

Leadership in Times of Crisis: President Truman and Dropping the Atomic Bomb

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102nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE

About me

- Content expert
- Examine decision making
- Weighing all options
 - ❑ positives and drawbacks
 - ❑ empathy
 - ❑ considered decision



Background information

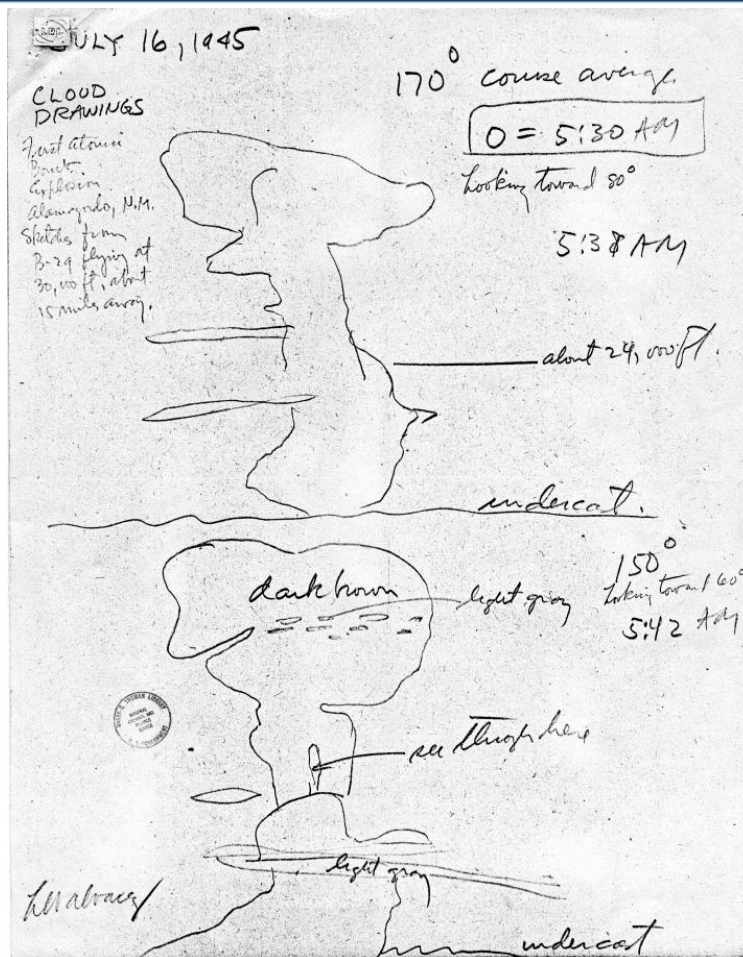
- ❑ Truman's background
- ❑ Vice President until April 1945
- ❑ April 1945 – August 1945



The Big Three

Potsdam Conference, July 1945





Sketch of successful test in New Mexico, July 1945

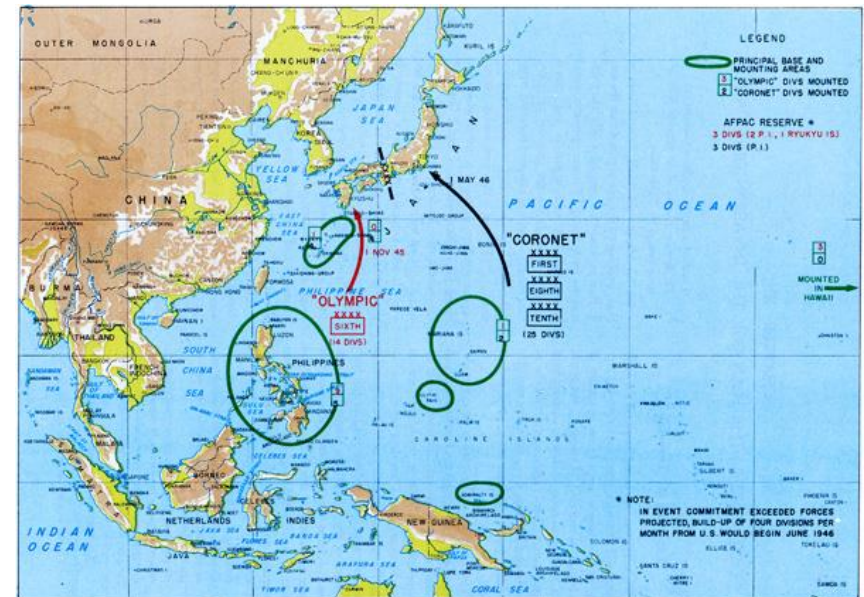
From Leslie Groves report to the Secretary of War, Henry Stimson

Truman's options

Continue conventional bombing



Land invasion of Japan



Truman's options

Demonstrate bomb on an unpopulated island



Drop the bomb on an inhabited Japanese city



Truman's options

Continue conventional bombing

- Safe approach
- Negotiated peace
- More humane
- Less loss of life
- **War would continue**
- **More casualties**
- **Stalemate/no surrender**
- **Public opinion tired of war**

Land invasion of Japan

- Eventual surrender possible
- Less casualties than Atomic Bomb
- No radiation threat
- **More US and Japan casualties**
- **Japanese defenses stronger than thought**
- **Japanese defenses in the right positions (secret intelligence)**
- **Public opinion tired of war**
- **Stalemate possible**

Truman's options

Demonstrate bomb on an unpopulated island

- Might cause surrender
- Less radiation threat
- **US POWS moved into area**
- **Technology might not work**
- **Only two bombs existed**
- **Threat to air crews if target announced ahead of time**
- **Who would witness, who would provide credible testimony?**

Drop the bomb on an inhabited Japanese city

- End war quickly
- Save American lives
- Surrender likely
- Revenge for Pearl Harbor
- **Devastating loss of life**
- **US lose moral high ground**
- **US seen as aggressor**
- **Radiation after effects**

Questions/Comments?

Additional Information

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