

Unit Three: Exercise Nine: Evidence Question: Dropping The Bomb

Name _____ Block _____ Date _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Use Documents 1 to 12 to answer the following questions. You should make careful note of not only what the document says but also who said it and when.

Document 1

[D]eciphered cables...from Tokyo to the Japanese ambassador in Moscow saying that Japan would not accept unconditional surrender persuaded the president that Japan intended to hold on to some conquered territory. On 27 July, the UK, USA, and China issued an ultimatum to Japan to proclaim unconditional surrender or face "prompt and utter destruction". Nothing was said about the future of the monarchy. Tokyo dismissed the ultimatum as a rehash of past declarations.

The Japanese response triggered final preparations for using atomic bombs against Japan.... In a sense there never was a decision. As General Leslie R. Groves, the army officer in charge of the bomb's development, said, Truman's "decision was one of non-interference – basically a decision not to upset the existing plan". All the momentum was in the direction of using the bomb. Having invested \$2 billion in its development, fearful that the alternative was a longer war with hundreds of thousands of additional Allied casualties, and hardened by repeated Axis and Allied air raids, which had already taken hundreds of thousands of civilian lives, Truman and his military chiefs saw no compelling reason against the earliest possible use of the bomb. Considerations of power politics – the extent to which use of the "winning weapon", as some called it, would increase the USA's ability to compel the Soviet compliance with post-war peace arrangements were distinctly secondary; but they were not entirely absent from Truman's mind.

The Oxford Companion to World War II, Ed. I.C.B. Dear, Oxford Univ. Press, 1995.

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Document 2

Aside from physical injury and damage, the most significant effect of the atomic bombs was the sheer terror which it struck into the peoples of the bombed cities. This terror, resulting in immediate hysterical activity and flight from the cities, had one especially pronounced effect: persons who had become accustomed to mass air raids had grown to pay little heed to single planes or small groups of planes, but after the atomic bombings the appearance of a single plane caused more terror and disruption of normal life than the appearance of hundreds of planes had ever been able to cause before. The effect of this terrible fear of the potential danger from even a single enemy plane on the lives of the peoples of the world in the event of any future war can easily be conjectured.

The atomic bomb did not alone win the war against Japan, but it most certainly ended it, saving thousands of Allied lives that would have been lost in any combat invasion of Japan.

Major General Leslie R. Groves, Manhattan Project Construction Manager. *The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, 29 June 1946, Chapter 24: "Effects of the Atomic Bombings on the Inhabitants of the Bombed Cities".

Document 3

The situation is developing rapidly and there are trends which indicate the Jap is not going to last much longer.

His sea power is so badly depleted that it is no match for any one of several task forces we could put into action.

His air power is in a bad way.... [H]e has lost his element, flight, squadron and group leaders and his hastily trained replacements haven't the skill or ability or combat knowledge to compete with us

Without the support of his sea power and air power his land forces cannot do anything except hold out in isolated, beleaguered spots all over the map until bombs, bullets, disease and starvation kill them off....

Lieutenant General George C. Kenney, Commander of Air Forces in Southwest Pacific to General "Hap" Arnold, Commander of the Army Air Forces, September, 1944, as quoted in Gar Alperovitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*, New York: Knopf, 1995.

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Document 4

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... 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 Japanese nation following unconditional surrender. It seems quite possible to me that this presents the opportunity the Japanese are looking for.

Memorandum of Ralph Bard (Undersecretary of the United States Navy), to Henry Stimson (United States Secretary of War), 27 June 1945.

Document 5

The development of 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 their future development. Thus a nation which sets the precedent of using these newly liberated forces of nature for the purposes of destruction may have to bear the responsibility of opening the door to an era of devastation on an unimaginable scale.

69 scientists at the Chicago Metallurgical Laboratory, "A Petition to the President of the United States," 17 July 1945.

Document 6

The Japs had to be killed anyway because of how they fought; there was no other way. But what made you want to do it was your friends. When you saw their corpses day after day, your hatred – oh God, hatred – built day after day. By June, I had no mercy for a single Japanese who was trying to surrender.

Even Regal, U.S. Marine Corps flamethrower operator on Okinawa, 1945.

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Document 7

This weapon is to be used against Japan between now and August 10. I have told the secretary of war, Mr. Stimson, to use it so that military objectives and soldiers and sailors are the target and not women and children.... The target will be a purely military one and we will issue a warning statement 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.

Harry S. Truman, *Diary Entry*, 25 July 1945.

Document 8

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.

The might that now converges on Japan is immeasurably greater than that which, when applied to the resisting Nazis, necessarily laid waste to the lands, the industry and the method of life of the whole German people. The full application of our military power, backed by our resolve, *will* mean the inevitable and complete destruction of the Japanese armed forces and just as inevitably the utter devastation of the Japanese homeland.

Proclamation Calling for the Surrender of Japan, Approved by the Heads of Government of the United States, China and the United Kingdom, Potsdam, 26 July 1945.

Document 9

Question: What is the Premier's view regarding the Joint Proclamation by the three countries [U.S.A., China, U.K.]?

Answer: I believe the Joint Proclamation by the three countries is nothing but a rehash of the Cairo Declaration. As for the Government, it does not find any important value in it, and there is no other recourse but to ignore it entirely and resolutely fight for the successful conclusion of this war.

Premier Suzuki, "Press Conference, 28 July 1945," as translated in *Foreign Relations of the United States: Conference of Berlin (Potsdam)*, Vol. 2.

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Document 10

As a result of the explosion at 8:15, almost the entire city was destroyed in a single blow.... The bomb exploded over the centre of the city. As a result of the blast, the small Japanese houses in a diameter of five kilometers, which comprised 99% of the city, collapsed or were blown up. Those who were in the houses were buried in the ruins. Those who were in the open sustained burn resulting from the contact with the substance or the rays emitted by the bomb.... As much six kilometers from the centre of the explosion, all houses were damaged and many collapsed and caught fire.... The newspapers called the bomb an "atomic bomb" ... but no one knew anything for certain concerning the nature of the bomb.

Father John A. Siemes, professor of modern philosophy at Tokyo's Catholic University, as quoted in The Manhattan Engineer District of the United States Army under direction of Major General Leslie R. Groves, *The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, 29 June 1946, Chapter 25: "Eyewitness Account".

Document 11

I have given serious thought to the situation prevailing at home and abroad and have concluded that continuing the war means destruction for the nation and a prolongation of bloodshed and cruelty in the world. I cannot bear to see my innocent people suffer any longer... The time has come when we must bear the unbearable. I swallow my tears and give my sanction to the proposal to accept the Allied proclamation on the basis outlined by the Foreign Minister.

Emperor Hirohito, **Radio Broadcast**, 10 August 1945

Document 12

Total Casualties

Estimates of Casualties	Hiroshima	Nagasaki
Pre-raid population	255,000	195,000
Dead	66,000	39,000
Injured	69,000	25,000
Total Casualties	135,000	64,000

The Manhattan Engineer District of the United States Army under direction of Major General Leslie R. Groves, *The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, 19 June 1946, Chapter 10: "Total Casualties".