**Arguments in Favor of Dropping the Bomb**

Argument #1.The Bomb Saved Japanese Lives

A concurrent, though ironic argument supporting the use of the bomb is that because of the expected Japanese resistance to an invasion of the home island, its use actually saved *Japanese* lives. Military planners included Japanese casualties in their estimates.  The study done for Secretary of War Stimson predicted five to ten million Japanese fatalities.  There is support for the bomb even among some Japanese.  In 1983, at the annual observance of Hiroshima's destruction, an aging Japanese professor recalled that at war’s end, due to the extreme food rationing, he had weighed less than 90 pounds and could scarcely climb a flight of stairs. "I couldn't have survived another month," he said.  "If the military had its way, we would have fought until all 80 million Japanese were dead.  Only the atomic bomb saved me.  Not me alone, but many Japanese, ironically speaking, were saved by the atomic bomb."

Argument #2: It Was Necessary to Shorten the War

Another concurrent argument supporting the use of the bomb is that it achieved its primary objective of shortening the war. The bombs were dropped on August 6 and 9. The next day, the Japanese requested a halting of the war.  On August 14 Emperor Hirohito announced to the Japanese people that they would surrender, and the United States celebrated V-J Day (Victory over Japan).  Military planners had wanted the Pacific war finished no later than a year after the fall of Nazi Germany. The rationale was the belief that in a democracy, there is only so much that can reasonably be asked of its citizen soldiers (and of the voting public). As Army Chief of Staff George Marshall later put it, “a democracy cannot fight a Seven Years’ war.” By the summer of 1945 the American military was exhausted, and the sheer number of troops needed for Operation Downfall meant that not only would the troops in the Pacific have to make one more landing, but even many of those troops whose valor and sacrifice had brought an end to the Nazi Third Reich were to be sent Pacific.

Argument #3: Only the Bomb Convinced the Emperor to Intervene

A third concurrent argument defending the bomb is the observation that even after the first two bombs were dropped, and the Russians had declared war, the Japanese still almost did not surrender. The Japanese cabinet convened in emergency session on August 7. Military authorities refused to concede that the Hiroshima bomb was atomic in nature and refused to consider surrender. The following day, Emperor Hirohito privately expressed to Prime Minister Togo his determination that the war should end and the cabinet was convened again on August 9. At this point Prime Minister Suzuki was in agreement, but a unanimous decision was required and three of the military chiefs still refused to admit defeat.  Some in the leadership argued that there was no way the Americans could have refined enough fissionable material to produce more than one bomb.  But then the bombing of Nagasaki had demonstrated otherwise, and a lie told by a downed American pilot convinced War Minister Korechika Anami that the Americans had as many as a hundred bombs. (The official scientific report confirming the bomb was atomic arrived at Imperial Headquarters on the 10th). Even so, hours of meetings and debates lasting well into the early morning hours of the 10th still resulted in a 3-3 deadlock.  Prime Minister Suzuki then took the unprecedented step of asking Emperor Hirohito, who never spoke at cabinet meetings, to break the deadlock. Hirohito responded: I have given serious thought to the situation prevailing at home and abroad and have concluded that continuing the war can only mean destruction for the nation and prolongation of bloodshed and cruelty in the world. I cannot bear to see my innocent people suffer any longer.

 In his 1947 article published in *Harper’s*, former Secretary of War Stimson expressed his opinion that only the atomic bomb convinced the emperor to step in: “All the evidence I have seen indicates that the controlling factor in the final Japanese decision to accept our terms of surrender was the atomic bomb.”

Argument 4: The Manhattan Project Expense Required Use of the Bomb

The Manhattan Project had been initiated by Roosevelt back in 1939, five years before Truman was asked to be on the Democratic ticket.  By the time Roosevelt died in April 1945, almost 2 billion dollars of taxpayer money had been spent on the project.  The Manhattan Project was the most expensive government project in history at that time.  The President's Chief of Staff, Admiral Leahy, said, "I know FDR would have used it in a minute to prove that he had not wasted $2 billion.” Bomb supporters argue that the pressure to honor the legacy of FDR, who had been in office for so long that many Americans could hardly remember anyone else ever being president, was surely enormous. The political consequences of such a waste of expenditures, once the public found out, would have been disastrous for the Democrats for decades to come. (The counter-argument, of course, is that fear of losing an election is no justification for using such a weapon).

Argument 6: Truman Inherited the War Policy of Bombing Cities

Likewise, the decision to intentionally target civilians, however morally questionable and distasteful, had begun under President Roosevelt, and it was not something that President Truman could realistically be expected to roll back. Precedents for bombing civilians began as early as 1932, when Japanese planes bombed Chapei, the Chinese sector of Shanghai.  Italian forces bombed civilians as part of their conquest of Ethiopia in 1935-1936.  Germany had first bombed civilians as part of an incursion into the Spanish Civil War. At the outbreak of WWII in September 1939, President Roosevelt was troubled by the prospect of what seemed likely to be Axis strategy, and on the day of the German invasion of Poland, he wrote to the governments of France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Great Britain.  Roosevelt said that these precedents for attacking civilians from the air, "has sickened the hearts of every civilized man and woman, and has profoundly shocked the conscience of humanity.” He went on to describe such actions as "inhuman barbarism," and appealed to the war-makers not to target civilian populations. But Germany bombed cities in Poland in 1939, destroyed the Dutch city of Rotterdam in 1940, and infamously "blitzed" London, Coventry, and other British cities in the summer and fall of the 1940. The British retaliated by bombing German cities.  Allied war leaders rationalized that to win the war, it was necessary to cripple the enemy’s capacity to make war. Since cities contained factories that produced war materials, and since civilians worked in factories, the population of cities (including the “workers’ dwellings” surrounding those factories) were legitimate military targets.