LEADERSHIP DEBATE ON THE ATOMIC BOMBINGS OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

**DOCUMENT 1: THE FRANCK REPORT, a report by Manhattan Project scientists advising against use of atomic bombs against Japan, June 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. … 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."

**Document 2: HARRY S. TRUMAN, 33rd President of the United States**

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

**Document 3: WINSTON CHURCHILL, Prime Minister of Great Britain:**

“There never was a moment’s discussion (at Potsdam) as to whether the atomic bomb should be used or not. The historic fact remains, and must be judged in the after time, that the decision to use the atomic bomb to compel the surrender of Japan was never an issue…There was unanimous, automatic, unquestioned agreement around our table; not did I ever hear the slightest suggestion that we should do otherwise…”

**Document 4: HENRY L. STIMSON, Secretary of War:**

“My chief purpose was to end the war in victory with the least possible cost in the lives of men in the armies which I had helped to raise. In the light of the alternatives which, on a fair estimate, were open to us I believe that no man, in our position and subject to our responsibilities, holding in his hands a weapon of such possibilities for accomplishing this purpose and saving those lives, could have failed to use it and afterwards looked his countrymen in the face…”

**Document 5: DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe**

"...in [July] 1945... Secretary of War Stimson, visiting my headquarters in Germany, informed me that our government was preparing to drop an atomic bomb on Japan. I was one of those who felt that there were a number of cogent reasons to question the wisdom of such an act. ...the Secretary, upon giving me the news of the successful bomb test in New Mexico, and of the plan for using it, asked for my reaction, apparently expecting a vigorous assent.

"During his recitation of the relevant facts, I had been conscious of a feeling of depression and so I voiced to him my grave misgivings, first on the basis of my belief that Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary, and secondly because I thought that our country should avoid shocking world opinion by the use of a weapon whose employment was, I thought, no longer mandatory as a measure to save American lives. It was my belief that Japan was, at that very moment, seeking some way to surrender with a minimum loss of 'face'. The Secretary was deeply perturbed by my attitude..."

"...the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing."

**Document 6: ELLIS ZACHARIAS, Deputy Director of the Office of Naval Intelligence**

"Just when the Japanese were ready to capitulate, we went ahead and introduced to the world the most devastating weapon it had ever seen and, in effect, gave the go-ahead to Russia to swarm over Eastern Asia. "Washington decided that Japan had been given its chance and now it was time to use the A-bomb. I submit that it was the wrong decision. It was wrong on strategic grounds. And it was wrong on humanitarian grounds."

**Document 7: BRIGADIER GENERAL CARTER CLARKE, U.S. Army intelligence officer in charge of intercepted Japanese cables**

"...when we didn't need to do it, and we knew we didn't need to do it, and they knew that we knew we didn't need to do it, we used them as an experiment for two atomic bombs

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

*Debate on the Atomic Bombings*

**1. What is the position of each of the following policy-makers, regarding use of the atomic bombs? Use at least two complete sentences or you will not receive credit.**

**Truman:**

**Churchill:**

**Stimson:**

**Eisenhower:**

**Zacharias:**

**Clarke:**

7. According to the various individuals above, what were some of the reasons the bomb was used?

8. According to these accounts, what other options did the United States have?

9. Albert Einstein is reported to have said “I do not know with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.” In your words, what do you think he meant?

10. In your opinion, was the use of atom bombs against Japan the correct choice?