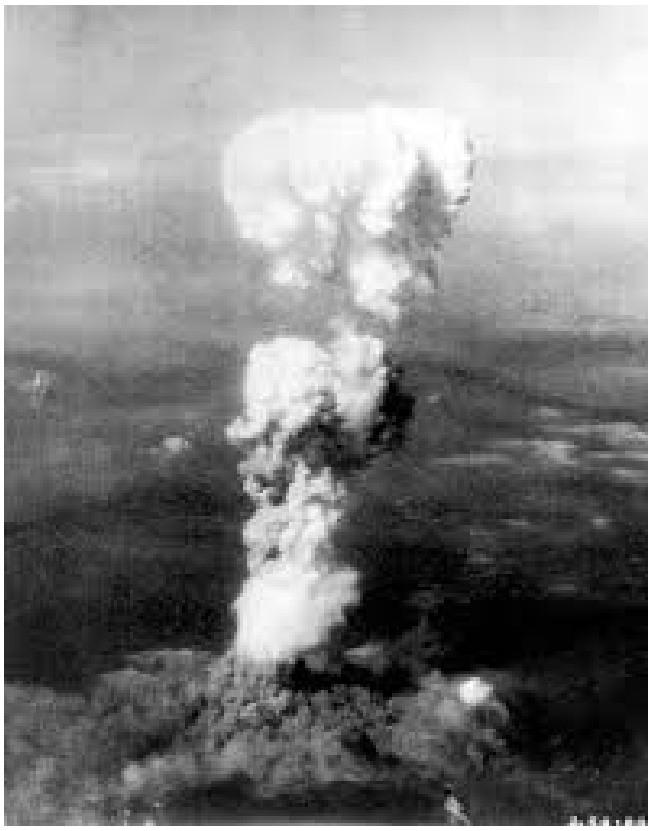


A special thanks to Monica Nelson, Dixie Luedtke, and John Koski, without whose help this class could not have taken place.

THE DECISION TO USE THE ATOMIC BOMB

Presented for Learning in Retirement by Larry Desotell, November 10 and 17, 2020

THE PARTICIPANTS

1. **Vannevar Bush – He was instrumental in convincing the FDR administration to begin the program to develop the atomic bomb. He was the Chair of the National Defense Research Committee (NDRC) and then the head of the Office of Scientific Research and Development which oversaw the NDRC. Bush oversaw the Uranium Committee, code named S-1, that was in charge of creating enough uranium to create bombs.**
2. **Jimmy Byrnes – Byrnes had been appointed to the Supreme Court by FDR and served for 15 months before being asked by FDR to serve as the head of the Office of War Mobilization. A close friend of HST, Byrnes was appointed by HST to be Secretary of State in July, 1945. He was HST's personal representative on the Interim Committee. He was a major advocate of use of the bomb without warning and of no modification of "unconditional surrender."**
3. **James Conant – He succeeded Bush as head of the NDRC. Its main task was to study and develop nuclear fission. He too was a member of the interim Committee.**
4. **Joseph Grew – Officially the Under Secretary of State, he served as acting Secretary of State during the time that that Secretary of State Joseph Stettinius and, later Jimmy Byrnes served were at conferences. He had been an ambassador to Japan and advise HST that if the Japanese were not allowed to maintain the office and person of Emperor Hirohito they would fight to the last person.**
5. **Leslie Groves, Jr. – Lieutenant General in the Army Corp of Engineer, Groves was the director of the Manhattan Project.**
6. **Averill Harriman – Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Harriman took a strong anti-Soviet opinion and believed that FDR had been too lenient with the Russians at the Yalta Conference. He sought to influence HST to take a stronger stand against Soviet control of Poland. He supported getting the war over with quickly to prevent the expansion of the Soviets into China, Korea, and Japan.**
7. **Cordell Hull – He was the Secretary of State from 1933-1944. Still influential after his resignation due to health reasons, he eventually advised HST that clarification of the demand for "unconditional surrender" to allow for the continuation of the office of Emperor would result in the surrender of the Japanese without using the bomb.**
8. **General George Marshall – Marshall served as Chief of Staff of the Army and oversaw the expansion of the military throughout the war. He believed that the war could be won without an invasion as the Japanese military infra-structure was collapsing. He developed serious reservations regarding the use of the bomb and urged consideration of its moral implications. He believed that the Japanese would surrender once the Soviets entered the war and advised modification of the demand for "unconditional surrender" by allowing for the retention of the person of the emperor.**
9. **John J. McCloy – The Assistant Secretary of War, McCloy tried to convince HST that an invasion of Japan was increasingly unnecessary from a military perspective, and that MAGIC intercepts indicated that the Japanese were putting out feelers about surrender. He urged HST to make an offer to allow the Japanese to maintain the office of the Emperor paired with an implied threat to use the bomb if the Japanese still refused to surrender. He argued that this would provide the U.S. the "moral high ground" if the bomb was to be utilized.**

10. **Robert Oppenheimer - He was given the title "Coordinator of Rapid Rupture", which specifically referred to the propagation of a fast neutron chain reaction in an atomic bomb. He concentrated the development efforts on the gun-type device, a simpler design that only had to work with uranium-235, in a single group, and this device became Little Boy in February 1945. He was a member of the Interim Committee which gave its views on the potential use and military and diplomatic effects of the bomb.**
11. **President Franklin Roosevelt – FDR began the project to develop the atomic bomb in 1939. It was at his insistence that that the Axis Powers be forced to accept "unconditional surrender" so as to assure the complete destruction of the military power. His acceptance of language regarding the future government of Poland became a major factor leading to the development of the Cold War between the U.S. and the USSR.**
12. **Leo Szilard – A Hungarian-born physicist, Szilard convinced Albert Einstein to sign a letter to FDR that Szilard and Eugene Wigner wrote to advocate that the U.S. begin to do research into atomic power and to begin to stockpile uranium, warning that Germany was engaged in such a project. After the successful test at Trinity site in July 1945, Szilard and other signed a letter to HST which stated their view that the bomb not be used against Japan before they were given an opportunity to surrender under terms made known to them.**
13. **Henry S. Stimson - Stimson was Secretary of War from 1940 until September 1945. Stimson was in overall direction of the Manhattan Project and viewed the bomb as a way to influence Soviet behavior in Eastern and Central Europe and Asia. He eventually advised HST that clarification of the demand for "unconditional surrender" to allow for the continuation of the office of Emperor would result in the surrender of the Japanese without using the bomb.**
14. **Colonel Paul W. Tibbets Jr. – Piiot and commander of the Enola Gay the B-29 Superfortress which delivered the first atomic bomb against Hiroshima. Tibbets recalled that the city was covered with a tall mushroom cloud after the bomb was dropped. Tibbets was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross immediately after landing on Tinian. "I'm proud that I was able to start with nothing, plan it and have it work as perfectly as it did ... I sleep clearly every night. I knew when I got the assignment, it was going to be an emotional thing. We had feelings, but we had to put them in the background. We knew it was going to kill people right and left. But my one driving interest was to do the best job I could so that we could end the killing as quickly as possible."**
15. **President Harry S. Truman (HST)– Truman became president on April 12, 1945 following the death of FDR. "Boys, if you ever pray, pray for me now. I don't know if you fellas ever had a load of hay fall on you, but when they told me what happened yesterday, I felt like the moon, the stars, and all the planets had fallen on me." He was unaware of the existence of S-1, the code name given to the ultra-secret project to develop an atomic bomb until April 25.**

Document 1: The Einstein–Szilárd Letter to FDR (August 2, 1939)

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 in 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 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. One possible way of achieving this might be for you to entrust with this task a person who has your confidence and who could perhaps serve in an unofficial capacity. His task might comprise the following:

a) to approach Government Departments, keep them informed of the further development, and put forward recommendations for Government action, giving particular attention to the problem of securing a supply of uranium ore for the United States.

b) to speed up the experimental work, which is at present being carried on within the limits of the budgets of University laboratories, by providing funds, if such funds be required, through his contacts with private persons who are willing to make contributions for this cause, and perhaps also by obtaining the co-operation of industrial laboratories which have the necessary equipment.

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 Weizsäcker, is attached to the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut in Berlin where some of the American work on uranium is now being repeated.

DOCUMENT 2: DECLARATIONS OF THE YALTA CONFERENCE (April 15, 1944)

AGREEMENT REGARDING POLAND

"A new situation has been created in Poland as a result of her complete liberation by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a Polish Provisional Government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of the western part of Poland. The Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This new Government should then be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity.

"M. Molotov, Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr are authorized as a commission to consult in the first instance in Moscow with members of the present Provisional Government and with other Polish democratic leaders from within Poland and from abroad, with a view to the reorganization of the present Government along the above lines. This Polish Provisional Government of National Unity shall be pledged to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot. In these elections all democratic and anti-Nazi parties shall have the right to take part and to put forward candidates.

"When a Polish Provisional of Government National Unity has been properly formed in conformity with the above, the Government of the U.S.S.R., which now maintains diplomatic relations with the present Provisional Government of Poland, and the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the United States of America will establish diplomatic relations with the new Polish Provisional Government National Unity, and will exchange Ambassadors by whose reports the respective Governments will be kept informed about the situation in Poland.

"The three heads of Government consider that the eastern frontier of Poland should follow the Curzon Line with digressions from it in some regions of five to eight kilometers in favor of Poland. They recognize that Poland must receive substantial accessions in territory in the north and west. They feel that the opinion of the new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity should be sought in due course of the extent of these accessions and that the final delimitation of the western frontier of Poland should thereafter await the peace conference."

AGREEMENT REGARDING JAPAN

The leaders of the three great powers - the Soviet Union, the United States of America and Great Britain - have agreed that in two or three months after Germany has surrendered and the war in Europe is terminated, the Soviet Union shall enter into war against Japan on the side of the Allies on condition that:

1. **The status quo in Outer Mongolia (the Mongolian People's Republic) shall be preserved.**
2. **The former rights of Russia violated by the treacherous attack of Japan in 1904 shall be restored, viz.:**

(a) The southern part of Sakhalin as well as the islands adjacent to it shall be returned to the Soviet Union;
(b) The commercial port of Dairen shall be internationalized, the pre-eminent interests of the Soviet Union in this port being safeguarded, and the lease of Port Arthur as a naval base of the U.S.S.R. restored;
(c) The Chinese-Eastern Railroad and the South Manchurian Railroad, which provide an outlet to Dairen, shall be jointly operated by the establishment of a joint Soviet-Chinese company, it being understood that the pre-eminent interests of the Soviet Union shall be safeguarded and that China shall retain sovereignty in Manchuria;

3. The Kurile Islands shall be handed over to the Soviet Union.

It is understood that the agreement concerning Outer Mongolia and the ports and railroads referred to above will require concurrence of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. The President will take measures in order to maintain this concurrence on advice from Marshal Stalin.

The heads of the three great powers have agreed that these claims of the Soviet Union shall be unquestionably fulfilled after Japan has been defeated.

For its part, the Soviet Union expresses it readiness to conclude with the National Government of China a pact of friendship and alliance between the U.S.S.R. and China in order to render assistance to China with its armed forces for the purpose of liberating China from the Japanese yoke.

Document 3: Report by General Leslie Grove Henry Stimson on the test explosion of the atomic bomb at Trinity Site, New Mexico (July 17, 1945)

"The test was successful beyond the most optimistic expectations of anyone. Based on the data which it has been possible to work up to date, I estimate the energy generated to be in excess of the equivalent of 15,000 to 20,000 tons of TNT; and this is a conservative estimate. Data based on measurements which we have not yet been able to reconcile would make the energy release several times the conservative figure. There were tremendous blast effects. For a brief period, there was a lighting effect within a radius of 20 miles equal to several suns in midday; a huge ball of fire was formed which lasted for several seconds. This ball mushroomed and rose to a height of over ten thousand feet before it dimmed. The light from the explosion was seen clearly at Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Silver City, El Paso and other points generally to about 180 miles away. The sound was heard to the same distance in a few instances but generally to about 100 miles. Only a few windows were broken although one was some 125 miles away. A massive cloud was formed which surged and billowed upward with tremendous power, reaching the substratosphere at an elevation of 41,000 feet, 36,000 feet above the ground, in about five minutes, breaking without interruption through a temperature inversion at 17,000 feet which most of the scientists thought would stop it. Two supplementary explosions occurred in the cloud shortly after the main explosion. The cloud contained several thousand tons of dust picked up from the ground and a considerable amount of iron in the gaseous form. Our present thought is that this iron ignited when it mixed with the oxygen in the air to cause these supplementary explosions. Huge concentrations of highly radioactive materials resulted from the fission and were contained in this cloud.

The cloud traveled to a great height first in the form of a ball, then mushroomed, then changed into a long trailing chimney-shaped column and finally was sent in several directions by the variable winds at

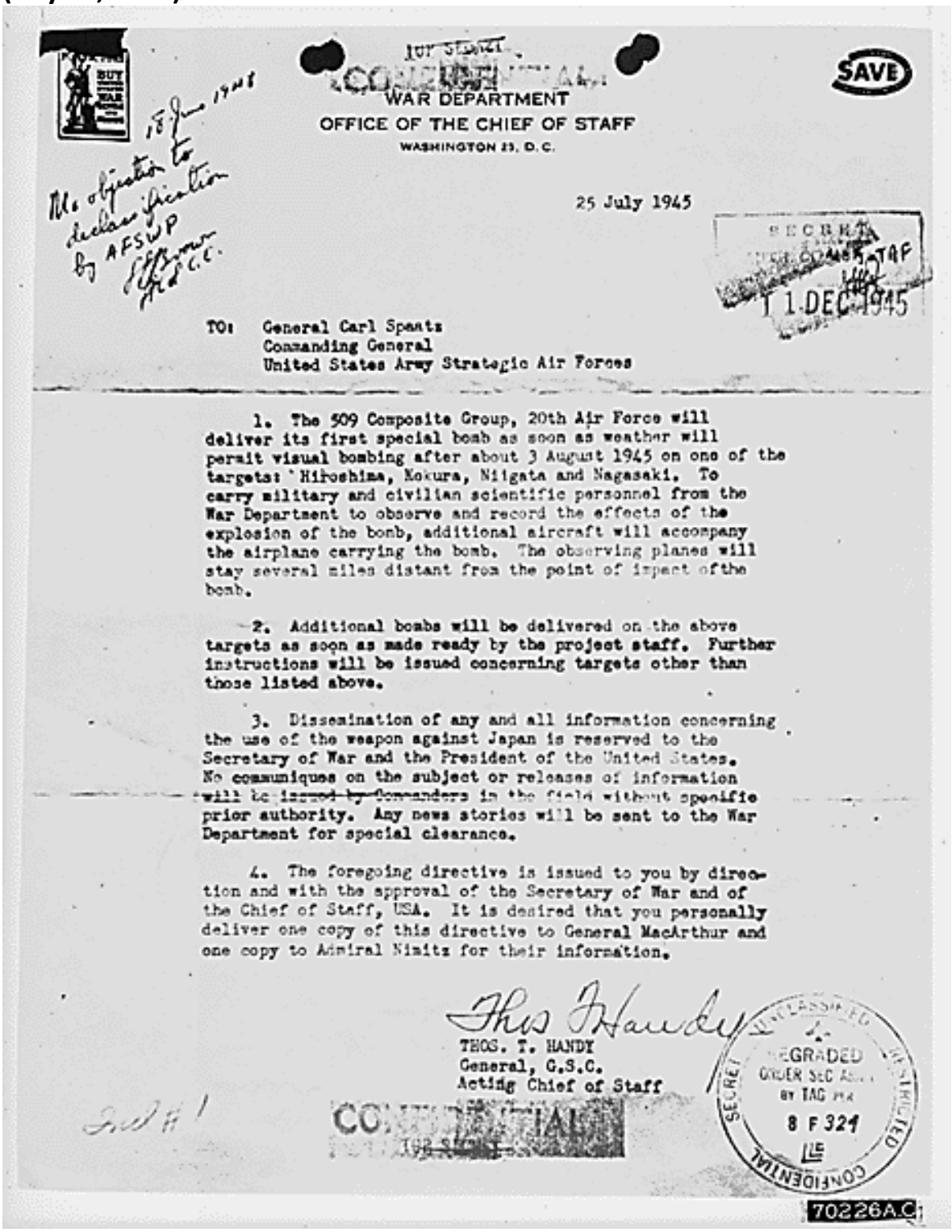
the different elevations. It deposited its dust and radioactive materials over a wide area. It was followed and monitored by medical doctors and scientists with instruments to check its radioactive effects. While here and there the activity on the ground was fairly high, at no place did it reach a concentration which required evacuation of the population. Radioactive material in small quantities was located as much as 120 miles away. The measurements are being continued in order to have adequate data with which to protect the Government's interests in case of future claims. For a few hours I was none too comfortable with the situation.

Document 4: Memorandum on plan and schedule of Japanese attack from: John Stone, Colonel, GSC to H. H. Arnold, General, July 24, 1945

Subject: Groves Project

1. **The following plan and schedule for initial attacks using special bombs have been worked out:**
   - **a. The first atom bomb (gun type) will be ready to drop between August 1 and 10 and plans are to drop it the first day of good weather following readiness.**
   - **b. The following targets have been selected: Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata and Nagasaki.**
     - **(1) Hiroshima (population 350,000) is an "Army" city; a major POE; has large QM and ssupply depots; has considerable industry and several small shipyards.**
     - **(2) Nagasaki (population 210,000) is a major shipping and industrial center of Kyushu.**
     - **(3) Kokura (population 178,000) has one of the largest army arsenals and ordnance works; has the largest railroad shops on Kyushu; and has large munitions storage to the south.**
     - **(4) Niigata (population 150,000) is an important industrial city, building machine tools, diesel engines, etc., and is key port for shipping to the mainland.**
   - **c. All four cities are believed to contain large numbers of key Japanese industrialists and political figures who have sought refuge from major destroyed cities.**
   - **d. The attack is planned to be visual to ensure accuracy and will await favorable weather. The four targets give a very high probability of one being open even if the weather varies from that forecast, as they are considerably separated.**
   - **e. The bomb will be carried in a master airplane to be accompanied by two other project B-29's with observers and special instruments.**
   - **f. The three B-29's will take off from North Field, Tinian, and fly via Iwo Jima. The use of fighter escort will be determined by General Spaatz upon consideration of all operational factors.**
   - **g. The master plane will attack the selected target from 30,000 feet plus altitude and will immediately upon release of the bomb make a steep diving turn away from the target to achieve maximum slant range distance as quickly as possible. Recording planes and fighters if employed will be kept several miles from the target. The participating planes are believed to be safe from the effects of the bomb.**
   - **h. The bomb will be detonated by radar proximity fuse about 2000 feet above the ground.**
   - **i. Emergency arrangements have been provided at Iwo Jima for handling the bomb if required.**
2. **Two tested type bombs are expected to be available in August, one about the 6th and another on the 24th. General Groves expects to have more information on future availabilities in a few days which will be furnished you when received.**
3. **The above has been discussed with Generals Spaatz and Eaker who concur.**

Document 5: Order to General Carl Spatz, Commander of the Army Strategic Air Force from General Thomas Handy, Acting Chief of Staff to deliver atomic bombs. (July 25, 1945)



BUY WAR BONDS

SAVE

CONFIDENTIAL

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

18 June 1948
No objection to declassification by AFSWP
Effective 1 A.C.C.

25 July 1945

SECRET
TAG
11 DEC 1945

TO: General Carl Spaatz
Commanding General
United States Army Strategic Air Forces

1. The 509 Composite Group, 20th Air Force will deliver its first special bomb as soon as weather will permit visual bombing after about 3 August 1945 on one of the targets: Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata and Nagasaki. To carry military and civilian scientific personnel from the War Department to observe and record the effects of the explosion of the bomb, additional aircraft will accompany the airplane carrying the bomb. The observing planes will stay several miles distant from the point of impact of the bomb.

2. Additional bombs will be delivered on the above targets as soon as made ready by the project staff. Further instructions will be issued concerning targets other than those listed above.

3. Dissemination of any and all information concerning the use of the weapon against Japan is reserved to the Secretary of War and the President of the United States. No communiques on the subject or releases of information will be issued by Commanders in the field without specific prior authority. Any news stories will be sent to the War Department for special clearance.

4. The foregoing directive is issued to you by direction and with the approval of the Secretary of War and of the Chief of Staff, USA. It is desired that you personally deliver one copy of this directive to General MacArthur and one copy to Admiral Nimitz for their information.

Thos Handy
THOS. T. HANDY
General, G.S.C.
Acting Chief of Staff

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Document 6: Excerpt from public statement 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. […] Having found the bomb we have used it. We have used it against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbor, against those who have starved and beaten and executed American prisoners of war, against those who have abandoned all pretense of obeying international laws of warfare. We have used it in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans."

DOCUMENT 7: ASSUMPTIONS CONCERNING OPERATION DOWNFALL, PREPARED BY GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES IN THE PACIFIC (MAY 28, 1945)

1. **That the Japanese will continue the war to the utmost extent of their capabilities and will prepare to defend the main islands of Japan with every means available to them. That operations in this area will be opposed not only by the available organized military forces of the Empire, but also by a fanatically hostile population.**
2. **That approximately three (3) hostile divisions will be disposed in Southern KYUSHU and an additional three (3) in Northern KYUSHU at initiation of the OLYMPIC operation.**
3. **That total hostile forces committed against KYUSHU operations will not exceed eight (8) to ten (10) divisions and that this level will be speedily attained.**
4. **That approximately twenty-one (21) hostile divisions, including depot divisions, will be on HONSHU at initiation of [*Coronet*] and that fourteen (14) of these divisions may be employed in the KANTO PLAIN area.**
5. **That the enemy may withdraw his land-based air forces to the Asiatic Mainland for protection from our neutralizing attacks. That under such circumstances he can possibly amass from 2,000 to 2,500 planes in that area by exercise of rigid economy, and that this force can operate against KYUSHU landings by staging through homeland fields.**
6. **That the attrition caused by our continued land-based and carrier-based air preparation and support, and our destruction of aircraft manufacturing and maintenance facilities, will reduce the hostile capability for air action against our landings to suicide attacks of uncertain proportions at an early phase of our operations.**
7. **Thar hostile fleet elements will be forced to retreat to the Yellow Sea or Western Sea of Japan. That the enemy will maintain the capability of suicide attack against KYUSHU landings with the approximate strength of a typical**

carrier task group. That his remaining submarines and large number of small suicide craft will oppose our landings and that mines will be used in large numbers.

8. **That hostile seas communications across the Japan Sea, while relatively unimpaired prior to KYUSHU landings, will be progressively and rapidly restricted to completer interdiction by the time air is operating from HONSHU.**
9. **That during continuation of Russian neutrality, the production capacity of hostile industries and raw materials in Manchuria, North China and Korea will remain relatively unimpaired.**
10. **That hostile logistic position, will permit determined defense in areas of projected operations by hostile ground forces in (3) and (4) above.**

Document 8: Japanese War Poem

Where dark tides billow in the ocean
A wing-shaped isle of mighty fame
Guards the gateway to our empire:
Iwo Jima is its name.

We brave men who have been chosen
to defend this island strand
Filled with Faith in certain triumph
Yearn to strike for Fatherland.
Oh, for Emperor and homeland
There's no burden we won't bear.
Sickness, hardship, filthy water
These are less to us than air.

Officers and men together
Work and struggle, strive and trust,
Till the hated Anglo-Saxons
Lie before us in the dust.

Document 9: Memorandum for the President on Proposed Program for Japan from Henry Stimson, Secretary of War, July 2, 1945

1. The plans of operation up to and including the first landing have been authorized and the preparations for the operation are now actually going on. This situation was accepted by all members of your conference on Monday, June 18th.

3. If we once land on one of the main islands and begin a forceful occupation of Japan, we shall probably have cast the die of last ditch resistance. The Japanese are highly patriotic and certainly susceptible to calls for fanatical resistance to repel an invasion. Once started in actual invasion, we shall in my opinion have to go through with an even more bitter finish fight than in Germany. We shall

incur the losses incident to such a war and we shall have to leave the Japanese islands even more thoroughly destroyed than was the case with Germany. This would be due both to the difference in the Japanese and German personal character and the differences in the size and character of the terrain through which the operations will take place.

4. A question then comes: Is there any alternative to such a forceful occupation of Japan which will secure for us the equivalent of an unconditional surrender of her forces and a permanent destruction of her power again to strike an aggressive blow at the "peace of the Pacific"? I am inclined to think that there is enough such chance to make it well worthwhile our giving them a warning of what is to come and a definite opportunity to capitulate. As above suggested, it should be tried before the actual forceful occupation of the homeland islands is begun and furthermore the warning should be given in ample time to permit a national reaction to set in.

We have the following enormously favorable factors on our side—factors much weightier than those we had against Germany:

- **Japan has no allies.**
- **Her navy is nearly destroyed and she is vulnerable to a surface and underwater blockade which can deprive her of sufficient food and supplies for her population.**
- **She is terribly vulnerable to our concentrated air attack upon her crowded cities, industrial and food resources.**
- **She has against her not only the Anglo-American forces but the rising forces of China and the ominous threat of Russia.**
- **We have inexhaustible and untouched industrial resources to bring to bear against her diminishing potential.**
- **We have great moral superiority through being the victim of her first sneak attack.**

On the other hand, I think that the attempt to exterminate her armies and her population by gunfire or other means will tend to produce a fusion of race solidity and antipathy which had no analogy in the case of Germany. We have a national interest in creating, if possible, a condition wherein the Japanese nation may live as a peaceful and useful member of the future Pacific community.

5. It is therefore my conclusion that a carefully timed warning be given to Japan by the chief representatives of the United States, Great Britain, China and, if then a belligerent, Russia, calling upon Japan to surrender and permit the occupation of her country in order to insure its complete demilitarization for the sake of the future peace.

This warning should contain the following elements:

- **The varied and overwhelming character of the force we are about to bring to bear on the islands.**
- **The inevitability and completeness of the destruction which the full application of this force will entail.**
- **The determination of the allies to destroy permanently all authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the country into embarking on world conquest.**
- **The determination of the allies to limit Japanese sovereignty to her main islands and to render them powerless to mount and support another war.**

- **The disavowal of any attempt to extirpate the Japanese as a race or to destroy them as a nation.**

The withdrawal from their country as soon as the above objectives of the allies are accomplished, and as soon as there has been established a peacefully inclined government, of a character representative of the masses of the Japanese people. I personally think that if in saying this we should add that we do not exclude a constitutional monarchy under her present dynasty, it would substantially add to the chances of acceptance.

6. Success of course will depend on the potency of the warning which we give her. She has an extremely sensitive national pride and, as we are now seeing every day, when actually locked with the enemy will fight to the very death. For that reason the warning must be tendered before the actual invasion has occurred and while the impending destruction, though clear beyond peradventure, has not yet reduced her to fanatical despair. If Russia is a part of the threat, the Russian attack, if actual, must not have progressed too far. Our own bombing should be confined to military objectives as far as possible.

[Enclosure 2]

top secret

Proclamation by the Heads of State U. S.—U. K—[U. S. S. R.]—China

Delete matters inside brackets if U. S. S. R. not in war]

12.The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as our objectives are accomplished and there has been established beyond doubt a peacefully inclined, responsible government of a character representative of the Japanese people. This may include a constitutional monarchy under the present dynasty if it be shown to the complete satisfaction of the world that such a government will never again aspire to aggression.

13. We call upon those in authority in Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all the Japanese armed forces under the authority of the Japanese Government and High Command, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action.

Document 10: Potsdam Declaration, July 26, 1945

1. **We—the President of the United States, the President of the National Government of the Republic of China, and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, representing the hundreds of millions of our countrymen, have conferred and agree that Japan shall be given an opportunity to end this war.**
2. **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.**
3. **The result of the futile and senseless German resistance to the might of the aroused free peoples of the world stands forth in awful clarity as an example to the people of Japan. 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.

4. **The time has come for Japan to decide whether she will continue to be controlled by those self-willed militaristic advisers whose unintelligent calculations have brought the Empire of Japan to the threshold of annihilation, or whether she will follow the path of reason.**
5. **Following are our terms. We will not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay.**
6. **There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world.**
7. **Until such a new order is established and until there is convincing proof that Japan's war-making power is destroyed, points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall be occupied to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth.**
8. **The terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine.**
9. **The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives.**
10. **We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established.**
11. **Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy and permit the exaction of just reparations in kind, but not those which would enable her to re-arm for war. To this end, access to, as distinguished from control of, raw materials shall be permitted. Eventual Japanese participation in world trade relations shall be permitted.**
12. **The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government.**
13. **We call upon the government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.**

Document 11: Entry in the Diary of Secretary of War Henry Stimson

May 14, 1945

My own opinion was that the time now and the method now to deal with Russia was to keep our mouths shut and let our actions speak for words. The Russians will understand them better than anything else. It is a case where we have got to regain the lead and perhaps do it in a pretty rough and realistic way. They have rather taken it away from us because we have talked too much and have been too lavish with our beneficences to them. I told him this was a place where we really held all the cards. I called it a royal straight flush and we musn't be a fool about the way we play it. They can't get along without our help and industries and we have coming into action a weapon which will be unique.

Now the thing is not to get into unnecessary quarrels by talking too much and not to indicate any weakness by talking too much; let our actions speak for themselves.

May 15

The trouble is that the President has now promised apparently to meet Stalin and Churchill on the first of July and at that time these questions will become burning and it may be necessary to have it out with Russia on her relations to Manchuria, and Port Arthur and various other parts of North China and also the relation of China to us. Over any such tangled wave of problems the S-1 secret would be dominant and yet we will not know until after that time probably, until after that meeting, whether this is a weapon in our hands or not. We think it will be shortly afterwards, but it seems a terrible thing to gamble with such big stakes in diplomacy without having your master card in your hand. The best we could do today was to persuade Harriman not to go back until we had had time to think over these things a little bit harder.

Document 12: *Report of the Committee on Political and Social* Problems, Manhattan Project "Metallurgical Laboratory", University of Chicago, June 11, 1945

The development of nuclear power not only constitutes an important addition to the technological and military power of the United States, but also creates grave political and economic problems for the future of this country.

Nuclear bombs cannot possibly remain a "secret weapon" at the exclusive disposal of this country, for more than a few years. The scientific facts on which their construction is based are well known to scientists of other countries. Unless an effective international control of nuclear explosives is instituted, a race of nuclear armaments is certain to ensue following the first revelation of our possession of nuclear weapons to the world. Within ten years other countries may have nuclear bombs, each of which, weighing less than a ton, could destroy an urban area of more than ten square miles. In the war to which such an armaments race is likely to lead, the United States, with its agglomeration of population and industry in comparatively few metropolitan districts, will be at a disadvantage compared to the nations whose population and industry are scattered over large areas.

We believe that these considerations make the use of nuclear bombs for an early, unannounced attack against Japan inadvisable. If the United States would be the first to release this new means of indiscriminate destruction upon mankind, she would sacrifice public support throughout the world, precipitate the race of armaments, and prejudice the possibility of reaching an international agreement on the future control of such weapons.

Much more favorable conditions for the eventual achievement of such an agreement could be created if nuclear bombs were first revealed to the world by a demonstration in an appropriately selected uninhabited area.

In case chances for the establishment of an effective international control of nuclear weapons should have to be considered slight at the present time, then not only the use of these weapons against Japan, but even their early demonstration may be contrary to the interests of this country. A postponement of such a demonstration will have in this case the advantage of delaying the beginning of the nuclear armaments race as long as possible. If, during the time gained, ample support could be made available for further development of the field in this country, the postponement would

substantially increase the lead which we have established during the present war, and our position in an armament race or in any later attempt at international agreement will thus be strengthened.

On the other hand, if no adequate public support for the development of nucleonics will be available without a demonstration, the postponement of the latter may be deemed inadvisable, because enough information might leak out to cause other nations to start the armament race, in which we will then be at a disadvantage. At the same time, the distrust of other nations may be aroused by a confirmed development under cover of secrecy, making it more difficult eventually to reach an agreement with them.

If the government should decide in favor of an early demonstration of nuclear weapons it will then have the possibility to take into account the public opinion of this country and of the other nations before deciding whether these weapons should be used against Japan. In this way, other nations may assume a share of the responsibility for such a fateful decision.

Members of the Committee: ***James Franck (Chairman), Donald J. Hughes, J. J. Nickson, Eugene Rabinowitch, Glenn T. Seaborg, J. C. Stearns, Leo Szilard, Farrington Daniels, Walter Zinn, Leon Jacobson, Kenneth Cole, John Howe, R.S. Mulliken, T.R. Hogness, J. Warner, Walter Barty***

DOCUMENT 13: A PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES FROM CONCERNED SCIENTISTS BY LEO SZILARD AND 69 CO-SIGNERS, July 17, 1945

Discoveries of which the people of the United States are not aware may affect the welfare of this nation in the near future. The liberation of atomic power which has been achieved places atomic bombs in the hands of the Army. It places in your hands, as Commander-in-Chief, the fateful decision whether or not to sanction the use of such bombs in the present phase of the war against Japan.

We, the undersigned scientists, have been working in the field of atomic power. Until recently, we have had to fear that the United States might be attacked by atomic bombs during this war and that her only defense might lie in a counterattack by the same means. Today, with the defeat of Germany, this danger is averted and we feel impelled to say what follows:

The war has to be brought speedily to a successful conclusion and attacks by atomic bombs may very well be an effective method of warfare. We feel, however, that such attacks on Japan could not be justified, at least not unless the terms which will be imposed after the war on Japan were made public in detail and Japan were given an opportunity to surrender.

If such public announcement gave assurance to the Japanese that they could look forward to a life devoted to peaceful pursuits in their homeland and if Japan still refused to surrender our nation might then, in certain circumstances, find itself forced to resort to the use of atomic bombs. Such a step, however, ought not to be made at any time without seriously considering the moral responsibilities which are involved.

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 purposes of destruction may have to bear the responsibility of opening the door to an era of devastation on an unimaginable scale.

If after this war a situation is allowed to develop in the world which permits rival powers to be in uncontrolled possession of these new means of destruction, the cities of the United States as well as the cities of other nations will be in continuous danger of sudden annihilation. All the resources of the United States, moral and material, may have to be mobilized to prevent the advent of such a world situation. Its prevention is at present the solemn responsibility of the United States — singled out by virtue of her lead in the field of atomic power.

The added material strength which this lead gives to the United States brings with it the obligation of restraint and if we were to violate this obligation our moral position would be weakened in the eyes of the world and in our own eyes. It would then be more difficult for us to live up to our responsibility of bringing the unloosened forces of destruction under control.

In view of the foregoing, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition: first, that you exercise your power as Commander-in-Chief, to rule that the United States shall not resort to the use of atomic bombs in this war unless the terms which will be imposed upon Japan have been made public in detail and Japan knowing these terms has refused to surrender; second, that in such an event the question whether or not to use atomic bombs be decided by you in light of the considerations presented in this petition as well as all the other moral responsibilities which are involved.

Document 14: A Petition by some scientists opposed to the Szilard Petition

Are not the men of the fighting forces not a part of the nation? Are not they, whoa re risking their lives for the nation entitled to the weapons which have been designed? In short, are we to go on shedding American blood when we have available a means to speedy victory? No! If we can save only a handful of American lives, then let us use this weapon – now! These sentiments, we feel, more represent more truly those of the majority of Americans and particularly those that have sone, in the foxholes and warships of the Pacific.

Document 15: A Poll given to Scientists at the Metallurgy Lab by Director Farrington Daniels (July 20, 1945) [% of individuals supporting particular provision of 150 respondents]

Which of the following five procedures comes closest to your choice as to the way in which any new weapons that we may develop should be used in the Japanese war:

- **I.** **Use them in a manner what is from the military point of view most effective in bringing about prompt Japanese surrender at a minimum human cost to our armed forces. [15]**
- **II.** **Give a military demonstration in Japan to be followed by a renewed opportunity for surrender before full use of the weapons is employed. [46]**
- **III.** **Give an experimental demonstration in this country, with representatives of Japan present; followed by a new opportunity for surrender before full use of the weapon is employed. [26]**
- **IV.** **Withhold military use of the weapons, but make public experimental demonstration of their effectiveness. [11]**
- **V.** **Maintain as secret as possible all developments of our new weapons and refrain from using them in this war. [2]**

Document 16: Japanese Offer of Surrender (August 10, 1945)

In obedience to the gracious command of His Majesty the Emperor who, ever anxious to enhance the cause of world peace, desires earnestly to bring about a speedy termination of hostilities with a view to saving mankind from the calamities to be imposed upon them by further continuation of the war, the Japanese Government several weeks ago asked the Soviet Government, with which neutral relations then prevailed, to render good offices in restoring peace vis a vis the enemy powers. Unfortunately, these efforts in the interest of peace having failed, the Japanese Government in conformity with the august wish of His Majesty to restore the general peace and desiring to put an end to the untold sufferings entailed by war as quickly as possible, have decided upon the following.

The Japanese Government are ready to accept the terms enumerated in the joint declaration which was issued at Potsdam on July 26th, 1945, by the heads of the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, and China, and later subscribed to by the Soviet Government, with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler.

The Japanese Government sincerely hope that this understanding is warranted and desire keenly that an explicit indication to that effect will be speedily forthcoming.

Document 17: Secretary of State Jimmy Byrnes' reply to Japanese Offer of Surrender (August 11, 1945)

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your note of August 10, and in reply to inform you that the President of the United States has directed me to send you for transmission to the Japanese Government the following message on behalf of the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and China:

With regard to the Japanese Government's message accepting the terms of the Potsdam proclamation but containing the statement, 'with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign ruler,' our position is as follows:

From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied powers who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms.

The Emperor will be required to authorize and ensure the signature by the Government of Japan and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters of the surrender terms necessary to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration, and shall issue his commands to all the Japanese military, naval and air authorities and to all the forces under their control wherever located to cease active operations and to surrender their arms, and to issue such other orders as the Supreme Commander may require to give effect to the surrender terms.

Immediately upon the surrender the Japanese Government shall transport prisoners of war and civilian internees to places of safety, as directed, where they can quickly be placed aboard Allied transports.

The ultimate form of government of Japan shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.

The armed forces of the Allied Powers will remain in Japan until the purposes set forth in the Potsdam Declaration are achieved."

Document 18: Japanese Acceptance of Potsdam Declaration (August 14, 1945)

"With reference to the Japanese Government's note of August 10 regarding their acceptance of the provisions of the Potsdam declaration and the reply of the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China sent by American Secretary of State Byrnes under the date of August 11, the Japanese Government have the honor to communicate to the Government of the four powers as follows:

1. His Majesty the Emperor has issued an Imperial rescript regarding Japan's acceptance of the provisions of the Potsdam declaration.

2. His Majesty the Emperor is prepared to authorize and ensure the signature by his Government and the Imperial General Headquarters of the necessary terms for carrying out the provision of the Potsdam declaration. His Majesty is also prepared to issue his commands to all the military, naval, and air authorities of Japan and all the forces under their control wherever located to cease active operations, to surrender arms and to issue such other orders as may be required by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces for the execution of the above- mentioned terms.

Document 19: President Truman's announcement of the surrender of Japan (August 14, 1945)

My fellow Americans, supreme Allied Commander General McArthur, and Allied representatives on the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay:

The thoughts and hopes of all America, indeed of all the civilized world, are centered tonight on the battleship *Missouri*. There on that small piece of American soil anchored in Tokyo Harbor the Japanese have just officially laid down their arms. They have signed terms of unconditional surrender.

Four years ago, the thoughts and fears of the whole civilized world were centered on another piece of American soil, Pearl Harbor. The mighty threat to civilization which began there is now laid at rest. It was a long road to Tokyo, and a bloody one.

We shall not forget Pearl Harbor. The Japanese militarists will not forget the U.S.S. *Missouri*.

To all of us there comes first a sense of gratitude to Almighty God who sustained us and our Allies in the dark days of grave danger, who made us to grow from weakness into the strongest fighting force in history, and who has now seen us overcome the forces of tyranny that sought to destroy His civilization.

God grant that in our pride of this hour, we may not forget the hard tasks that are still before us; that we may approach these with the same courage, zeal, and patience with which we faced the trials and problems of the past four years.

Our first thoughts, of course -- thoughts of gratefulness and deep obligation -- go out to those of our loved ones who have been killed or maimed in this terrible war. On land and sea and in the air, American men and women have given their lives so that this day of ultimate victory might come and assure the survival of a civilized world. No victory can make good their loss.

We think of those whom death in this war has hurt, taking from them fathers, husbands, sons, brothers, and sisters whom they loved. No victory can bring back the faces they long to see.

Only the knowledge that the victory, which these sacrifices have made possible, will be wisely used can give them any comfort. It is our responsibility – ours, the living – to see to it that this victory shall be a monument worthy of the dead who died to win it.

All the millions of men and women in our armed forces and merchant marine all over the world who, after years of sacrifice and hardship and peril, have been spared by Providence from harm.

We think of all the men and women and children who during these years have carried on at home, in lonesomeness and anxiety and fear.

Our thoughts go out to the millions of American workers and businessmen, to our farmers and miners, to all those who have built up this country's fighting strength, and who have shipped to our Allies the means to resist and overcome the enemy.

Our thoughts go out to our civil servants and to the thousands of Americans who, at personal sacrifice, have come to serve in our Government during these trying years, to the members of the Selective Service boards and ration boards, to the civilian defense and Red Cross workers, to the men and women in the USO, and in the entertainment world, to all those who have helped in this cooperative struggle to preserve liberty and decency in the world.

We think of our departed gallant leader, Franklin D. Roosevelt, defender of democracy, architect of world peace and cooperation.

And our thoughts go out to our gallant Allies in this war, to those who resisted the invaders, to those who were not strong enough to hold out, but who, nevertheless, kept the fires of resistance alive within the souls of their people, to those who stood up against great odds and held the line, until the United Nations together were able to supply the arms and the men with which to overcome the forces of evil.

This is a victory of more than arms alone. This is a victory of liberty over tyranny.

From our war plants rolled the tanks and planes which blasted their way to the heart of our enemies. From our shipyards sprang the ships which bridged all the oceans of the world for our weapons and supplies. From our farms came the food and fiber for our armies and navies and for our Allies in all the corners of the earth. From our mines and factories came the raw materials and the finished products which gave us the equipment to overcome our enemies.

But back of it all were the will and spirit and determination of a free people who know what freedom is, and who know that it is worth whatever price they had to pay to preserve it.

It was the spirit of liberty which gave us our armed strength and which made our men invincible in battle. We now know that that spirit of liberty, the freedom of the individual, and the personal dignity of man, are the strongest, and toughest, and most enduring forces in all the world.

And so on V-J Day we take -- make -- take renewed faith and pride in our own way of life. We have had our day of rejoicing over this victory. We have had our day of prayer and devotion. Now let us set aside V-J Day as one of renewed consecration to the principles which have made us the strongest nation on earth and which, in this war, we have striven so mightily to preserve.

Those principles provide the faith, the hope, and the opportunity which help men to improve themselves and their lot. Liberty does not make all men perfect nor all society secure. But it has provided more solid progress and happiness and decency for more people than any other philosophy of government in history. And this day has shown again that it provides the greatest strength and the greatest power which man has ever reached. We know that under it we can meet the hard problems of peace which have come upon us. A free people with free allies, who can develop an atomic bomb, can use the same skill and energy and determination to overcome all the difficulties ahead.

Victory always has its burdens, and its responsibilities, as well as its rejoicing.

But we face the future and all its dangers with great confidence and great hope. America can build for itself a future of employment and security. Together with the United Nations, it can build a world of peace founded on justice, fair dealing, and tolerance.

As President of the United States, I proclaim Sunday, September the second, 1945, to be V-J Day -- the day of formal surrender of Japan. It is not yet the day for the formal proclamation of the end of the war nor of the cessation of hostilities. But it is a day which we Americans shall always remember as a day of retribution -- as we remember that other day, the day of infamy.

From this day we move forward. We move toward a new era of security at home. With the other United Nations, we move toward a new and better world of cooperation, of peace, and international goodwill. God's help has brought us to this day of victory. With His help we will attain that peace and prosperity for ourselves and all the world in the years ahead.

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