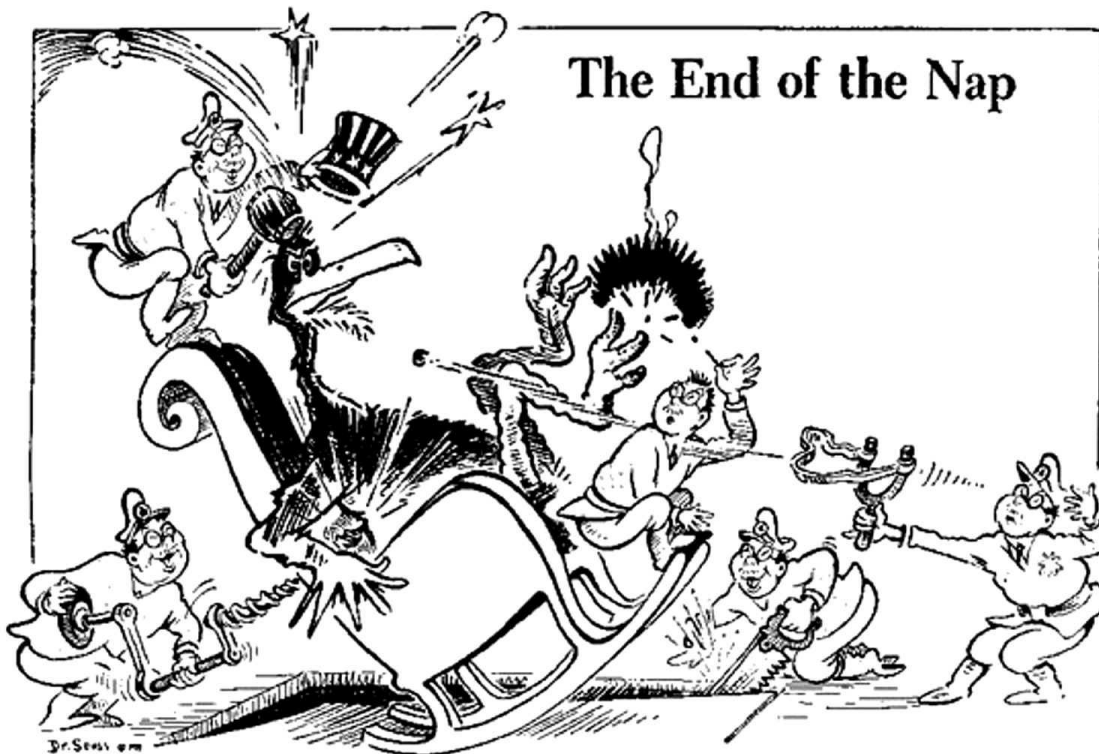


Prompt:

Was the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki a military necessity, a scientific experiment, or a diplomatic blunder?

DOCUMENT A



Source: Editorial cartoon by Theodor Seuss Geisel, December 9, 1941.

DOCUMENT B

Source: Letter from Albert Einstein to FDR, August 2nd, 1939

F.D. Roosevelt
President of the United States
White House
Washington, DC.

Sir:

Some recent work by E. Fermi and L. Szilard, which has been communicated to me in manuscript, leads me to expect that the element uranium may be turned into a new and important source of energy in the immediate future. Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of the Administration. I believe therefore that it is my duty to bring to your attention the following facts and recommendations:

In the course of the last four months it has been made probable – through the work of Joliot of France as well as Fermi and Szilard in America – that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium, by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new radium-like elements would be generated. Now it appears almost certain that this could be achieved in the immediate future.

This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable – though much less certain – that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed. A single bomb of this type, carried by boat and exploded in a port, might very well destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding territory. However, such bombs might very well prove to be too heavy for transportation by air.

The United States has only very poor ores of uranium in moderate quantities. There is some good ore in Canada and the former Czechoslovakia, while the most important source of uranium is Belgian Congo.

In view of this situation you may think it desirable to have some permanent contact maintained between the Administration and the group of physicists working on chain reactions in America.

I understand that Germany has actually stopped the sale of uranium from the Czechoslovakian mines which she has taken over. That she should have taken such early action might perhaps be understood on the ground that the son of the German Under-Secretary of State, von Weizacker, is attached to the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut in Berlin where some of the American work on uranium is now being repeated.

Yours Very Truly,

(Albert Einstein)

DOCUMENT C

Source: Henry L. Stimson, *The Decision to Use the Bomb*, Harpers, February, 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 lasting peace.

Japan, in July 1945, has been seriously weakened by our increasingly violent attacks. . . There was as yet no indication of Japan to accept unconditional surrender. If she should persist in her fight to the end, she has still a great military force.

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 over 2,000,000; in Korea, Manchuria, China proper, and Formosa, slightly over 2,000,000. The total strength of the Japanese army was estimated at about 5,000,000 men.

Two great nations were approaching contact in a fight to a finish, which would begin on November 1, 1945. Our enemy, Japan, commanded forces of somewhat over 5,000,000 armed men. As long as the Japanese Government refused to surrender, we should be forced to take and hold the ground.

In order to end the war in the shortest possible time and to avoid the enormous losses of human life, I felt that we must use the Emperor as our instrument to command and compel his people to cease fighting. The bomb seemed to me to furnish a unique instrument for that purpose.

My chief purpose was to end the war in victory with the least possible cost in the lives of the men in the armies which I had helped to raise.

The face of war is the face of death; death is an inevitable part of every order that a wartime leader gives. The decision to use the atomic bomb was a decision that brought death to over a hundred thousand Japanese. The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki put an end to the Japanese war. It stopped the fire raid and the strangling blockade; it ended the ghastly specter of a class of great land armies. . .

DOCUMENT D

Source: Harry S Truman, *Memoirs of Harry S Truman*, Doubleday, 1955.

My own knowledge of these [atomic] developments had come about only after I became President, when Secretary [of War] Stimson had given me the full story. He had told me at that time that the project was nearing completion, and that a bomb could be expected within another four months . . . It was [the committee's] recommendation that the bomb be used against the enemy as soon as it could be done. They recommended further that it should be used without specific warning, and against a target that would clearly show its devastating strength. I had realized, of course, that an atomic bomb explosion would inflict damage and casualties beyond imagination. . .

The final decision of where and when to use the atomic bomb was up to me. Let there be no mistake about it. I regarded the bomb as a military weapon, and never had any doubt that it should be used. The top military advisers to the President recommended its use, and when I talked to Churchill, he unhesitatingly told me that he favored the use of the atomic bomb if it might aid to end the war.

In deciding to use this bomb I wanted to make sure that it would be used as a weapon of war in the manner prescribed by the laws of war. And I wanted it dropped on a military target.

DOCUMENT E

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 F

Source: Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade In Europe*. (New York: Doubleday, 1948).

Another item on which I ventured to advise President Truman involved the Soviets' 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 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 G

Source: Herbert Feis. *The Atomic Bomb and the End of the War in the Pacific*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1961)

Some of those men who concurred in the decision to use the bomb discerned other advantages and justifications. It may be also, but this is only conjecture, that Churchill and Truman and some of their colleagues conceived that besides bringing the war to a quick end, it would improve the chances of arranging a satisfactory peace. For would not the same dramatic proof of western power that shocked Japan into surrender impress the Russians also? Might it not influence them to be more restrained? Might it not make more effective the resistance of the western allies to excessive Soviet pretensions and ventures, such as the Soviet bids for a military base in the Black Sea Straits, and a part of the occupation and control of Japan akin to that which it had in Germany? If these conjectures have any basis in actuality, they would provide another justification for using the bomb as a military weapon. We were not only subduing Japanese aggressors; we were perhaps monitoring the emergent Russian aggression.

Recognition of this tendency must not be distorted into an accusation that the American government engaged in what Soviet propagandists and historians have called "atomic blackmail." To the contrary, the American government remained intently desirous of preserving the friendly connection with the Soviet Union. It had rejected Churchill's proposal to face down the Soviet government in some climactic confrontation over the outward thrust of Soviet power. It showed throughout the Conference at Potsdam, which preceded the use of the bomb, a patient disposition to arrive at compromises with the Soviet government. In brief, the purposes of the men who determined American policy were directed toward achieving a stable international order by peaceful ways, not swayed by excited thought or wish of imposing our will on the rest of the world by keeping atomic bombs poised over their lives.

DOCUMENT H

Source: Nippon Times (Tokyo, Japan), August 10th, 1945

How can a human being with any claim to a sense of moral responsibility deliberately let loose an instrument of destruction which can at one stroke annihilate an appalling segment of mankind? This is not war; this is not even murder; this is pure nihilism. This is a crime against God and humanity which strikes at the very basis of moral existence. What meaning is there in any international law, in any rule of human conduct, in any concept of right and wrong, if the very foundations of morality are to be overthrown as the use of this instrument of total destruction threatens to do?

The crime of the Americans stands out in ghastly repulsiveness all the more for the ironic contradiction it affords to their lying pretensions. But where its own actions are concerned, the United States seems to see no inconsistency in committing on an unimaginably vast scale the very same crime it had falsely accused others of committing.

This hypocritical character of the Americans had already been amply demonstrated in the previous bombings of Japanese cities. Strewing explosives and fire bombs indiscriminately over an extensive area, hitting large cities and small towns without distinction, wiping out vast districts which could not be mistaken as being anything but strictly residential in character...the American raiders had already shown how completely they violate in their actual deeds the principles of humanity which they mouth in conspicuous pretense.

But now, beside the latest technique of total destruction which the Americans have adopted, their earliest crimes pale into relative insignificance. . . What more barbarous atrocity can there be than to wipe out at one stroke the population of a whole city without distinction - men, women, and children; the aged, the weak, the infirm; those in positions of authority, and those with no power at all; all snuffed out without being given a chance of lifting even a finger in either defense or defiance!

The United States may claim, in a lame attempt to raise a pretext in justification of its latest action, that a policy of utter annihilation is necessitated by Japan's failure to heed the recent demand for unconditional surrender. For this American outrage against the fundamental moral sense of mankind, Japan must proclaim to the world its protest against the United States, which has made itself the arch-enemy of humanity.

DOCUMENT I

Source: Samuel Gladstone, *The Effects of Nuclear Explosion*. U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, 1962.

The three main types of physical effects associated with a nuclear explosion are: blast and shock, thermal radiation, and nuclear radiation; each have the potentiality for causing death and injury to exposed persons. . . The frequency of burn injuries due to a nuclear explosion is exceptionally high. Most of these are flash burns caused by direct exposure to the thermal radiation. . . Finally, mention must be made of the harmful effects of the nuclear radiations. These represent a source of casualties entirely new to warfare.

It was estimated that 20 to 30 percent of the fatal casualties in Hiroshima and Nagasaki were caused by flash burns. The consequences of nuclear radiation may not appear for some years after exposure. Among them, apart from genetic effects, are the formation of cataracts, life shortening, and leukemia . . .