring non-combatants is prohibited.

ARTICLE XXIII

Aerial bombardment for the purpose of enforcing compliance with requisitions in kind or payment of contributions in money is prohibited.

ARTICLE XXIV

(1) Aerial bombardment is legitimate only when directed at a military objective, that is to say, an object of which the destruction or injury would constitute a distinct military advantage to the belligerent.

(2) Such bombardment is legitimate only when directed exclusively at the following objectives: military forces; military works; military establishments or depots; factories constituting important and well-known centres engaged in the manufacture of arms, ammunition or distinctively military supplies; lines of communication or transportation used for military purposes.

(3) The bombardment of cities, towns, villages, dwellings or buildings not in the immediate neighborhood of the operations of land forces is prohibited. In cases where the objectives specified in paragraph 2 are so situated, that they cannot be bombarded without the indiscriminate bombardment of the civilian population, the aircraft must abstain from bombardment.

(4) In the immediate neighborhood of the operations of land forces, the bombardment of cities, towns, villages, dwellings or buildings is legitimate provided that there exists a reasonable presumption that the military concentration is sufficiently important to justify such bombardment, having regard to the danger thus posed to the civilian population.

(5) A belligerent state is liable to pay compensation for injuries to person or to property caused by violation by any of its officers or forces of the provisions of this article.

ARTICLE XXV

In bombardment by aircraft, all necessary steps must be taken by the commander to spare as far as possible buildings dedicated to public worship, art, science, or charitable purposes, historic monuments, hospital ships, hospitals and other places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided such buildings, objects, or places are not at the time used for military purposes. Such buildings, objects, and places must by day be indicated by marks visible to aircraft. The use of marks to indicate other buildings, objects, or places than those specified above is to be deemed an act of perfidy. The marks used as aforesaid shall be in the case of buildings protected under the Geneva Convention the red cross on a white background, and in the case of other protected buildings a large rectangular panel divided diagonally into two pointed triangular portions, one black and the other white...

Document K

Protection of Civilian Populations Against Bombing From the Air in Case of War, League of Nations, September 30, 1938

PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN POPULATIONS AGAINST BOMBING FROM THE AIR

IN CASE OF WAR Unanimous resolution of the League of Nations Assembly, September 30, 1938.

The Assembly,

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

Considering that this practice, for which there is no military necessity and which, as experience shows, only causes needless suffering, is condemned under the recognised principles of international law;

Considering further that, though this principle ought to be respected by all States and does not require further reaffirmation, it urgently needs to be made the subject of regulations specially adapted to air warfare and taking account of the lessons of experience;

Considering that the solution of this problem, which is of concern to all States, whether Members of the League of Nations or not, calls for technical investigation and thorough consideration;

Considering that the Bureau of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments is to meet in the near future and that it is for the Bureau to consider practical means of undertaking the necessary work under conditions most likely to lead to as general an agreement as possible:

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;

II. Also takes the opportunity to reaffirm that the use of chemical or bacterial methods in the conduct of war is contrary to international law, as recalled more particularly in the resolution of the General Commission of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments of July 23rd 1932, and the resolution of the Council of May 14th, 1938.

Document L

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

The President of the United States to the Governments of France, Germany, Italy, Poland and His Britannic Majesty, September 1, 1939

The ruthless bombing from the air of civilians in unfortified centers of population during the course of the hostilities which have raged in various quarters of the earth during the past few years, which has resulted in the maiming and in the death of thousands of defenseless men, women, and children, has sickened the hearts of every civilized man and woman, and has profoundly shocked the conscience of humanity.

If resort is had to this form of inhuman barbarism 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, upon the understanding that these same rules of warfare will be scrupulously observed by all of their opponents. I request an immediate reply.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Document M

Nuremberg Principles, August 8, 1945

CHARTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL AUGUST 8, 1945

[Signatories: USA, USSR, Britain, France]

[excerpts]

ARTICLE VI

[excerpt]

The following acts, or any of them, are crimes coming within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal for which there shall be individual responsibility:

- (a) Crimes against peace: namely, planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances, or participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the foregoing;
- (b) War Crimes: namely, violations of the laws or customs of war. Such violations shall include, but not be limited to, murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave labor or for any other purpose of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war or persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns, or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity;
- (c) Crimes against humanity: namely, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian populations, before or during the war; or prosecutions on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated.

Leaders, organizers, instigators, and accomplices participating in the formulation or execution of a common plan or conspiracy to commit any of the foregoing crimes are responsible for all acts performed by any persons in execution of such plan.

ARTICLE VII

The official position of defendants, whether as Heads of States or responsible officials in Government Departments, shall not be considered as freeing them from responsibility or mitigating punishment.

ARTICLE VIII

The fact that the Defendant acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior shall not free him from responsibility, but may be considered in mitigation of punishment if the Tribunal determines that justice so requires.

Document N

Minutes of the second meeting of the Target Committee Los Alamos, May 10-11, 1945

Source: U.S. National Archives, Record Group 77, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Manhattan Engineer District, TS Manhattan Project File '42-'46, folder 5D Selection of Targets, 2 Notes on Target Committee Meetings.

12 May 1945 Memorandum For: Major General L. R. Groves Subject: Summary of Target Committee Meetings on 10 and 11 May 1945

1. The second meeting of the Target Committee convened at 9:00 AM 10 May in Dr. Oppenheimer's office at Site Y with the following present:

General Farrell Dr. C. Lauritsen Colonel Seeman Dr. Ramsey Captain Parsons Dr. Dennison Major Derry Dr. von Neumann

Dr. Stearns Dr. Wilson Dr. Tolman Dr. Penney Dr. Oppenheimer

Dr. Bethe and Dr. Brode were brought into the meeting for discussion of Item A of the agenda. During the course of the meeting panels were formed from the committee members and others to meet in the afternoon and develop conclusions to items discussed in the agenda. The concluding meeting was held at 10:00 AM 11 May in Dr. Oppenheimer's office with the following present:

Colonel Seeman Dr. Stearns Captain Parsons Dr. Von Neumann Major Derry Dr. Dennison

Dr. Tolman Dr. Penney

Dr. Oppenheimer Dr. Ramsey Dr. Wilson

6. Status of Targets

A. Dr. Stearns described the work he had done on target selection. He has surveyed possible targets possessing the following qualification: (1) they be important targets in a large urban area of more than three miles in diameter, (2) they be capable of

being damaged effectively by a blast, and (3) they are unlikely to be attacked by next August. Dr. Stearns had a list of five targets which the Air Force would be willing to reserve for our use unless unforeseen circumstances arise. These targets are:

7. 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.

8. Use Against "Military" Objectives

A. It was agreed that for the initial use of the weapon any small and strictly military objective should be located in a much larger area subject to blast damage in order to avoid undue risks of the weapon being lost due to bad placing of the bomb.

Document O

Bard Memorandum, June 27, 1945

Memorandum by Ralph A. Bard, Undersecretary of the Navy, to Secretary of War Stimson, June 27, 1945

Source: U.S. National Archives, Record Group 77, Records of the Chief of Engineers, Manhattan Engineer District, Harrison-Bundy File, folder #77, "Interim Committee, International Control".

SECRET -- TOP SECRET -- SECRET

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED ORDER SEC ARMY BY TAG PER 721164
CLASSIFICATION CHANGED UNCLASSIFIED To By authority of: SEC
ARMY BY

TAG per 710554 Date 9/29/71 WHC-NARS

Copy 1 of 2 copies each of 1 pages series A MEMORANDUM ON THE USE OF S-1 BOMB:

Ever since I have been in touch with this program I have had a feeling that before the bomb is actually used against Japan that Japan should have some preliminary warning for say two or three days in advance of use. The position of the United States as a great humanitarian nation and the fair play attitude of our people generally is responsible in the main for this feeling.

During recent weeks I have also had the feeling very definitely that the Japanese government may be searching for some opportunity which they could use as a medium of surrender. Following the three-power conference emissaries from this country could contact representatives from Japan somewhere on the China Coast and make representations with regard to Russia's position and at the same time give them some information regarding the proposed use of atomic power, together with whatever assurances the President might care to make with regard to the Emperor of Japan and the treatment of the Japanese nation following unconditional surrender. It seems quite possible to me that this presents the opportunity which the Japanese are looking for.

I don't see that we have anything in particular to lose in following such a program. The stakes are so tremendous that it is my opinion very real consideration should be given to some plan of this kind. I do not believe under present circumstances existing that there is anyone in this country whose evaluation of the chances of the success of such a program is worth a great deal. The only way to find out is to try it out.

[signature] RALPH A. BARD 27 June 1945

Document P

Szilard Petition, First Version, July 3, 1945

Source: U.S. National Archives, Record Group 77, Records of the Chief of Engineers, Manhattan Engineer District, Harrison-Bundy File, folder #76.

The first version of Leo Szilard's petition, dated July 3, 1945, was more strongly worded than the final version. It was also more specific in identifying the moral issues that he believed were involved. Rejecting the pretense that the targets would

be military, the petition called atomic bombs "a means for the ruthless annihilation of cities." The bombing of cities, it continued, "had been 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."

The petition concluded by requesting the President "to rule that the United States shall not, in the present phase of the war, resort to the use of atomic bombs." The July 3 version received 59 signatures at the Chicago Metallurgical Laboratory, but it was not submitted to the President in this form. Szilard sought to broaden support, and rewrote it into the final version of July 17.

SECRET

THIS PAGE REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED Order Sec Army 720564

July 3, 1945

A PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Discoveries of which the people of the United States are not aware may affect the welfare of this nation in the near future. The liberation of atomic power, which has been achieved, places atomic bombs in the hands of the Army. It places in your hands, as Commander-in- Chief, the fateful decision whether or not to sanction the use of such bombs in the present phase of the war against Japan.

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

[Source for number of signers of July 3 petition: Szilard to Frank Oppenheimer, July 23, 1945, Robert Oppenheimer Papers, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.]

Document Q

Truman Tells Stalin, July 24, 1945

Most of the groups and individuals who had considered the subject -- from the Scientific Panel to the writers of the Franck Report -- believed it necessary to inform

the USSR of the imminent success of the Manhattan project. Failure to do so, they believed, would guarantee a post-war atmosphere of suspicion and hostility.

At the Potsdam Conference, however, President Truman chose to tell Stalin only that the U.S. possessed "a new weapon of unusual destructive force." Truman's decision raises an obvious question: Since Stalin would learn of the existence of the atomic bomb the day it was used, if he did not know already, what purpose could be served by Truman's tactic?

Truman's announcement to Stalin can be seen here from the accounts of the different observers. Each describes the same event, but the event appears in a different light to each observer. Did the "master politicians" Truman, Churchill, and Byrnes know what they were doing? Or did they make a tragic blunder?

President Truman's version:

On July 24 I casually mentioned to Stalin that we had a new weapon of unusual destructive force. The Russian Premier showed no special interest. All he said was he was glad to hear it and hoped we would make "good use of it against the Japanese."

Harry S. Truman, *Year of Decisions* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1955) p. 416.

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's version:

I was perhaps five yards away, and I watched with the closest attention the momentous talk. I knew what the President was going to do. What was vital to measure was its effect on Stalin. I can see it all as if it were yesterday. He seemed to be delighted. A new bomb! Of extraordinary power! Probably decisive on the whole Japanese war! What a bit of luck! This was my impression at the moment, and I was sure that he had no idea of the significance of what he was being told. Evidently in his immense toils and stresses the atomic bomb had played no part. If he had the slightest idea of the revolution in world affairs which was in progress his reactions would have been obvious. Nothing would have been easier than for him to say, "Thank you so much for telling me about your new bomb. I of course have no technical knowledge. May I send my expert in these nuclear sciences to see your expert tomorrow morning?" But his face remained gay and genial and the talk between these two potentates soon came to an end. As we were waiting for our cars I found myself near Truman. "How did it go?" I asked. "He never asked a question,"

he replied. I was certain therefore that at that date Stalin had no special knowledge of the vast process of research upon which the United States and Britain had been engaged for so long...

Winston Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1953) pp 669-70.

Secretary of State James Byrnes' version I:

At the close of the meeting of the Big Three on the afternoon of July 24, the President walked around the large circular table to talk to Stalin. After a brief conversation the President rejoined me and we rode back to the "Little White House" together. He said he had told Stalin that, after long experimentation, we had developed a new bomb far more destructive than any other known bomb, and that we planned to use it very soon unless Japan surrendered. Stalin's only reply was to say that he was glad to hear of the bomb and he hoped we would use it. I was surprised at Stalin's lack of interest. I concluded that he had not grasped the importance of the discovery. I thought that the following day he would ask for more information. He did not. Later I concluded that, because the Russians kept secret their developments in military weapons, they thought it improper to ask us about ours.

James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947) p. 263

Secretary of State James Byrnes' version II:

I am just as convinced now as I was when I wrote that first book, "Speaking Frankly," in 1947, that Stalin did not appreciate the significance of the statement. I have read stories by so-called historians who assert that he must have known, but they were not present. I was. I watched Stalin's face. He smiled and said only a few words, and Mr. Truman shook hands with him, left, coming back to where I was seated and the two of us went to our automobile.

I recall telling the President at the time, as we were driving back to our headquarters, that, after Stalin left the room and got back to his own headquarters, it would dawn on him, and the following day the President would have a lot of questions to answer. President Truman thought that most probable. He devoted some time in talking to me that evening as to how far he could go -- or should go.

Stalin never asked him a question about it. I am satisfied that Stalin did not appreciate the significance of President Truman's statement. I'm pretty certain that they knew we were working on the bomb, but we had kept secret how far that development had gone.

James Byrnes, interview in U.S. News and World Report, August 15, 1960 pp 67-68.

Truman's Interpreter Charles Bohlen's version:

Three days after the successful test blast, after consulting his advisers and Churchill (the British had cooperated in the project), Truman decided it would be wise to tell Stalin the news. Explaining that he wanted to be as informal and casual as possible, Truman said during a break in the proceedings that he would stroll over to Stalin and nonchalantly inform him. He instructed me not to accompany him, as I ordinarily did, because he did not want to indicate that there was anything particularly momentous about the development. So it was

Pavlov, the Russian interpreter, who translated Truman's words to Stalin. I did not hear the conversation, although Truman and Byrnes both reported that I was there.

In his memoirs, Truman wrote that he told Stalin that the United States had "a new weapon of unusual destructive force." Apparently, the President did not tell Stalin the new weapon was an atomic bomb, and the Soviet leader did not ask or show any special interest. He merely nodded and said something. "All he said was that he was glad to hear it and hoped we would make good use of it against the Japanese," Truman wrote. Across the room, I watched Stalin's face carefully as the President broke the news. So offhand was Stalin's response that there was some question in my mind whether the President's message had got through. I should have known better than to underrate the dictator. Years later, Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov, in his memoirs, disclosed that that night Stalin ordered a telegram sent to those working on the atomic bomb in Russia to hurry with the job.

Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History 1929-1969* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973) pp. 247- 248.

British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden's version:

Mr. Churchill and I had previously discussed together the problem of telling Stalin and, if so, whether before the explosion of the bomb or after. If we did tell him,

would he ask for the know-how at once? A refusal would be awkward but inescapable.

There were embarrassments every way, but on balance, I was in favour of telling Stalin. My chief argument was that the United States and Britain would have to refuse the secret information. They would be better placed to do this if Stalin had already been told that we possessed this weapon and meant to use it. There was not much to this, but the Prime Minister thought it the better way.

On the question of when Stalin was to be told, it was agreed that President Truman should do this after the conclusion of one of our meetings. He did so on July 24th, so briefly that Mr. Churchill and I, who were covertly watching, had some doubts whether Stalin had taken it in. His response was a nod of the head and a brief "thank you." No comment.

Anthony Eden, *The Reckoning: The Memoirs of Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965) p. 635.

Soviet Marshal Georgii Zhukov's version:

I do not recall the exact date, but after the close of one of the formal meetings, Truman informed Stalin that the United States now possessed a bomb of exceptional power, without, however, naming it the atomic bomb.

As was later written abroad, at that moment, Churchill fixed his gaze on Stalin's face, closely observing his reaction. However, Stalin did not betray his feelings and pretended that he saw nothing special in what Truman had imparted to him. Both Churchill and many other Anglo-American authors subsequently assumed that Stalin had really failed to fathom the significance of what he had heard.

In actual fact, on returning to his quarters after this meeting Stalin, in my presence, told Molotov about his conversation with Truman. The latter reacted almost immediately. "Let them. We'll have to talk it over with Kurchatov and get him to speed things up."

I realized that they were talking about research on the atomic bomb.

It was clear already then that the US Government intended to use the atomic weapon for the purpose of achieving its Imperialist goals from a position of strength in "the cold war." This was amply corroborated on August 6 and 8. Without any

military need whatsoever, the Americans dropped two atomic bombs on the peaceful and densely-populated Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Georgii Konstantinovich Zhukov, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1971) pp. 674-675.

Document R

Official Bombing Order, July 25, 1945. U.S. National Archives, Record Group 77, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Manhattan Engineer District, TS Manhattan Project File '42 to '46, Folder 5B "(Directives, Memos, Etc. to and from C/S, S/W, etc.)."

The written order for the use of the atomic bomb against Japanese cities was drafted by General Groves. President Truman and Secretary of War Stimson approved the order at Potsdam.

The order made no mention of targetting military objectives or sparing civilians. The cities themselves were the targets. The order was also open-ended. "Additional bombs" could be dropped "as soon as made ready by the project staff."

TOP SECRET DECLASSIFIED

TO: General Carl Spaatz Commanding General

United States Army Strategic Air Forces

1. The 509 Composite Group, 20th Air Force will deliver its first special bomb as soon as weather will permit visual bombing after about 3 August 1945 on one of the targets: Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata and Nagasaki. To carry military and civilian scientific personnel from the War Department to observe and record the effects of the explosion of the bomb, additional aircraft will accompany the airplane carrying the bomb. The observing planes will stay several miles distant from the point of impact of the bomb.

2. Additional bombs will be delivered on the above targets as soon as made ready by the project staff. Further instructions will be issued concerning targets other than those listed above.

3. Discussion of any and all information concerning the use of the weapon against Japan is reserved to the Secretary of War and the President of the United States. No communiques on the subject or releases of information will be issued by Commanders in the field without specific prior authority. Any news stories will be sent to the War Department for specific clearance.

4. The foregoing directive is issued to you by direction and with the approval of the Secretary of War and of the Chief of Staff, USA. It is desired that you personally deliver one copy of this directive to General MacArthur and one copy to Admiral Nimitz for their information.

(Sgd) THOS. T. HANDY THOS. T. HANDY

General, G.S.C. Acting Chief of Staff copy for General Groves

TOP SECRET

Document S

Truman Speech, August 9, 1945 (excerpt)

In a radio speech to the nation on August 9, 1945, President Truman called Hiroshima "a military base." It seems likely, considering his July 25 diary entry, that he was not aware that Hiroshima was a city. Otherwise, he was being untruthful about the nature of the target.

Truman delivered his speech from the White House at 10 P.M. Washington time on August 9, 1945. By this time, a second atomic bomb already had destroyed the city of Nagasaki. Because of the great length of the speech, most of which dealt with Germany, only the relevant paragraph is quoted here.

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.