

July 1945: The Moment of Decision  
 Guided Notes

	Definition	Notes
Manhattan Project	research and development project that produced the first <u>atomic bombs</u> during <u>World War II</u> . It was led by the United States with the support of the United Kingdom and Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top Secret → Vice President <sup>Harry Truman</sup> didn't know</li> <li>• Los Alamos, New Mexico (middle of <sup>desert</sup>)</li> <li>• 1942-1945 ↳ Development of the bomb</li> <li>• Robert Oppenheimer - lead scientist</li> </ul>

Factors in U.S. Decision Making

1. American Military Casualties
  - a. By July 1945, U.S. forces in WWII had already suffered more than 1 million casualties (killed, missing, and wounded)
  - b. American POWs in Japan were dying of starvation and it was known that they were being tortured and executed
  - c. Japanese gov't announced it would execute Allied pilots captured in Japan
  
2. Policy of Unconditional Surrender = *No guarantees are given to the person surrendering*
  - a. Demand for unconditional surrender reinforced President Roosevelt's message that the war was a struggle between good and evil (we don't compromise with evil people)
  - b. U.S. leaders didn't want a repeat of the aftermath of WWI (Germans declared they hadn't been beaten on the battlefield)
  - c. Potsdam Declaration
    - i. Japan would give up its territory acquired since 1914
    - ii. Wartime gov't removed
      1. Japan wanted to maintain its emperor (seen as divine)
  
3. Destructive power of the bomb
  - a. Manhattan project was originally meant to counter Germany's atomic program
  - b. The bomb was known to be able to destroy an entire city
  - c. The radiation emitted effected the entire landscape and would harm the environment for years
  - d. Impossible to only have a military target because of its power
    - equal to 20000 tons of TNT
    - visible for 200 miles

4. American values

- a. The U.S. did not choose to fight WWII
- b. U.S. leaders were fighting to repel aggression, preserve freedom, and champion the dignity and rights of the individual
- c. By July 1945, the U.S. had all but achieved victory but now had a quick means to end the war.
  - i. Does the end justify the means?

5. Possibility of Japanese Surrender

- a. There were reasons to believe that Japan might be willing to surrender before an invasion by U.S. troops
- b. An Allied sea blockade cut off war materials and food, forcing slow starvation of people and troops
- c. U.S. air bombardment of Japanese cities killed hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians and destroyed war production
- d. In May 1945, Japan secretly approached the Soviet Union to suggest that they convince the Allied forces to help end the war

Hiroshima	Nagasaki
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August 6, 1945</li> <li>• "Little Boy" - name of bomb</li> <li>• wiped out 90% of the city</li> <li>• Immediately Killed 80,000 people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August 9, 1945</li> <li>• "Fat Man" - name of bomb</li> <li>• Impact limited by topography (land)</li> <li>• Immediately Killed 40,000 people</li> </ul>

	Definition	Notes
V-E Day/ V-J Day	V-E Day: May 8, 1945 V-J Day: September 2, 1945	• End of the war

V-E = Victory in Europe

V-J = Victory in Japan