The Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb

"During [Secretary of War, Stimson's] recitation of the 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.'"

- General Dwight D. Eisenhower

"We have the following enormously favorable factors on our side...

Japan has no allies.

Her navy is 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."

-Secretary of War, Henry Stimson

"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... My own feeling is 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 war cannot be won by destroying women and children..."

- Admiral William D. Leahy
"When Japan surrendered a few days after the bomb was ordered dropped, on August 6, 1945, the military estimated that at least a quarter of a million of the invasion forces against Japan and a quarter of a million Japanese had been spared complete destruction and that twice that many on each side would, otherwise, have been maimed for life.

As the executive who ordered the dropping of the bomb, I think the sacrifice of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was urgent and necessary for the prospective welfare of both Japan and the Allies."

- President Harry S. Truman

"Nobody is more disturbed over the use of Atomic bombs than I am but I was greatly disturbed over the unwarranted attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor and their murder of our prisoners of war. The only language they seem to understand is the one we have been using to bombard them. When you have to deal with a beast you have to treat him as a beast. It is most regrettable but nevertheless true."

- President Harry S. Truman

(in response to criticism of his decision to bomb Hiroshima)