

Guide to Reading

Connection

In the previous section, you learned how the Allies turned the tide both in Europe and the Pacific. In this section, you will learn about the road to victory against Germany and Japan and the creation of the United Nations.

Main Idea

- After the Battle of the Bulge, Germany had few military resources to continue fighting the war. (p. 609)
- Hoping to shorten the war, President Truman decided to drop atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (p. 612)

- The Allied nations attempted to prevent future wars by creating the United Nations and by bringing war criminals to trial. (p. 616)

Content Vocabulary
hedgerow, napalm, charter

Academic Vocabulary
successor, error, reluctant

People and Terms to Identify

Battle of the Bulge, V-E Day, Harry S. Truman, Curtis LeMay, Manhattan Project, V-J Day, United Nations

Reading Objectives

- **Explain** the tactics the Allies used to invade Germany and to defeat Japan.

- **Outline** the reasons the Allies created the United Nations and held war crimes trials.

Reading Strategy

Taking Notes As you read about the end of World War II and the organizations set up to maintain global peace, use the major headings of the section to create an outline similar to the one below.

The War Ends

- I. The Third Reich Collapses
 - A.
 - B.
- II.
 - A.
 - B.

Preview of Events



The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

11.7.2 Explain U.S. and Allied wartime strategy, including the major battles of Midway, Normandy, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and the Battle of the Bulge.

11.7.3 Identify the roles and sacrifices of individual American soldiers, as well as the unique contributions of the special fighting forces (e.g., the Tuskegee Airmen, the 442nd Regimental Combat team, the Navajo Code Talkers).

11.7.5 Discuss the constitutional issues and impact of events on the U.S. home front, including the internment of Japanese Americans (e.g., *Fred Korematsu v. United States of America*) and the restrictions on German and Italian resident aliens; the response of the administration to Hitler's atrocities against Jews and other groups; the roles of women in military production; and the roles and growing political demands of African Americans.

11.7.6 Describe major developments in aviation, weaponry, communication, and medicine and the

war's impact on the location of American industry and use of resources.

11.7.7 Discuss the decision to drop atomic bombs and the consequences of the decision (Hiroshima and Nagasaki).

11.9.1 Discuss the establishment of the United Nations and International Declaration of Human Rights, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and their importance in shaping modern Europe and maintaining peace and international order.

The Big Idea

The fate of nations is forever changed by monumental world events.

After the D-Day invasion, the Allies fought one last German offensive before defeating the Nazis. In the meantime, the war in the Pacific intensified, despite the firebombing of Japan and slow Allied gains. With the Japanese refusing to surrender unconditionally, commanders became convinced that only an invasion of Japan would end the war. Truman, who became president after Roosevelt's death, decided to use a new weapon—the atomic bomb. After the military dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan surrendered. The Allies formed a military tribunal to try German and Japanese leaders for war crimes. At the same time, delegates from 39 countries created the United Nations.

The Third Reich Collapses

Main Idea After the Battle of the Bulge, Germany had few military resources to continue fighting the war.

Reading Connection What needed resources did the Germans lose at the Battle of the Bulge? Read on to learn how Germany surrendered unconditionally.

Well before the war ended, President Roosevelt and other Allied leaders were aware that the Nazis were committing atrocities. When Allied soldiers arrived in Germany, they witnessed the extent of the Nazis' horrible acts.

★ An American Story ★

In 1945 Captain Luther Fletcher entered the German concentration camp at Buchenwald with a group of Germans who were being forced to see what their country had done. In his diary Fletcher described what they witnessed:

“They saw blackened skeletons and skulls in the ovens of the crematorium. In the yard outside, they saw a heap of white human ashes and bones. . . . [The] dead were stripped of their clothing and lay naked, many stacked like cordwood waiting to be burned at the crematory. At one time 5,000 had been stacked on the vacant lot next to the crematory. . . . At headquarters of the SS troops who ran the place were lamp shades made from human skin. . . . Often, the guide said, the SS wished to make an example of someone in killing him. . . . They used what I call hay hooks, catching him under the chin and the other in the back of the neck. He hung in this manner until he died.”

—quoted in *World War II: From the Battle Front to the Home Front*

In 1943 the Allies officially declared that they would punish the Nazis for their crimes after the war. Meanwhile, Roosevelt was convinced that the best way to put an end to the concentration camps was to destroy the Nazi regime. To do that, he believed the Allies had to dedicate their resources to breaking out of Normandy, liberating France, and conquering Germany.

Although D-Day had been a success, it was only the beginning. Surrounding many fields in Normandy were **hedgerows**—dirt walls, several feet

thick, covered in shrubbery. The hedgerows had been built to fence in cattle and crops, but they also enabled the Germans to take cover from the enemy and fiercely defend their positions. The battle of the hedgerows ended on July 25, 1944, when 2,500 American bombers managed to blow a hole in the German lines, enabling American tanks to race through the gap.

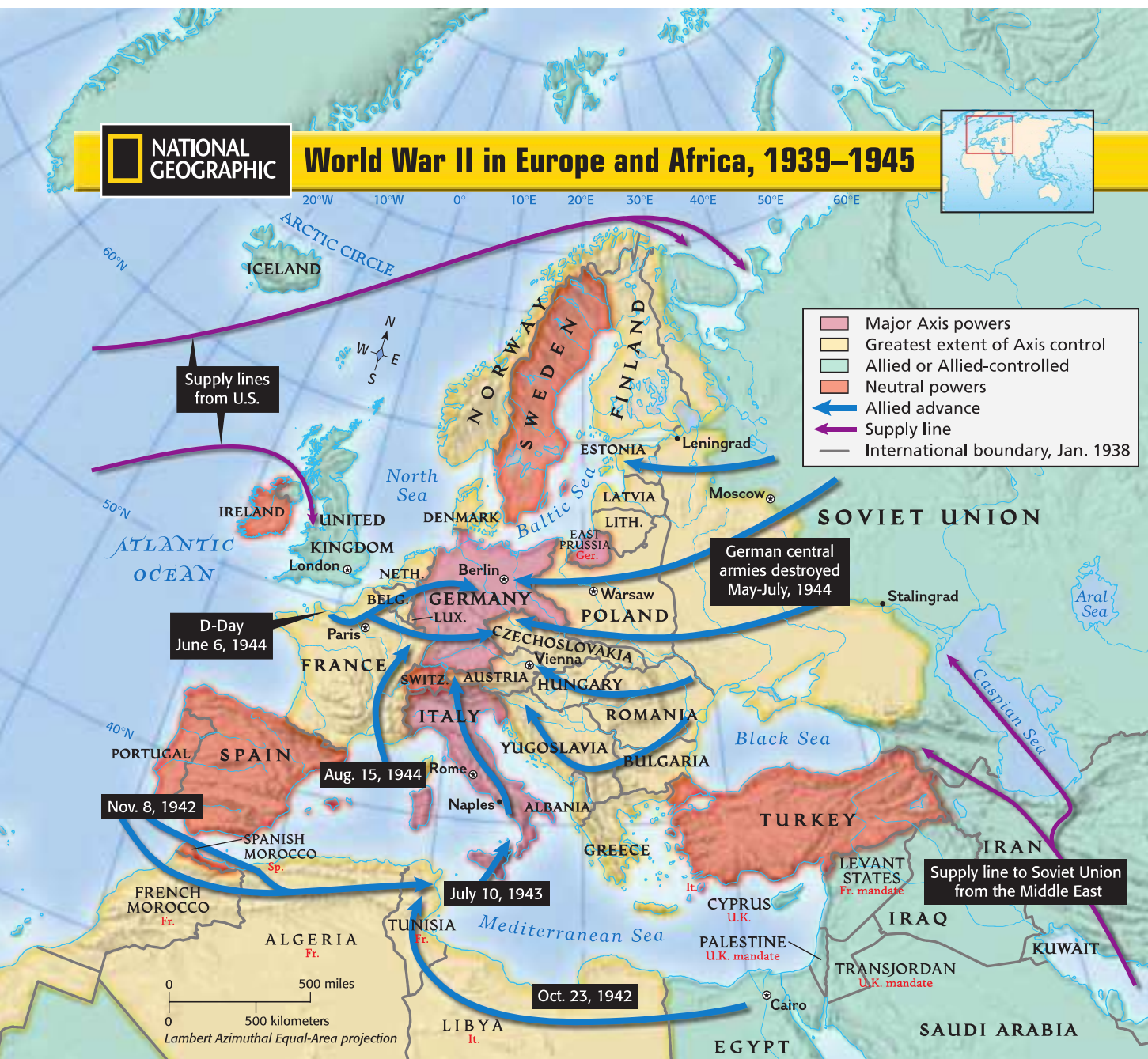
As the Allies broke out of Normandy, the French Resistance—a group of French civilians who had secretly organized to resist the German occupation of their country—staged a rebellion in Paris. When the Allied forces liberated Paris on August 25, they found the streets filled with French citizens celebrating their victory. Three weeks later, American troops were within 20 miles (32 km) of the German border.

The Battle of the Bulge As the Allies closed in on Germany, Hitler decided to stage one last desperate offensive. His goal was to cut off the Allied supplies coming through the port of Antwerp, Belgium. The attack began just before dawn on December 16, 1944. Six inches (15 cm) of snow covered the ground, and the weather was bitterly cold. Moving rapidly, the Germans were able to catch the American defenders by surprise.

As the German troops raced west, their lines bulged outward, and the attack became known as the **Battle of the Bulge**.

▼ Jewish prisoners at a German concentration camp





Part of the German plan called for the capture of the town of Bastogne, where several important roads converged. If the Allies held Bastogne, it would greatly delay the German advance. American reinforcements raced to the town, arriving just ahead of the Germans. The Germans then surrounded the town and demanded that the Americans surrender. The American commander sent back a one-word reply: "Nuts!"

Shortly after the Germans surrounded the Americans, Eisenhower ordered General Patton to rescue them. Three days later, faster than anyone expected in the midst of a snowstorm, Patton's troops slammed into the German lines. As the weather cleared, Allied aircraft began hitting German fuel depots. On Christmas Eve, out of fuel and weakened by heavy losses, the German troops driving

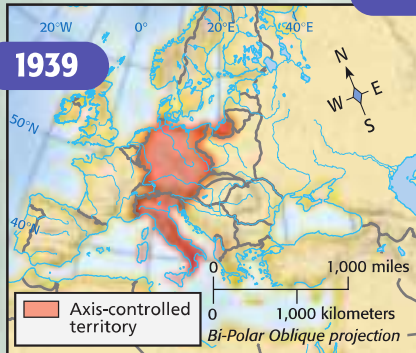
toward Antwerp were forced to halt. Two days later, Patton's troops broke through to Bastogne.

Although fighting continued for three weeks, the United States had won the Battle of the Bulge. On January 8, the Germans began to withdraw. They had suffered more than 100,000 casualties and lost many tanks and aircraft. They now had very little left to prevent the Allies from entering Germany.

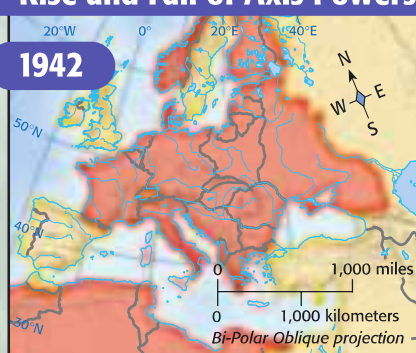
V-E Day: The War Ends in Europe While American and British forces fought to liberate France, the Soviet Union began a massive attack on German troops in Russia. By the time the Battle of the Bulge ended, the Soviets had driven Hitler's forces out of Russia and back across Poland. By February 1945, Soviet troops had reached the Oder River. They were only 35 miles (56 km) from Berlin.

Rise and Fall of Axis Powers

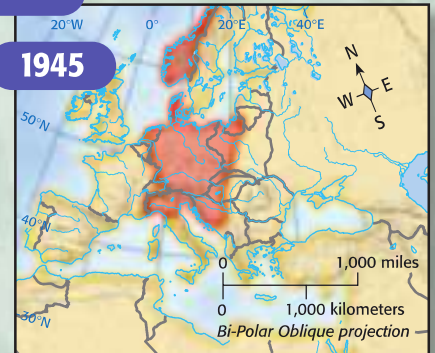
1939



1942



1945



Axis Expansion The Axis powers included Germany, Italy, Austria, and the Sudetenland.

Axis Control At their height, the Axis controlled almost all of Europe and North Africa.

Axis Collapse The Allies invaded Germany from the east and the west.

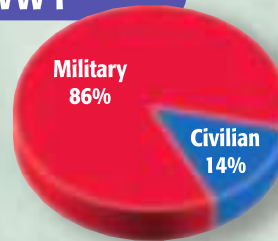
Military and Civilian Deaths in World War II

| Country | Military Deaths | Civilian Deaths |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| USSR | 11,000,000 | 6,700,000 |
| Germany | 3,250,000 | 2,350,000 |
| Japan | 1,740,000 | 393,000 |
| China | 1,400,000 | 8,000,000 |
| Poland | 110,000 | 5,300,000 |
| United States | 405,000 | 2,000 |
| Great Britain | 306,000 | 61,000 |
| Italy | 227,000 | 60,000 |
| France | 122,000 | 470,000 |

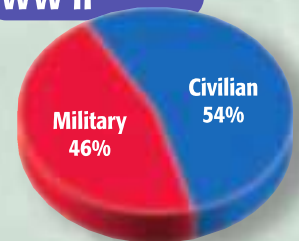
Source: *World War II: A Statistical Survey*. (Figures are approximate.)

As the Soviets crossed Germany's eastern border, American forces attacked Germany's western border. By the first week of March, 1945, American troops had fought their way to the Rhine River, Germany's last major line of defense in the west. Then on March 7, American soldiers captured the heights above the town of Remagen. Gazing down at the town, platoon leader Emmet J. Burrows was amazed at what he saw. The Ludendorf Bridge across the Rhine was still intact. The Germans had not blown it up. The American troops raced across the bridge, driving back the German defenders. By the end of the day, American tanks were across the Rhine. Hearing the news, General Bradley yelled, "Hot dog . . . this will bust them wide open."

WW I



WW II



War Casualties World War II took more lives than any other war in history. More civilians than soldiers died in the war.



Geography Skills

- Interpreting Maps** Which European countries remained neutral during the war?
- Applying Geography Skills** How did the Soviet Union receive supplies during the war?

As German defenses crumbled, American troops raced east, closing to within 70 miles (113 km) of Berlin. On April 16, Soviet troops finally smashed through the German defenses on the Oder River. Five days later, they reached the outskirts of Berlin.

Deep in his Berlin bunker, Adolf Hitler knew the end was near. On April 30, 1945, he put a pistol in his mouth and pulled the trigger. His secretary, Martin Bormann, carried Hitler's body outside, doused it in gasoline, and set it on fire. Before killing himself, Hitler chose Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz to be his **successor**. Doenitz tried to surrender to the Americans and British while continuing to fight the

Soviets, but Eisenhower insisted on unconditional surrender. On May 7, 1945, Germany surrendered unconditionally. The next day—May 8, 1945—was proclaimed **V-E Day**, for “Victory in Europe.”

Reading Check **Explaining** Why was the Battle of the Bulge such a disastrous defeat for Germany?

Japan Is Defeated

Main Idea Hoping to shorten the war, President Truman decided to drop atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Reading Connection Do you believe President Truman was justified in dropping atomic bombs on Japan? Read on to discover the events that led to Truman’s decision.

Unfortunately, President Roosevelt did not live to see the defeat of Germany. On April 12, 1945, while vacationing in Warm Springs, Georgia, he suffered a

stroke and died. His vice president, **Harry S. Truman**, became president during this difficult time.

The next day, Truman told reporters: “Boys, if you ever pray, pray for me now. . . . When they told me yesterday what had happened, I felt like the moon, the stars, and all the planets had fallen on me.” Despite feeling overwhelmed, Truman began at once to make decisions about the war. Although Germany surrendered a few weeks later, the war with Japan continued to intensify, and Truman was forced to make some of the most difficult decisions of the war during his first six months in office.

Uncommon Valor on Iwo Jima On November 24, 1944, bombs fell on Tokyo for the first time since the 1942 Doolittle raid. Above the city flew 80 B-29 Superfortress bombers that had traveled over 1,500 miles (2,414 km) from new American bases in the Mariana Islands.

At first the B-29s did little damage because they kept missing their targets. Japan was simply too far away: By the time the B-29s reached Japan, they did not have enough fuel left to fix their navigational errors or to adjust for high winds. The solution was to capture an island closer to Japan, where the B-29s could refuel. After studying the problem, American military planners decided to invade Iwo Jima.

Iwo Jima was perfectly located, roughly halfway between the Marianas and Japan, but its geography

*“uncommon valor
was a common
virtue”*

—Admiral Chester W. Nimitz

Picturing History

Planting the Flag Photographer Joe Rosenthal won the Pulitzer Prize for this photo of five marines and a navy medical corpsman raising the flag on Iwo Jima. **How do you think photographs such as this one affected American morale? Why?**

was formidable. At its southern tip was Mount Suribachi, a dormant volcano. The terrain was rugged, with rocky cliffs, jagged ravines, and dozens of caves. Volcanic ash covered the ground. Even worse, the Japanese had built a vast network of caves and concrete bunkers connected by miles of tunnels.

On February 19, 1945, 60,000 U.S. Marines landed on Iwo Jima. As the troops leapt from the amphibtracs, they sank up to their ankles in the soft ash. Meanwhile, Japanese artillery began to pound the invaders. Robert Sherrod, who had been on Tarawa, was shocked: “[The marines] died with the greatest possible violence. Nowhere in the Pacific have I seen such badly mangled bodies. Many were cut squarely in half. Legs and arms lay 50 feet (15 m) away from any body.”

Inch by inch, the marines crawled inland, using flamethrowers and explosives to attack the Japanese bunkers. More than 6,800 marines were killed before the island was captured. Admiral Nimitz later wrote that on Iwo Jima, “uncommon valor was a common virtue.”

Firebombing Devastates Japan While American engineers prepared airfields on Iwo Jima, General **Curtis LeMay**, commander of the B-29s based in the Marianas, decided to change strategy. To help the B-29s hit their targets, he ordered them to drop bombs filled with **napalm**—a kind of a jellied gasoline. The bombs were designed not only to explode but also to start fires. Even if the B-29s missed their targets, the fires they started would spread to the intended targets.

The use of firebombs was very controversial because the fires would also kill civilians; however, LeMay could think of no other way to destroy Japan’s war production quickly. Loaded with firebombs, B-29s attacked Tokyo on March 9, 1945. As strong winds fanned the flames, the firestorm grew so intense that it sucked the oxygen out of the air, asphyxiating thousands. As one survivor later recalled:

“The fires were incredible . . . with flames leaping hundreds of feet into the air. . . . Many people were gasping for breath. With every passing moment the air became more foul . . . the noise was a continuing crashing roar. . . . Firewinds filled with burning particles rushed up and down the streets. I watched people . . . running for their lives. . . . The flames raced after them like living things, striking them down. . . . Wherever I turned my eyes, I saw people . . . seeking air to breathe.”

—quoted in *New History of World War II*

The Tokyo firebombing killed over 80,000 people and destroyed more than 250,000 buildings. By the



Picturing History

Ship Attacks Kamikaze attacks intensified in 1945, hitting the USS *Bunker Hill* and many other American ships. **Why do you think these Japanese kamikaze pilots were willing to fly suicide missions?**

end of June 1945, Japan’s six most important industrial cities had been firebombed, destroying almost half of their total urban area. By the end of the war, the B-29s had firebombed 67 Japanese cities.

The Invasion of Okinawa Despite the massive damage the firebombing caused, there were few signs in the spring of 1945 that Japan was ready to quit. Many American officials believed the Japanese would not surrender until Japan had been invaded. To prepare for the invasion, the United States needed a base near Japan to stockpile supplies and build up troops. Iwo Jima was small and still too far away. After much discussion, military planners chose Okinawa—only 350 miles (563 km) from Japan.

American troops landed on Okinawa on April 1, 1945. Instead of defending the beaches, the Japanese troops took up positions in the island’s rugged mountains. To dig the Japanese out of their caves and bunkers, the Americans had to fight their way up steep slopes against constant machine gun and artillery fire. More than 12,000 American soldiers, sailors, and marines died during the fighting, but by June 22, 1945, Okinawa had finally been captured.

The Terms for Surrender Shortly after the United States captured Okinawa, the Japanese emperor urged his government to find a way to end the war. The biggest problem was the American demand for unconditional surrender. Many Japanese leaders were willing to surrender but on one condition—the emperor had to stay in power.

American officials knew that the fate of the emperor was the most important issue for the Japanese. Most Americans, however, blamed the emperor for the war and wanted him removed from power. President Truman was **reluctant** to go against public opinion. Furthermore, he knew the United States was almost ready to test a new weapon that might force Japan to surrender without any conditions. The new weapon was the atomic bomb.

The Manhattan Project In 1939 Leo Szilard, one of the world’s top physicists, learned that German scientists had split the uranium atom. Szilard had been the first scientist to suggest that splitting the

atom might release enormous energy. Worried that the Nazis were working on an atomic bomb, Szilard convinced the world’s best-known physicist, Albert Einstein, to sign a letter Szilard had drafted and send it to President Roosevelt. In the letter Einstein warned that by using uranium, “extremely powerful bombs of a new type may . . . be constructed.”

Roosevelt responded by setting up a scientific committee to study the issue. The committee remained skeptical until 1941, when they met with British scientists who were already working on an atomic bomb. The British research so impressed the Americans that they convinced Roosevelt to begin a program to build an atomic bomb.

The American program to build an atomic bomb was code-named the **Manhattan Project** and was headed by General Leslie R. Groves. The project’s first breakthrough came in 1942, when Szilard and Enrico Fermi, another physicist, built the world’s first nuclear reactor at the University of Chicago. Groves organized a team of engineers and scientists

Different Viewpoints

Dropping the Atomic Bomb: Was It the Right Decision?

More than half a century later, people continue to debate what some historians have called the most important event of the twentieth century—President Truman’s order to drop the atomic bomb on Japan. Did his momentous decision shorten the war and save lives on both sides, or was it prompted by Truman’s fear that the Soviet Union, poised to invade, would gain control of Japan after the war?

A historian opposes Truman’s decision:

Historian Gar Alperovitz maintains that Truman possessed alternatives to the atomic bomb but chose to use the weapon in order to force Japan’s surrender before the Soviet Union could mount an invasion and subsequently occupy Japanese territory.

“Quite simply, it is not true that the atomic bomb was used because it was the only way to save the ‘hundreds of thousands’ or ‘millions’ of lives as was subsequently claimed. The readily available options were to modify the surrender terms and/or await the shock of the Russian attack.

Perhaps it is here, most poignantly, that we confront our own reluctance to ask the difficult questions—for even if one were to accept the most inflated estimates of lives saved by the atomic bomb, the fact remains that it was an act of violent destruction aimed at large concentrations of noncombatants.”

—quoted in *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb, and the Architecture of an American Myth*

Hiroshima in the aftermath of the atomic bomb



to build an atomic bomb at a secret laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico. J. Robert Oppenheimer led the team. On July 16, 1945, they detonated the world's first atomic bomb near Alamogordo, New Mexico.

The Decision to Drop the Bomb Even before the bomb was tested, American officials began to debate how to use it. Admiral William Leahy, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, opposed using the bomb because it killed civilians indiscriminately. He believed that an economic blockade and conventional bombing would convince Japan to surrender.

Secretary of War Henry Stimson wanted to warn the Japanese about the bomb while at the same time telling them that they could keep the emperor if they surrendered. Secretary of State James Byrnes, however, wanted to drop the bomb without any warning to shock Japan into surrendering.

President Truman later wrote that he “regarded the bomb as a military weapon and never had any doubts that it should be used.” His advisers had warned him to

expect massive casualties if the United States invaded Japan. Truman believed it was his duty as president to use every weapon available to save American lives.

The Allies threatened Japan with “prompt and utter destruction” if the nation did not surrender unconditionally, but the Japanese did not reply. Truman then ordered the military to drop the bomb. On August 6, 1945, a B-29 bomber named the *Enola Gay* dropped an atomic bomb, code-named “Little Boy,” on Hiroshima, an important industrial city. The bomb was dropped at 8:15 A.M. Forty-three seconds later, it exploded. Heat, radiation, and an enormous shock wave slammed into Hiroshima.

The bomb destroyed 76,000 buildings—about 63 percent of the city. Somewhere between 80,000 and 120,000 people died instantly, and thousands more died later from burns and radiation sickness. Everywhere, as witness Nozaki Kiyoshi recalled, were “horrific scenes”:

“The center of the city was still burning bright red, like live charcoal. Roof tiles were popping. We passed numerous war dead who had been carbonized. . . . We found five or six half-burned roofless streetcars. Inside were piles of corpses smoldering under white smoke. . . . A young mother lay face down, her baby tucked under her breast. They looked more like pink wax dolls than human beings.”

—quoted in *Senso: The Japanese Remember the Pacific War*

The bombing stunned Japan. Three days later, on August 9, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan. Later that day, the United States dropped another atomic bomb, code-named “Fat Man,” on the city of Nagasaki, killing between 35,000 and 74,000 people.

Faced with such massive destruction and the shock of the Soviets joining the war, the Japanese emperor ordered his government to surrender. On August 15, 1945—**V-J Day**—Japan surrendered. On the other side of the world, Americans celebrated. For American soldiers the news was especially good. As one veteran recalled: “We would not be obliged to run up the beaches near Tokyo assault firing while being mortared and shelled. . . . We were going to live. We were going to grow up to adulthood after all.” The long war was finally over. The United States and its allies, after a tremendous effort, had freed Europe from Nazi tyranny and put an end to Japanese aggression in Asia.

Reading Check Analyzing What issues did Truman consider before using the atomic bomb?

A historian defends Truman's decision:

Historian Herbert Feis argues that Truman's desire to avoid an invasion of Japan, thus saving thousands of lives on both sides, motivated his decision to drop the bomb.

“Our right, legal and historical, to use the bomb may thus well be defended; but those who made the decision to use it were not much concerned over these considerations, taking them for granted. Their thoughts about its employment were governed by one reason which was deemed imperative: that by using the bomb, the agony of war might be ended more quickly.

The primary and sustaining aim from the start of the great exertion to make the bomb was military, and the impelling reason for the decision to use it was military—to end the war victoriously as soon as possible.”

—quoted in *Japan Subdued: The Atomic Bomb and the End of the War in the Pacific*

Learning From History

1. Which of the above interpretations do you think is the most valid? Why?
2. Using the Internet or other resources, find an account of the bombing from the point of a Japanese citizen. How does it differ from the accounts above, and why?