

Dropping "the Bomb"

YES

Harry S. Truman

President of the United States



PRIMARY SOURCE

"The world will note that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a military base. . . . If Japan does not surrender, bombs will have to be dropped on her war industries and, unfortunately, thousands of civilian lives will be lost.

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."

—from *Public Papers of the Presidents*

NO

William Leahy

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff



PRIMARY SOURCE

"It is my opinion that the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender because of the effective sea blockade and the successful bombing with conventional weapons.

The lethal possibilities of atomic warfare in the future are frightening. My own feeling was that in being the first to use it, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children."

—from *I Was There*

DBQ Document-Based Questions

- 1. Explaining** What reasons does Truman offer to justify the use of the atomic bomb?
- 2. Summarizing** Why does Leahy say he was against using the bomb?
- 3. Evaluating** Whom do you think makes the more persuasive argument? Explain your answer.

Dropping "the Bomb"

YES

Harry S. Truman

President of the United States



PRIMARY SOURCE

"The world will note that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a military base. . . . If Japan does not surrender, bombs will have to be dropped on her war industries and, unfortunately, thousands of civilian lives will be lost.

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."

—from *Public Papers of the Presidents*

NO

William Leahy

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff



PRIMARY SOURCE

"It is my opinion that the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender because of the effective sea blockade and the successful bombing with conventional weapons.

The lethal possibilities of atomic warfare in the future are frightening. My own feeling was that in being the first to use it, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children."

—from *I Was There*

DBQ Document-Based Questions

- 1. Explaining** What reasons does Truman offer to justify the use of the atomic bomb?
- 2. Summarizing** Why does Leahy say he was against using the bomb?
- 3. Evaluating** Whom do you think makes the more persuasive argument? Explain your answer.