

Truman's Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb: A Logical Increase in the Weapons Used During
the Conflict of World War II

Anne Williams

Senior Division

Historical Paper

Paper Length: 1,881 words

On the morning of August 6, 1945, the American B-29 bomber, *Enola Gay*, released the world's first atom bomb over Hiroshima, Japan. America ended up dropping two atomic bombs on Japan during World War II. Since the end of the Second World War, President Truman's decision has been controversial, which is mainly due to the high Japanese civilian death toll that resulted from the bombings. However, Truman's decision to use the atomic bombs against Japan was justified by the historical context of the war, and Japan's refusal to surrender because of their traditional militaristic values. In the context of the war, the atomic bombs were a natural step up in war violence. Through the use of kamikaze pilots and the American island invasion on Okinawa, the Japanese proved they were willing to fight to the death and that a traditional island invasion of the mainland of Japan would produce high death tolls on both sides. Additionally, the bombs were not used as a power threat against the Soviet Union because President Truman's main focus was on saving the largest number of American and Japanese lives. The atomic bombs indirectly led to Japan's surrender because they allowed Emperor Hirohito to step out of his role of being a passive figurehead and end the conflict of the Pacific War during World War II. The genesis of the nuclear weapons gave world leaders the power to completely annihilate not only their enemies, but the entire world.

The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were justified in the historical context of the Second World War, and President Truman inherited the war policy of bombing civilians. During this time period, America was fighting against Nazi Germany and imperial Japan ("World War II: In Depth."). Both the Allies and Axis powers used mass conventional bombings, and these were acceptable military strategies although they produced a significant number of civilian casualties (Selden). For example, Germany bombed cities in Poland in 1939, destroyed the Dutch

city of Rotterdam in 1940, and notoriously "blitzed" London, Coventry, and other British cities in the summer and fall of 1940 ("The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb: Arguments in Support."). Allied war leaders rationalized that, to win the war, it was necessary to cripple the enemy's capacity to make war. The bombings aimed to destroy the war production capabilities of a nation; thus, war production centers were considered legitimate military targets (Selden). Since cities contained factories that produced war materials and civilians worked in these factories, the population of cities, including the workers' homes surrounding the factories, were legitimate military targets ("The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb: Arguments in Support.").

The British literally fought fire with fire by bombing Dresden, Germany, a center for German art and culture, with the help of American heavy bombers on February 13, 1945 (Selwood). Although Allied war leaders justified their actions by stating that they aimed to destroy the Axis war production, the bombing of the German city of Dresden did not have any military significance (Selwood). The firestorm, created by the two days of bombing, set the city burning for many more days, littering the streets with the scorched corpses of the elderly, women, and children (The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Bombing of Dresden."). Almost five months before the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, the United States and the British were already violating their own reasoning and killing innocent civilians with little to no strategic gain. The United States desperately wanted to win the war, causing them to become more and more brutal. On March 9, 1945, five weeks before Truman would take office, American bombers dropped 2,000 tons of incendiary bombs on Tokyo, Japan (Rothman). Although firebombing was not a new idea, the damage to Japan's capital was unparalleled. American Major General Curtis E. LeMay told Time Magazine that "This fire left nothing but

twisted, tumbled-down rubble in its path” (Rothman). Not only was Tokyo incinerated, but surrounding cities burned because many of the buildings were constructed out of wood (Allen 85). In essence, fire spread quickly because so many things in the city were flammable. More than one million Tokyo residents lost their homes, and Japanese records state that 83,793 citizens were killed (Allen 86). The firebombing of Tokyo is another example which showcases that wiping out noncombatants was a reasonable act of violence during the context of the Second World War. The atomic bomb was a logical step up in violence, because both sides of the war intentionally targeted civilians throughout World War II. Thus, it was not something that President Truman could realistically be expected to take back.

The American invasion of Okinawa, Japan demonstrated the fierceness of Japanese opposition and previewed that a traditional land invasion of the mainland of Japan would result in a shocking number of American casualties. The island had multiple fleets, anchorages, and airfields that made it the perfect rehearsal for what a land invasion of Japan would be like (Allen 96). However, it was heavily fortified because of its proximity to Japan (Allen 96). No rational thought prepared Americans for how the Japanese would really fight (Maddox). During the eighty-two days of fighting, about 100,000 Japanese troops and 12,510 Americans were killed, and somewhere between 42,000 and 150,000 Okinawan civilians died as well (Taylor). The Japanese military was prepared to fight regardless of the consequences, and claimed that the invasion of the home islands would force thousands of American casualties and the United States would retreat from its policy of unconditional surrender (Maddox). Multiple kamikaze pilots—Japanese suicide pilots—began attacking as soon as Allied fleets came to Okinawa and the majority of these kamikaze pilots were teenagers or in their early twenties (Allen 102). The

young age of these men who were willing to sacrifice themselves emphasized Japanese determination to fight to the death. There is no better example than the super-battleship *Yamato* to showcase Japan's willingness to sacrifice their lives for their country. The ship was on a planned suicide mission: after attacking American ships offshore of Okinawa, it was planned that it would be plunged ashore to become a steel fortress. In reality, it sunk shortly after leaving port. Nevertheless, the concept behind the ship emphasized Japan's willingness to sacrifice countless lives for their country (Maddox). The suicide of the *Yamato* killed about 4,000 Japanese soldiers. In comparison, American carriers only lost ten aircrafts and a dozen fliers in order to sink the battleship (Allen 107). In short, Japan's kamikaze attempt of the *Yamato* was futile, because the end did not justify the means. Because both America and Japan endured such terrible casualties at Okinawa, the United States prophesied that a land invasion of Japan would be an even bloodier invasion, thinking that the Japanese could be even more violent in defending their sacred homeland. In contrast, the atomic bomb served as a quicker method to end the war with less casualties, because it was apparent that the Japanese were not willing to surrender any time soon if a traditional land invasion was to be used.

The atomic bomb is controversial topic. Samuel J. Walker, an American historian who specializes in the nuclear age, states that the "recognition of the ambiguities, uncertainties, and complexities involved in the [atomic bomb controversy] is essential for an informed debate" (Walker). One perspective that some historians have is that the bombs were a power move against the Soviet Union. Although geopolitics may have been on some of the minds of the president's cabinet, President Truman's primary focus was on saving American and Japanese lives. From July 17 to August 2, 1945, he attended the Potsdam Conference and sought help

from Stalin in the Pacific War. If international relations were only guiding Truman's actions, President Truman would not have formally asked the Soviet Union for their support. With the preparations of a large amphibious assault on Japan in the works, the president learned only on July 16 that the atomic bomb would work, and he ordered to use the nuclear weapon. President Truman decided to use the atomic bomb because at the time it seemed like the most logical way to end the conflict of World War II rapidly. Although Nazi Germany was defeated in May 1945, the war in the Pacific was still raging on (Allen 193). Had land invasion occurred, millions of Americans would be dead and wounded (National Park Service). President Truman wrote to Senator B. Russell of Georgia after the second atomic bomb was dropped, "My object is to save as many American lives as possible, but I also have a human feeling for the women and children of Japan" (National Park Service). The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, effectively saved countless American and Japanese lives. It is easier now to look back and try to construct different scenarios; but, in the context of the Second World War, President Truman's decision was the best way to save lives on both sides. It would have been even worse if Truman did go through with a traditional land invasion with millions of American soldiers dead. He would then go down in history as the president who had a weapon that could have ended the bloody war sooner.

Neither the first nor the second atomic bomb directly forced Japan to surrender, but they caused Emperor Hirohito to step out of his role of a constitutional monarch, whose duty was to symbolize the country of Japanese and be the father to the Japanese national family. After the two atomic bombings in August 1945, the Emperor knew that he needed to stand up against the generals with samurai hearts, because if the Japanese people kept on fighting, there would be no

more homeland. He proclaimed that the country would accept the Allied terms of unconditional surrender (Trumbull). By this decree, he opposed militaristic generals who desired to keep on fighting even if it led to Japan's entire destruction.

Truman's decision to use the bombs was a natural progression in the context of the war, because targeting noncombatants was not a new military tactic. Additionally, the land invasion of Okinawa and the use of kamikaze pilots made it clear to the United States that a land invasion of the mainland of Japan would be a bloody takeover with a large number of deaths on both sides. Additionally, the bombs were not used as a power threat against the Soviet Union because President Truman's dominant goal was on saving the greatest number of American and Japanese lives. Although the atomic bombs did not directly force Japan's surrender, they allowed Emperor Hirohito to step out of his role of being a passive figurehead and end the conflict of the Pacific War during World War II. However, the ending of the Pacific War was only a minor compromise, because dropping the bombs on Japan was a turning point in history: the world had begun a new era known as the Nuclear Age. The genesis of the atomic bomb opened Pandora's box, giving advanced countries the power to completely annihilate not just their enemies, but the planet. This power must be used wisely or else the human race could cease to exist if two countries end up dropping nuclear weapons on one another.

Process Paper

My history fair project examines the reasoning behind President Truman's decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan. The event is driven by my interest in Japanese culture.

Through my research, I wanted to answer the following questions: "What are Japanese values regarding dying in the military or surrendering?", "Did Truman know about these values?", "Why did President Truman choose to use the bombs?", and "Did President Truman have other options?". I found various databases with many primary sources. Many of these primary sources are documents that government officials sent one another. They provide insight on what advice Truman was receiving from his generals. The first one I found was a letter written by Albert Einstein addressed to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It shows that even before President Truman, the technology of the atomic bomb was in the making. Additionally, I found websites regarding why the bomb was necessary to end the war. Also, doing more research about World War II, I found out that dropping bombs on civilians was not a new idea. President Truman could not realistically take back this idea.

I have decided to do a paper for my history fair project. I am not tech-savvy so the documentary and building a website by myself did not sound appealing. By choosing the paper category it will push me to become a better writer.

My history fair topic fits this year's theme of "Conflict and Compromise" because America dropped the atomic bombs on Japan during World War II. Since the end of the Second World War, Truman's decision has been controversial, which is mainly due to the high Japanese civilian death toll that resulted from the bombings. However, Truman's decision to use the bombs was a natural step up in the context of the war because targeting noncombatants was not a new military tactic. Additionally, the land invasion of Okinawa and the use of kamikaze pilots made it clear to the United States that a land invasion of the mainland of Japan would be a bloody invasion with a large number of deaths on both sides. The bombs were also not used as a power threat against the Soviet Union because President Truman's main focus was on saving the greatest number of American and Japanese lives. Although the atomic bombs did not directly force Japan's surrender, they allowed Emperor Hirohito to step out of his role of being a passive figurehead and end the conflict of the Pacific War during World War II. However, the ending of the Pacific War was only a minor compromise, because dropping the bombs on Japan was a turning point in history: the world has begun a new era known as the Nuclear Age. The genesis of the atomic bomb opened Pandora's box: people now have the power to completely annihilate not just their enemies, but the planet. This power must be used wisely or else the human race could cease to exist if two countries end up dropping nuclear weapons on one another.

Word count: 500

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources (10)

Einstein, Albert. "Albert Einstein to Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 25, 1945. Miscellaneous Historical Documents Collection. 345." Received by Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Albert Einstein to Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 25, 1945. Miscellaneous Historical Documents Collection. 345.*, 25 Mar. 1945. *Harry S. Truman Library & Museum*, www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/bomb/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1945-03-25&documentid=3-5&pagenumber=1.

This letter comes from the database created by the Harry S. Truman Library & Museum. The letter was written by Albert Einstein to the former President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It discusses Einstein vouching for Dr. L. Szilard, a scientist working on the possibility of uranium for national defense. Einstein does not know the details of the project but wants the former president to personally discuss with Dr. L. Szilard. This is because the former President Roosevelt's Cabinet is not helping the communication between scientists who are working on the project. This source shows how even before President Truman was oathed into office, the idea of the atomic bomb was already in the making.

Emperor Michinomiya Hirohito. "大東亜戦争終結ノ詔書." Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War. Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War, 14 Aug. 1945, Tokyo, Japan, www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/hirohito.htm.

This is an English translation of Japanese Emperor Hirohito's, now known as Emperor Showa, reading of the Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War also known as the the "Jewel Voice Broadcast." The radio broadcast was spoken in Classical Japanese, causing the common person in Japan not to understand. It also made no reference to the surrender of Japan. The speech only stated that the Japanese government would accept the terms of the Potsdam conference. Coupled with the terrible audio quality of the radio broadcast, the general Japanese population was only more confused. This source just goes

to show how traditional Japanese values viewed surrendering as cowardly, demonstrating why Emperor Showa might have not explicitly wanted to admit surrender.

General Groves to Chief of Staff, “Memorandum to the Chief of Staff,” July 30, 1945, U.S.

National Archives, MED records, TS Manhattan Project files '42-'46, folder 5B, copy in *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II: A Collection of Primary Sources*, National Security Archive Briefing Book No. 162, edited by William Burr, The National Security Archive, Washington D.C.

The rate of bomb production was one of the Manhattan Project’s, the atomic bomb factory, most closely guarded secrets. In this memo, General Groves described the bomb’s expected effects. Then he discussed the expected rate of production. The production rate of 3 bombs per month in August was expected to rise to 5 bombs per month in November, and 7 bombs per month in December. In 1946, it could rise much higher. The United States was prepared to use more than two atomic bombs until president Truman ordered atomic bombing to be stopped. However, since two bombs were dropped, other countries started to want such factories to build weapons of their own. Ahead lay the nuclear arms race: the Cold War.

General Headquarters (Japanese Imperial General Staff), Army Division. “Decree of Homeland Decisive Battle,” Tokyo, April 20, 1945.

This primary source comes from the Imperial Japanese Army General Staff Office (参謀本部 *Sanbō Honbu*) which is one of the two main agencies who oversees the Imperial Japanese Army. In April 1945, despite more than 100,000 Japanese civilians dying from bombers in Tokyo and hospitals filled with wounded people, the Japanese War Ministry prevailed to produce patriotic slogans to arouse the general public to defend their homeland. The decree said that men “should not be afraid of death” and that soldiers are the “shield to our Emperor.” Additionally, there would be no retreat and men were ordered to stand and die. This primary source emphasizes that the Japanese military had

traditional samurai-like hearts and countless deaths would be more favorable than to cowardly surrender.

‘Harry S. Truman, Diary, July 25, 1945’ 25 Jul. 1945, p. 1-2 in *Harry S. Truman Library & Museum*,

https://www.trumanlibrary.org/flip_books/index.php?pagenumber=1&titleid=231&tldate=1945-07-25&collectionid=ihow&PageID=-1&groupid=3702

This diary entry comes from the database created by the Harry S. Truman Library & Museum. In this particular diary entry, President Truman writes about how he had ordered the atomic bomb to be used. The President’s clear opinion was that he had ordered the bomb to be dropped on a “purely military” target, so that “military objectives and soldiers and sailors are the target and not women and children.” This source demonstrates and supports the fact that President Truman wants to save the most amount of American and Japanese lives.

Truman, Harry. “President Harry Truman's Diary.” *President Harry Truman's Diary*,

www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/library/correspondence/truman-harry/corr_diary_truman_print.htm.

This source contains multiple diary entries from President Harry Truman. The dates range from April 12, 1945 to August 11, 1945. They each give insight on what President Truman was thinking at that particular moment in time. For example, on June 17, 1945, he writes: “I have to decide Japanese strategy -- shall we invade Japan proper or shall we bomb and blockage? That is my hardest decision to date. But I’ll make it when I have all of the facts.” This particular entry shows that although President Truman is under a lot of pressure, he puts thought into what the most logical decision is.

Truman, Harry S. 9 Aug. 1945, Washington D.C., White House.

Truman delivered his radio 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. In the speech to the nation on August 9, 1945, President Truman called Hiroshima “a military base.” It is 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. The likely answer reinforces the fact that President Truman was concerned and wanted to save the most amount of Japanese lives.

U.S. National Archives, Record Group 77, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Manhattan Engineer District, TS Manhattan Project Files, folder 4, “Trinity Test.”

This source comes from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

NARA is an independent agency of the United States government which preserves and documents government and historical records and with increases public access to those documents. The Trinity test, on July 16, 1945, was a success. A six kilogram sphere of plutonium, exploded over the New Mexico desert with a force equal to approximately 20,000 tons of TNT. This report, by Col. Stafford Warren, Chief of the Manhattan Project’s Medical Section, shows that the potential for radioactive fallout from the test was an important concern. Warren’s report shows that fallout from the test exposed a family living 20 miles from Ground Zero to dangerous levels of radiation. By July 27, General Groves’ office diary shows, the radiation monitors became so concerned that they asked permission to talk to the family “to see how they feel.” This primary source demonstrates that the atomic bombs will not only kill people from a direct hit, but radiation poisoning can cause death from many miles away.

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.).”

This source comes from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

NARA is an independent agency of the United States government which preserves and

documents government and historical records and with increases public access to those documents. This primary source is the written order for the use of the atomic bomb against Japanese cities and it was drafted by General Groves. President Truman and Secretary of War Stimson approved the order at Potsdam. However, the order made no mention of targeting military objectives or sparing civilians. This supports the idea that harming civilians was not a new concept in World War II. In essence, 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." This shows that the United States could have dropped more than two atomic bombs on Japan. Overall, this source emphasizes that during the Second World War, noncombatants getting killed was acceptable and the United States was prepared for Japan not surrendering after two atomic bombs.

U.S. National Archives, Record Group 77: Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, 1789-1999, Series: General Correspondence, 1940- 1950, File Unit: 25Q, Item: Memorandum from Major General Leslie Groves to Army Chief of Staff about the Availability of Another Atomic Bomb, 8/10/1945. Transcription by Gene Dannen. <https://research.archives.gov/id/6874336>.

This source comes from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). NARA is an independent agency of the United States government which preserves and documents government and historical records and with increases public access to those documents. After the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, preparations for the next atomic bombing continued. On August 10, 1945, General Groves reported that the next bomb could be dropped on Japan in as little as one week. That same day, Truman told a cabinet meeting that he had ordered the atomic bombing stopped. The thought of wiping out another 100,000 people was "too horrible," he said, especially the idea of killing "all those kids." General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, noted Truman's order on the bottom of Groves' memo. This source emphasizes the fact that President Truman

wanted to end the war with the least amount of death and that he cared about Japanese noncombatant lives too.

Secondary Sources (25)

Allen, Thomas B., and Norman Polmar. *Code-Name Downfall: The Secret Plan to Invade Japan-And Why Truman Dropped the Bomb*. Headline, 1996.

This book is co-written by Thomas B. Allen and Norman Polmar. Allen is an American historian and author. He has written for the *National Geographic Magazine* and appeared multiple times on the *History Channel* to discuss war and espionage. Polmar is an author, analyst and consultant who is an expert in the naval, aviation, science and technology sectors. He has consulted and even led naval-related issues to multiple American senators, the Speaker of the House, and the Deputy Counselor to the President. The book argues that the Japanese were not ready to surrender until after the second bomb was dropped. The secret plan for a land invasion is presented in the book. Allen and Polmar released evidence to support the prediction that Americans would suffer thousands of casualties. Both authors effectively argue that President Truman wanted to end the conflict of the war with the least amount of Japanese and American lives. The book helps drive home the point that a traditional land invasion of Japan would result in such a high death toll and so, the bombs allowed the war to end swiftly.

Block, Melissa, and Kaleria Palchikoff Drago. "Seeing the Horror of Hiroshima." *NPR*, NPR, 5 Aug. 2005, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4787714. Accessed 30 Sept. 2017.

Melissa Block started working for the *National Public Radio (NPR)* in 1985 as an editorial assistant for *All Things Considered (ATC)*. She co-hosted and was the senior producer of *ATC* before she left in 2015. From 1994 to 2002, Block was a reporter and correspondent for the state of New York. She helped *NPR* receive a Peabody Award because of her reports of the September 11th, 2001 attacks. In this interview, Block interviews Kaleria Palchikoff Drago, a Russian lady living near the destroyed Japanese

city of Hiroshima. Drago tells her memories of seeing people caught by the blast. The atomic bombs did stop the Second World War, but it is easy to forget the damage the United States caused to the innocent civilians of Japan which this interview explains.

Chan, Melissa. "Hydrogen Bomb vs Atomic: What Is the Difference?" *Time*, Time, 22 Sept. 2017, time.com/4954082/hydrogen-bomb-atomic-bomb/.

Melissa Chan is an American reporter. She has worked for ABC News in New York from 2002-2004 and Al Jazeera English from 2007-2012. During the 2012-2013 academic year, Chan completed a John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship at Stanford University. The article explains the differences of a hydrogen bomb and an atomic bomb. It also touches upon the aftermaths of the atomic bomb dropping in Nagasaki, Japan. This source also includes a video on nuclear weapons in modern-day North Korea. The effects from the atomic bomb droppings on Japan are still felt today.

Dietrich, Bill. "Pro and Con on Dropping the Bomb." *The Seattle Times*, The Seattle Times Company, 1995, old.seattletimes.com/special/trinity/supplement/procon.html.

Bill Dietrich is Pulitzer-prize winning science reporter. His first book, *The Final Forest: The Battle for the Last Great Trees of the Pacific Northwest*, received the Washington Governor's Writers Award and the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award. Dietrich's work as a Times' science reporter has resulted in major projects on the atomic bomb. The article concisely lays out the advantages and disadvantages of the dropping the atomic bomb on Japan. It points out that historians are split between if it was or was not necessary to drop the atomic bombs on Japan. The decision to drop the atomic bombs is controversial even to this day.

Dunlap, David W. "1945 | The Times Learns an Atomic Bomb Will Soon Fall." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 12 May 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/05/12/insider/1945-the-times-learns-an-atomic-bomb-will-soon-fall.html?mcubz=1.

David Dunlap has been reporting for the *New York Times* since 2003 and primarily focuses on the redevelopment of the World Trade Center. Additionally, he serves as the keeper of the *Times's* history. In 2004, he wrote *From Abyssinian to Zion*. In 2015, his second book was titled *Building Provincetown*. The article shares historical wisdom on how the news company prepared for the atomic era because the world would never be the same after the atomic bomb was used. Because the bomb was dropped, civilization went forth into a new period.

The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Atomic Bomb." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 27 Jan. 2017, www.britannica.com/technology/atomic-bomb.

Encyclopedia Britannica is a general knowledge English-language encyclopedia. It is written by one hundred full-time authors and more than 4,000 contributors which includes over one hundred Nobel Prize winners and five American presidents. This broad context source provides a general overview of the science behind the atomic bomb, the Manhattan Project and where it was first tested. It also provides information about other countries producing their own nuclear weapons after the Second World War which demonstrates that the world has entered a new era: the Nuclear Age.

The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Bombing of Dresden." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 13 Feb. 2015, www.britannica.com/event/bombing-of-Dresden.

Encyclopedia Britannica is a general knowledge English-language encyclopedia. It is written by one hundred full-time authors and more than 4,000 contributors which includes over one hundred Nobel Prize winners and five American presidents. This specific article briefly summarizes the Allied bombing of Dresden, Germany. The source helps put the Second World War in context because the victims of the firebombing were mainly women, children and the elderly. It demonstrates that even the Allies hurt innocent noncombatants and targeting civilians was acceptable during the war.

Fessenden, Marissa. "The Health Effects of the Atom Bomb Are Still Being

Studied." *Smithsonian.com*, Smithsonian Institution, 6 Aug. 2015,

www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/how-bombings-hiroshima-and-nagasaki-still-info-rm-health-today-180956185/.

Melissa Fessenden is a science illustrator and journalist. She has written multiple articles for the *Smithsonian Magazine*, the *Daily Dot*, and the *Scientific American*. This specific article focuses on the long-term health effects of the Japanese people who survived the bombing. The survivors suffered from different amounts of radiation which caused thousands of tumors. People's psychological fear of radiation stems from the atomic bombings. This source reminds the world that although World War II was won with the bombs, the United States' decision caused fatal, long-term effects to the Japanese people.

Kaiser, David. "Obama in Hiroshima: Why the U.S. Dropped the Bomb in 1945." *Time*, Time,

25

May 2016, time.com/4346336/atomic-bombs-1945-history/.

David Kaiser is both an American physicist and a science historian. He is the Germeshausen Professor of the History of Science at MIT, head of its Science, Technology, and Society program, and senior lecturer in the department of physics. Kaiser has written various books on the history of science. One of his books, *Drawing Theories Apart: The Dispersion of Feynman Diagrams in Postwar Physics*, was written in 2005. The article explains whether it was mandatory or not to drop the atomic bombs on Japan. The *Time's* article is categorized as an opinion piece. Kaiser believes that dropping the bombs were a necessary step to end WWII quickly with the least amount of life lost possible. Additionally, it briefly discusses President Obama's visit to Hiroshima, Japan. While the atomic bomb droppings are controversial, the bombs made Japan surrender and helped the Allies win WWII.

Kallina, Edmund F. "The Florida Historical Quarterly." *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol.

74, no. 3, 1996, pp. 380–382. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/30148870.

Edmund F. Kallina is a history professor at the University of Central Florida and has been teaching there since 1970. His expertise lays in American politics of the 1950s and 1960s, military and diplomatic history. He has published three books about politics. *The Florida Historical Quarterly* is an American academic journal and it is published quarterly every year by the Florida Historical Society. This source is a critical review of the book, *Code-Name Downfall: The Secret Plan to Invade Japan-And Why Truman Dropped the Bomb* co-written by Thomas B. Allen and Norman Polmar. Kallina states that the prologue and half of the chapters deliver the military history of the Pacific and believes that there is nothing new written. However, in chapter six, Kallina writes how the book gets more interesting because Allen and Polmar give a vivid description of Downfall (the code-name for the invasion of Japan). Additionally, the book is strengthened with maps of locations and appendices that show the number of American and Japanese troops that opposed one another. Kallina writes that the overall book is persuasive, however, its central thesis relies on a hypothetical situation of how many American and Japanese lives would have perished if a land invasion did actually occur. Kallina admits that he is thankful that troops back then did not have to test the hypothesis.

Listwa, Dan. “Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Long Term Health Effects.” *K=1 Project*, Columbia University in the City of New York, 9 Aug. 2012, k1project.columbia.edu/news/hiroshima-and-nagasaki.

Dan Listwa attended Columbia University in the City of New York from 2011-2015. During the nuclear reactor meltdown in Japan in 2011, Listwa was part of a research team based at the European Council for Nuclear Research in Switzerland. He co-founded and was the Assistant Director of the K1 Project at Columbia University. The K1 Project is a center for the study of nuclear-related issues. It aims to promote educated debates on nuclear technologies in order to gain supporters of disarmament and sustainable energy policies. The article dives into the lasting medical effects from the two atomic bombs released on human populations. The Japanese are real people that the United States

killed. Hiroshima and Nagasaki could have become nuclear wastelands but it just goes to show that humans have the ability to bounce back from tragedy.

Maddox, Robert James. "The Biggest Decision: Why We Had To Drop The Atomic Bomb." *American Heritage*, 1995,

www.americanheritage.com/content/biggest-decision-why-we-had-drop-atomic-bomb.

Robert James Maddox is a history professor at Pennsylvania State University. His latest book is *Weapons for Victory: The Hiroshima Decision Fifty Years Later*. The *American Heritage* is a magazine committed to provide the history of America for the common reader. This specific article focuses on why the United States of America needed to drop the atomic bombs. Maddox uses the American land invasion of Okinawa as a bloody example to show that invading the mainland of Japan would be even more horrific. His overarching thesis is that President Truman used the bombs to save lives. The article supports the notion that the atomic bombs were the quickest way to end the war and to protect American and Japanese lives.

National Archives and Records Administration. "The Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb." *Harry S. Truman Library & Museum*,

www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/bomb/large/.

This database is created by the Harry S. Truman Library & Museum. The museum is one out of the fourteen Presidential Libraries in the country that is administered by the National Archives and Records Administration. Their goal is to preserve the papers, books, and other historical materials relating to the former President Harry S. Truman. The online database makes these preserved resources open to the public for research. This database contains many primary sources. Many include various letters that government officials have sent one another during the decision to drop the atomic bombs. It gives insight on what kind of feedback President Truman was receiving from his generals.

National Park Service. "Harry S Truman's Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb (U.S. National

Park Service).” *National Park Service*, U.S. Department of the Interior,
www.nps.gov/articles/trumanatomicbomb.htm.

The National Park Service is run by the United States federal government. It controls all of the national parks, and most of the national monuments. The article discusses the different paths that Truman may have chosen besides dropping the atomic bombs. It also compares and contrasts what was happening in America versus what was happening in Japan when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. It is easy to look back at the past and hypothetically come up with a better solution. This article reminds the world that President Truman’s decision was the most logical way to end the war at that time.

Popkin, Gabriel. “Seventy Years Later, Atomic Bombs Still Influence Health Research.” *Inside Science*, 23 Aug. 2016,
www.insidescience.org/news/seventy-years-later-atomic-bombs-still-influence-health-research.

Gabriel Popkin is an American journalist who mainly writes about physics, ecology and the environment. He has written articles for many companies including *The New York Times*, *Nature Magazine*, the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Post Magazine*, *Inside Science*, the *John Hopkins Magazine*, the *Smithsonian*, the *Scientific American* and *NPR*. This article dives into the fact that Japanese bombing survivors are the longest studied medical patients. Popkin introduces the Radiation Effects Research Foundation (RERF) which is the American-Japanese partnership that studies the effects of radiation on survivors. He also touches upon the effects of everyday, low-dose radiation. This source demonstrates the atomic bomb was the most powerful weapon unleashed upon a living population, and the effects of radiation are still felt today despite the bombs being dropped multiple decades ago.

Recchiuti, John Louis. “The Manhattan Project and the Atomic Bomb (Article).” Khan Academy,

www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-us-history/period-7/apush-us-wwii/a/the-manhattan-project-and-the-atomic-bomb.

John Louis Recchiuti is a history professor and the Saffell Endowed Chair in Humanities at the University of Mount Union. His fields of interests include American history, intellectual history, political history and much, much more. Khan Academy is a non-profit educational organization invented in 2006 by Salman Khan with an aim of devising a set of online tools that assist in tutoring students. This broad context source provides general information about the Manhattan Project and the atomic bombs. The article also touches upon how the development and use of the atomic bomb changed the nature of warfare for the rest of history. This source demonstrates that since 1945, the threat of nuclear war has hovered over international conflicts.

Rothman, Lily. "WWII Firebombing of Tokyo:" *Time*, Time, 9 Mar. 2015, time.com/3718981/tokyo-firebombing-1945/.

Lily Rothman is a graduate of Yale University (BA) and the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism (MA). She is a history and archives editor at TIME.com, overseeing TIME's History coverage and online archives. This specific article covers the firebombing in Tokyo during the Second World War. Although firebombing was not a new idea, the damage from the firebombing was unprecedented in warfare history. Many of the buildings were flammable and so, a strike to one building could spread a firestorm across the whole city. This online article shows that even before the atomic bombs were dropped, targeting civilians and whole cities was not a new idea.

Selden, Mark. "A Forgotten Holocaust: US Bombing Strategy, the Destruction of Japanese Cities & the American Way of War from World War II to Iraq." *The Asian-Pacific Journal*, 2 May 2007, apjif.org/-Mark-Selden/2414/article.html.

Mark Selden is a Senior Research Associate in the East Asia Program at Cornell University, an editor of *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, and Emeritus Professor

of History and Sociology at Binghamton University. This specific article focuses on the fact that strategic bombing has been used long before World War II and in the actual war before the atomic bombs were used. Strategic bombing, the the goal of defeating the enemy's morale and its economic ability to produce and transport material war, caused many innocent civilians to be killed. This source shows that both sides of the war committed terrible atrocities in the context of the Second World War and targeting civilians was not a new idea.

Selwood, Dominic. "Dresden Was a Civilian Town with No Military Significance. Why Did We Burn Its People?" *The Telegraph*, Telegraph Media Group, 13 Feb. 2015, www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-two/11410633/Dresden-was-a-civilian-town-with-no-military-significance.-Why-did-we-burn-its-people.html.

Dominic Selwood is an English author, journalist and barrister. He writes articles for the UK's *Daily Telegraph*, often discrediting historical myths. Selwood has also written multiple works of history, historical fiction and historical thrillers. The online article discusses how Dresden, Germany did not have any military significance. The city was a center for German culture. The article provides the evidence that bombing civilians was not a new idea during the war.

Shallet, Sidney. "First Atomic Bomb Dropped on Japan; Missile Is Equal to 20,000 Tons of TNT;

Truman Warns Foe of a 'Rain of Ruin.'" *The New York Times*, 7 Aug. 1945, www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0806.html.

Sidney Shallet (1911-1965) was a freelance journalist for both the *New York Times* and the *Chattanooga Times*. She became a Washington, D.C. correspondent for *American Magazine* in 1947. This is a primary source article published the day after the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan. It discusses the ultimatum made at the Potsdam Conference, and the guarded secrecy of the technology. It also acknowledges that while the American people were eating dinner, the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan and

annihilated thousands of innocent Japanese civilians. The source shows that the atomic bomb shocked the American public and that the atomic bomb was the deadliest military weapon at that time.

Taylor, Alan. "World War II: The Pacific Islands." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 25 Sept. 2011,

www.theatlantic.com/photo/2011/09/world-war-ii-the-pacific-islands/100155/.

Alan Taylor is an American historian. His expertise lays in early United States history and he has written multiple books about the colonial history of America, the American Revolution and the early American Republic. He was won two Pulitzer Prizes and the Bancroft Prize. This specific articles discusses the Pacific War during World War II and briefly acknowledges that thousands of both American and Japanese soldiers died during the land invasion of Okinawa. The source also contains multiple photographs from the war. The photos show that the war was very violent and bloody. The facts regarding the land invasion of Okinawa demonstrate that a land invasion of the mainland of Japan would be even more horrific.

Trumbull, Robert. "A Leader Who Took Japan to War, to Surrender, and Finally to Peace." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 6 Jan. 1989,

www.nytimes.com/1989/01/07/obituaries/a-leader-who-took-japan-to-war-to-surrender-and-finally-to-peace.html?pagewanted=all.

Robert Trumbull (1912-1992) wrote about war, the birth of nations, and the economic changes in Asia and the Pacific region for more than three decades as a correspondent for *The New York Times*. This specific article focuses on the Japanese Emperor Hirohito (1901-1989). The Emperor was known to be a passive figurehead, however, when the atomic bombs were dropped, he took matters into his own hands. He was able to bring peace to the country of Japan. This source demonstrates that the atomic bombs indirectly caused Japan to surrender because they allowed the Emperor to stand up against militaristic generals.

Walker, J. Samuel. "Recent Literature on Truman's Atomic Bomb Decision: A Search for Middle Ground." *Diplomatic History*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2005, pp. 311–334. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/24914852.

Samuel J. Walker is an American historian who specializes in the nuclear age. He has written several books about arms and atomic energy. These books are *Prompt and Utter Destruction*, *Three Mile Island*, and *The Road to Yucca Mountain*. In 2010, he was awarded the Richard W. Leopold Prize by the Organization of American Historians for *The Road to Yucca Mountain*. This scholarly journal article contrasts the views of the traditional viewpoint and the revisionist interpretation. The traditional viewpoint stated that the bombs were necessary to win the Pacific War and that they saved many American lives. On the other hand, the revisionist interpretation argues that Japan was on the verge of defeat and so the bombs were not necessary. Walker highlights the fact that people from these different viewpoints discovered holes in each other's arguments but failed to give a plausible answer to whether the bombs were necessary or not. For example, revisionists were correct in their thinking that President Truman had other options besides the atomic bombs. However, they did not have any convincing evidence that these alternatives would produce a better result when compared to the atomic bomb. This source has a balanced and educated view on the atomic bomb. As Walker puts it, the atomic bomb controversy "cannot be definitively resolved because it require[s] speculation and extrapolation from incomplete evidence. [...] Recognition of the ambiguities, uncertainties, and complexities involved in the issue is essential for an informed debate." Overall, this source gives insight on the reasoning behind why the bomb was necessary, or not not necessary, to win the Pacific War. It is important to see both sides of an argument.

Williams, Anne, and Peter Kuznick. "Atomic Bomb." 28 Nov. 2017.

Peter Kuznick is a history professor and is the Director of the Nuclear Studies Institute at American University. He is the author and co-author of multiple books. To name a couple

are *Beyond the Laboratory: Scientists As Political Activists in 1930s America* (University of Chicago Press), and *Rethinking the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Japanese and American Perspectives* (Horitsu Bunkasha, 2010) with co-author Akira Kimura. The interview was a discussion about the atomic bomb, and whether the atomic bomb was necessary to end the Pacific War during the Second World War. Kuznick believed that the bombs were used as a political move against the Soviet Union and that the United States should have changed their unconditional surrender. However, he gave no specific and compelling evidence that this was the case. Additionally, militant generals of the Japanese government were still very much in control and so, unconditional surrender would be needed. Kuznick also described President Truman as hostile and that Truman had little understanding of agreements being made during the war. Kuznick's anti-Truman view may be skewing his perspective. Another topic of the interview was the significance of the atomic bomb. Two things that are changing the modern world are climate change and nuclear war. Kuznick agreed that the United States dropping the atomic bomb was a turning point in history. The interview reinforced the idea that world is forever changed after the atomic bomb because the leaders of different countries have the power to wipe out the entire planet.

“World War II: In Depth.” *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007314.

The *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (USHMM) is America's official remembrance to the Holocaust. Next door to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the USHMM is a place for the record keeping, the studying, and the understanding of Holocaust history. This specific article focuses on the Second World War and the Axis powers being anti-communist and unhappy with their positions in the world after World War I. It also describes when different countries entered World War II and when certain countries were defeated. The article concludes with various facts about the amount of deaths that the Soviet Union, China and the United States had. The millions of people who died around the world truly demonstrates how violent, cruel and bloody the war

really was. This supports the idea that President Truman was trying to save the most amount of lives using the atomic bomb. If a traditional land invasion was used instead of nuclear weapons, the death toll around the world would be even higher.