**Quotes Supporting the Atomic Bomb**

**President Truman's military advisers warn him of the very high cost of an invasion of Japan**

Faced with this knowledge of Japan's extraordinary plan to defend its home islands to the death, and the fanatical character of Japanese soldiers, and extrapolating the fanatical defence of Iwo Jima and Okinawa to an amphibious assault on Japan's four home islands, American military leaders were deeply concerned. They advised President Truman that an attempt to invade and subdue the Japanese on their home islands was likely to cost at least 1,000,000 American battle casualties.

**The Potsdam Declaration gives Japan a last opportunity to surrender**

On July 26, 1945, the Allies issued the Potsdam Declaration. Its purpose was to hasten Japan's surrender without the need for a difficult and very costly amphibious assault. It warned Japan that it faced "prompt and utter destruction" unless the Japanese swiftly agreed to an unconditional surrender. On July 28, Prime Minister Suzuki announced that Japan intended to "ignore" the Potsdam Declaration.

We have learned that underlying Suzuki's rejection of the Potsdam Declaration was Emperor Hirohito's stubborn resolve to continue the war until he received a guarantee from the Allies that his status as emperor would be preserved and that he would not be tried as a war criminal. There is no evidence that Hirohito felt any genuine concern for the suffering of Japanese civilians as the war encroached on their lives. See Professor Herbert Bix: "Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan" (2000), published by Harper Collins, and especially, the chapter "Delayed Surrender".

**When the Japanese refuse to surrender, President Truman elects to use the atomic bomb**

By July 1945, Japan's military and industrial resources had either been destroyed or dispersed widely and largely concealed from air attack. The Americans were finding it very difficult to locate sizeable military or industrial targets for their B-29 bombers to attack with conventional bombs.

When informed that Japan intended to ignore the Potsdam Declaration, President Truman was faced with a dilemma. There was little scope for further conventional bombing. He was left with the choice of ordering an invasion of Japan's home islands or using the atomic bomb. Rather than risk the predicted 1,000,000 American battle casualties in an amphibious assault on Japan, President Truman elected to use the atomic bomb.

The first target was Hiroshima, a city on Japan's Inland Sea. At this time it was the headquarters of the 2nd General Army. On 4 August 1945, American aircraft dropped leaflets on Hiroshima warning the citizens to expect terrible destruction to be visited upon their city because Japan had refused to surrender. Although many civilians had already been evacuated to the country, this warning was largely ignored. On August 6, the first atomic bomb was dropped on this city. At Hiroshima, 60,000 Japanese died and a similar number were injured.

The emotive impact of the use of an atomic bomb on a Japanese city, and its usefulness as a stick with which to beat the United States, has caused many people to ignore the fact that more people died in the conventional bomb attack on Tokyo on the night of 8/9 March 1945. At Tokyo, on this **one** night, the bombs and resulting firestorm killed 80,000 people and injured 44,000.

Three days later, when the first atomic bomb had still evoked no response from Japan, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, a port with naval installations. The primary target on this day had been the city of Kokura where a huge army arsenal was located. Thick clouds over Kokura forced diversion of the B-29 with the second bomb to Nagasaki. At Nagasaki, 36,000 were killed and about 60,000 wounded.

Although these casualties from the two atomic bombs are disturbing, they almost certainly represent a very tiny fraction of the Japanese who would have died if the whole population of Japan, civilian as well as military, adults and children, had been mobilised by the Suzuki government to die as a nation in defence of Japan.

The atomic bombs were dropped on two cities of military significance (a) because the Emperor of Japan and his government refused to surrender and were preparing the Japanese people for a fight to the death as a nation, (b) because there were no readily discernible large military or industrial targets available for conventional air attack, and (c) because the Allies faced the prospect of incurring horrendous battle casualties from a conventional amphibious invasion of Japan.

Professor Bix states that the dropping of the atomic bombs, and the simultaneous entry of the Soviet Union into the war against Japan, were described as "gifts from the gods" by Navy Minister Mitsumasa Yonai (page 509). By mid-1945, Hirohito and his chief political adviser Koichi Kido were becoming increasingly concerned at growing alienation of public support for continuation of the war. District governors and police chiefs were reporting that the Japanese people were war-weary and despondent, and that popular hostility to the emperor and his government was increasing rapidly. Faced with these serious domestic pressures, Hirohito and his councillors welcomed the dropping of the atomic bombs and the Soviet entry into the war as a convenient excuse to accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration and, at the same time, to provide the emperor with the credit for ending the war (page 523).

The historical matters detailed above are not intended to put an end to argument about the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan, but to put on record some of the more important considerations that persuaded President Truman to use the atomic bombs.

**Evidence Opposing the Atomic Bomb**

"It always appeared to us that, atomic bomb or no atomic bomb, the Japanese were already on the verge of collapse."  - **General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold**  Commanding General of the U.S. Army  Air Forces Under President Truman

"I had been conscious of depression and so I voiced to (Sec. Of War Stimson) 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 this very moment, seeking a way to surrender with a minimum loss of 'face.' "  - **General Dwight D. Eisenhower**

"Japan was at the moment seeking some way to surrender with minimum loss of 'face'. It wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing."  - **General Dwight D. Eisenhower**

"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. 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 taught not to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying woman and children."  - **Admiral William D. Leahy**  Former Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

"I am absolutely convinced that had we said they could keep the emperor, together with the threat of an atomic bomb, they would have accepted, and we would never have had to drop the bomb."  - **John McCloy**

"P.M. [Churchill} & I ate alone. Discussed Manhattan (it is a success). Decided to tell Stalin about it. Stalin had told P.M. of telegram from Jap Emperor asking for peace."  - **President Harry S. Truman**  Diary Entry, July 18, 1945

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| **Dwight Eisenhower's view on using the Atomic Bomb**  "In 1945 ... , Secretary of War Stimson visited my headquarters in Germany, [and] 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 second 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, almost angrily refuting the reasons I gave for my quick conclusions."  Macintosh HD:Users:ChrisCollison:Desktop:Unknown.jpeg - Picture A  Macintosh HD:Users:ChrisCollison:Desktop:Unknown-1.jpeg - Picture B |  |

TABLE A: 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** |

