

## Document 1

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

### 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

A few notes of explanation: "S-1 bomb" means atomic bomb. The "three-power conference" refers to the Potsdam Conference between the leaders of the Great Britain, Russia, and the U.S., scheduled to begin on 7/16/45. "Russia's position" refers to the likelihood of Russia soon declaring war on Japan. "Assurances... with regard to the Emperor" referred to telling Japan that they could keep their Emperor, whom they believed to be a god.

## Document 2

Excerpt from Harry S. Truman's Diary  
July 25, 1945

We have discovered the most terrible bomb in the history of the world. It may be the fire destruction prophesied in the Euphrates Valley Era, after Noah and his fabulous Ark.

Anyway we "think" we have found the way to cause a disintegration of the atom. An experiment in the New Mexico desert was startling – to put it mildly. Thirteen pounds of the explosive caused the complete disintegration of a steel tower 60 feet high, created a crater 6 feet deep and 1,200 feet in diameter, knocked over a steel tower 1/2 mile away and knocked men down 10,000 yards away. The explosion was visible for more than 200 miles and audible for 40 miles and more.

This weapon is to be used against Japan between now and August 10th. I have told the Sec. of War, Mr. Stimson, to use it so that military objectives and soldiers and sailors are the target and not women and children. Even if the Japs are savages, ruthless, merciless and fanatic, we as the leader of the world for the common welfare cannot drop that terrible bomb on the old capital or the new.

He and I are in accord. 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...

Document 3

4. A translation of the above leaflet follows:

"ATTENTION JAPANESE PEOPLE"

EVACUATE YOUR CITIES

"Because your military leaders have rejected the thirteen part surrender declaration, two momentous events have occurred in the last few days.

"The Soviet Union, because of this rejection on the part of the military has notified your Ambassador Sato that it has declared war on your nation. Thus, all powerful countries of the world are now at war against you.

"Also, because of your leaders' refusal to accept the surrender declaration that would enable Japan to honorably end this useless war, we have employed our atomic bomb.

"A single one of our newly developed atomic bombs is actually the equivalent in explosive power to what 2000 of our giant B-29's could have carried on a single mission. Radio Tokyo has told you that with the first use of this weapon of total destruction, Hiroshima was virtually destroyed.

"Before we use this bomb again and again to destroy every resource of the military by which they are prolonging this useless war, petition the Emperor now to end the war. Our President has outlined for you the thirteen consequences of an honorable surrender; We urge that you accept these consequences and begin the work of building a new, better, and peace loving Japan.

"Let it once or we shall resolutely employ this bomb and all our other superior weapons to promptly and forcefully end the war."

EVACUATE YOUR CITIES

~~SECRET~~  
DOD Dir. 5200.10, June 20, 1960  
RMSV by SE date 12-14-62

DECLASSIFIED  
DOD Dir. 5200.10  
RM By 67 Date 8-27-67

## Document 4

Excerpt from a radio speech by President Truman  
August 9, 1945

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.

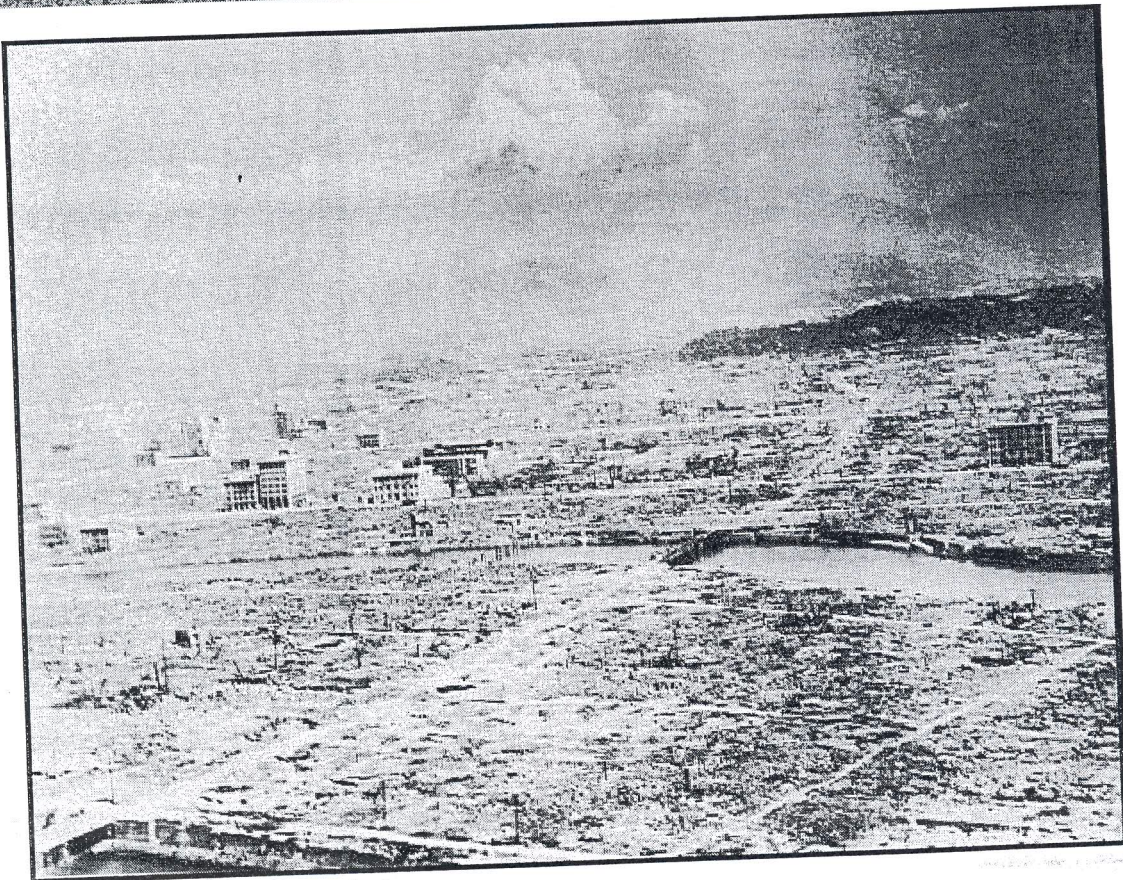
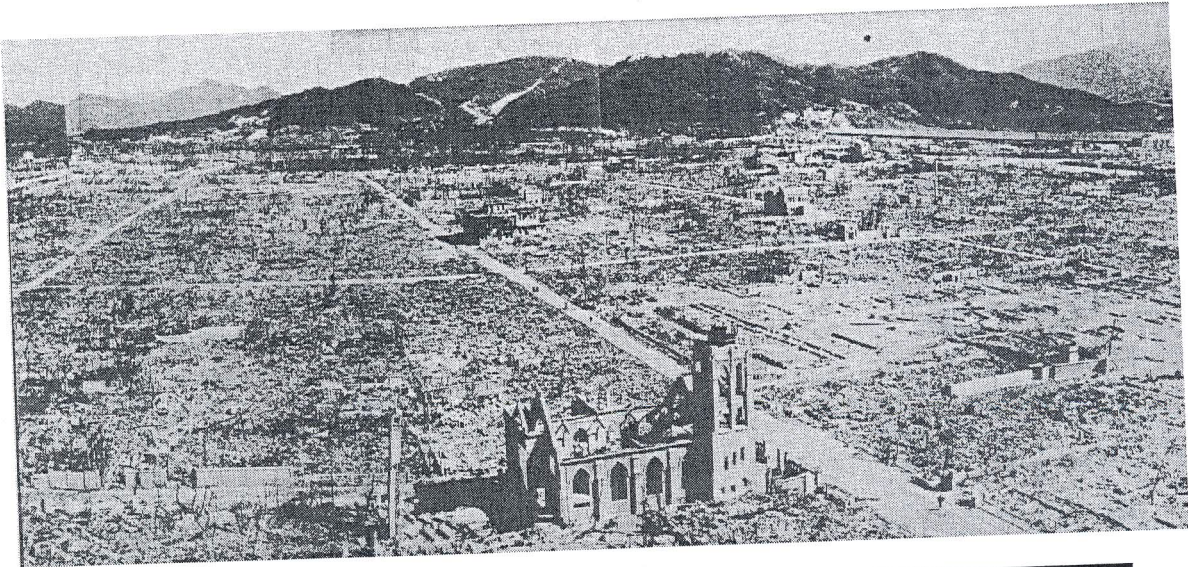
## Document 5

A young veteran of the Pacific war

I was a 21-year old second lieutenant leading a rifle platoon...When the bombs dropped and news began to circulate that the invasion of Japan would not take place, that we would not be obliged to run up the beaches near Tokyo, assault-firing while being mortared and shelled, for all the fake manliness of our facades, we cried with relief and joy. We were going to live. We were going to grow up to adulthood after all.

## Document 6

Two pictures that show the destruction in Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the bombs were dropped.



## Document 7

Witnesses to the atomic bomb explosion in Hiroshima and Nagasaki  
1945

A fourth-grade girl:

The people passing along the street are covered with blood and trailing the rags of their torn clothes after them. The skin of their arms is peeled off and dangling from their finger tips, and they go walking silently, hanging their arms before them.

A five-year old girl:

People came fleeing from the nearby streets. One after another they were almost unrecognizable. The skin was burned off some of them and was hanging from their hands and from their chins; their faces were red and so swollen that you could hardly tell where their eyes and mouths were. From the houses smoke black enough to scorch the heavens was covering the sky. It was a horrible sight.

A fifth-grade boy compiling a list:

The flames which blaze up here and there from the collapsed houses as though to illuminate the darkness. The child making a suffering, groaning sound, his burned face swollen up balloon-like and jerking s he wonders among the fires. The old man, the skin of his face and body peeling off like a potato skin, mumbling prayers while he flees with faltering steps. Another man pressing with both hands the wound from which blood is steadily dripping, rushing around as though he has gone mad and calling the names of his wife and child. My hair seems to stand on end just to remember. This is the way war really looks.

A five-year old girl:

The whole city was burning. Black smoke was billowing up and we could hear the sound of big things exploding. Those dreadful streets. The fires were burning. There was a strange smell all over. Blue-green balls of fire were drifting around. I had a terrible lonely feeling that everybody else in the world was dead and only we were still alive.

Another girl the same age:

I really have to shudder when I think of that atom bomb which licked away the city of Hiroshima in one or two minutes on the 6th of August, 1945. We were running for our lives. On the way we saw a soldier floating in the river with his stomach all swollen. In desperation he must have jumped into the river to escape from the sea of fire. A little farther on dead people were lined up in a long row. A little farther on there was a woman lying with a big fallen log cross her legs so that she couldn't get away. When her father saw that he shouted, "Please come and help!" But not a single person came to help. They were all too intent on saving themselves. Finally father lost his patience, and shouting, "Are you people Japanese or not??" He took a rusty saw and cut off her leg and rescued her. A little farther on we saw a man who had been burned black as he was walking.

1. Casualties

The most striking result of the atomic bombs was the great number of casualties. The exact number of dead and injured will never be known because of the confusion after the explosions. Persons unaccounted for might have been burned beyond recognition in the falling buildings, disposed of in one of the mass cremations of the first week of recovery, or driven out of the city to die or recover without any record remaining. No sure count of even the pre-raid populations existed. Because of the decline in activity in the two port cities, the constant threat of incendiary raids, and the formal evacuation programs of the government, an unknown number of the inhabitants had either drifted away from the cities or been removed according to plan. In this uncertain situation, estimates of casualties have generally ranged between 100,000 and 180,000 for Hiroshima, and between 60,000 and 100,000 for Nagasaki. The Survey believes the dead at Hiroshima to have been between 70,000 and 80,000, with an equal number injured; at Nagasaki over 35,000 dead and somewhat more than that injured seem the most plausible estimate.

Most of the immediate casualties did not differ from those caused by incendiary or high explosive raids. The outstanding difference was the presence of radiation effects, which became unmistakable about a week after the bombing. At the time of impact, however, the causes of death and injury were flash burns, secondary effects of blast and falling debris, and burns from blazing buildings. No records are available that give the relative importance of the various types of injury, especially for those who died immediately after the explosion. Indeed, many of these people undoubtedly died several times over, theoretically, since each was subjected to several injuries any one of which would have been fatal. The Hiroshima prefectural health department placed the proportion of deaths from burns (flash or flame) at 60 percent, from falling debris at 30 percent and from other injuries at 10 percent; it is generally agreed that burns caused at least 50 percent of the initial casualties. Of those who died later, an increasing proportion succumbed to radiation effects.

The seriousness of these radiation effects may be measured by the fact that 95 percent of the traced survivors of the immediate explosion who were within 3,000 feet suffered from radiation disease. Colonel Stafford Warren, in his testimony before the Senate Committee on Atomic Energy, estimated that radiation was responsible for 7 to 8 percent of the total deaths in the two cities. Most medical investigators who spent some time in the areas feel that this estimate is far too low; it is generally felt that no less than 15 to 20 percent of the deaths were from radiation. In addition, there were an equal number who were casualties but survived, as well as uncounted thousands who probably were affected by the gamma rays but not enough to produce definite illness.

A plausible estimate of the importance of the various causes of death would range as follows:

19 June 1946

U. S. Strategic Bombing Survey: The Effects of the Atomic Bombings  
of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, June 19, 1946. President's Secretary's  
File, Truman Papers.

Flash burns	20 to 30 per cent
Other injuries	50 to 60 per cent
Radiation Sickness	15 to 20 per cent

If we examine the nature of the casualties under each group of causes we find familiar and unfamiliar effects.

#### Flash burns.

The flash of the explosion, which was extremely brief, emitted radiant heat travelling at the speed of light. Flash burns thus followed the explosion instantaneously. The fact that relatively few victims suffered burns of the eyeballs should not be interpreted as an indication that the radiant heat followed the flash, or that time was required to build up to maximum heat intensity. The explanation is simply that the structure of the eye is more resistant to heat than is average human skin, and near ground zero the recessed position of the eyeball offered protection from the overhead explosion. Peak temperatures lasted only momentarily.

Survivors in the two cities stated that people who were in the open directly under the explosion of the bomb were so severely burned that the skin was charred dark brown or black and that they died within a few minutes or hours.

Among the survivors, the burned areas of the skin showed evidence of burns almost immediately after the explosion. At first there was marked redness, and other evidence of thermal burns appeared within the next few minutes or hours, depending on the degree of the burn. Uninfected burns healed promptly without any unusual clinical features, according to the Japanese physicians who attended the cases. American medical observers noted only a tendency to formation of excess scar tissue, which could be satisfactorily explained as the result of malnutrition and the large degree of secondary infection that complicated healing of the burns. There were also a few instances of burns healing with contractures and limitation of the mobility of certain joints, such as the elbows or knees. In many instances, these primary burns of minor nature were completely healed before patients developed evidence of radiation effects.

Because of the brief duration of the flash rays and the shielding effects of almost any objects -- leaves and clothing as well as buildings -- there were many interesting cases of protection. The radiant heat came in a direct line like light, so that the area burned corresponded to this directed exposure. Persons whose sides were toward the explosion often showed definite burns of both sides of the back while the hollow of the back escaped. People in buildings or houses were apparently burned only if directly exposed through the windows. The most striking instance was that of a man writing before a window. His hands were seriously burned but his exposed face and neck suffered only slight burns due to the angle of entry of the radiant heat through the window.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Atomic Bomb History Lab

*Directions: Analyze the documents and identify the information they provide regarding the statement: "The United States was justified in dropping the atomic bombs on Japan."*

Document #	Type of Source	Information	Support/Challenge

Document #	Type of Source	Information	Support/Challenge

1. Which document does the best job **supporting** the statement "*The United States was justified in dropping the atomic bombs on Japan.*"? Justify your answer.
2. Which document does the best job **challenging** the statement "*The United States was justified in dropping the atomic bombs on Japan.*"? Justify your answer.