DEBATE WARM UP:
Some strategies that were considered by scientists and the Truman Administration.

Question:
What would be the pros and cons of each?

	A. For this idea:	B. Against this idea:
1. Keep our invention of the bomb a complete secret and do not use it in this war.		
2. Detonate the bomb in an American desert so that the Japanese can hear about its power.		
3. As above, but specifically invite members of Japan over and then give them a new opportunity to surrender before full use of the weapon is employed.		
4. Give a military demonstration in a deserted part of Japan followed by a renewed opportunity to surrender before we drop the bomb on a Japanese city.		
5. Use the bomb immediately and mercilessly on a Japanese City.		

1. How useful are Sources A and B to explain why President Truman ordered the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan in 1945?

Source A: James Byrne, US Secretary of State, speaking in 1945.

Any weapon that would bring an end to the war and save a million casualties among American boys was justified, and we were talking about people who hadn't hesitated at Pearl Harbor to make a sneak attack destroying not only ships but the lives of many American sailors. I would have been satisfied had the Russians determined not to enter the war against Japan. I believed the A-bomb would be successful and would force the Japanese to accept surrender on our terms. I feared what would happen when the Red Army entered Manchuria.

Source B: An extract from *The Roots of European Security* by the Russian historian Vadim Nekrasov, 1984.

Officially the Americans claimed that the bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was aimed at bringing the end of the war nearer and avoiding unnecessary bloodshed and casualties. But they had entirely different objectives. The purpose of the bombings was to intimidate other countries, above all the Soviet Union. In other words the US decision to use atomic energy for military purposes was meant to produce a diplomatic and psychological impact, and this has since involved the world in a nuclear arms race.

2. How reliable is Source C to an historian why the Americans dropped the Atomic Bomb on the Japanese in 1945?

Source C: an extract from *Sanity –the voice of CND* (the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), 1985.

The Japanese were on the verge of surrender. General Groves, the engineer director of the atom bomb project was desperate to try the bomb. The military equipment was available and had been developed at a cost of $2,000 million. It would have been difficult to justify not using it after such a vast financial investment. Truman was very impressed with what he heard and believed the bomb should be used. For some reason the scientists failed to mention the long-term dangers of radiation.

3. ***'Truman was fully justified in dropping the atomic bombs on Japan to end the war in the Pacific.'*** Is there sufficient evidence in Sources A to J support this interpretation? Use the Sources and your own knowledge to explain your answer.

Source D: Letter from Truman to Irv Kupcinet, August 5, 1963

HARRY S. TRUMAN
INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI
August 5, 1963

Dear Kup:

I appreciated most highly your column of July 30th, a copy of which you sent me. I have been rather careful not to comment on the articles that have been written on the dropping of the bomb for the simple reason that the dropping of the bomb was completely and thoroughly explained in my Memoirs, and it was done to save 125,000 youngsters on the American side and 125,000 on the Japanese side from getting killed and that is what it did. It probably also saved a half million youngsters on both sides from being maimed for life.

You must always remember that people forget, as you said in your column, that the bombing of Pearl Harbor was done while we were at peace with Japan and trying our best to negotiate a treaty with them.

All you have to do is to go out and stand on the keel of the Battleship in Pearl Harbor with the 3,000 youngsters underneath it who had no chance whatever of saving their lives. That is true of two or three other battleships that were sunk in Pearl Harbor. Altogether, there were between 3,000 and 6,000 youngsters killed at that time without any declaration of war. It was plain murder.

I knew what I was doing when I stopped the war that would have killed a half million youngsters on both sides if those bombs had not been dropped. I have no regrets and, under the same circumstances, I would do it again - and this letter is not confidential.

Sincerely yours,

Harry Truman
Mr. Irv Kupcinet
Chicago Sun-Times
Chicago, Illinois

Source E: An extract from *The Collins Encyclopaedia of Military History*, 1993.

No one knows how long a fanatical Japan could have continued the war if the bombs had not been dropped. It is clear that these weapons combined with Soviet entry into the war, convinced the Japanese Emperor and Government that further resistance was hopeless.

Source F: An extract from President Truman's memoirs, 1958.

All of us realised that the fighting would be fierce and the looses heavy. General Marshall told me it might cost half a million American lives.

Source G: An Allied prisoner of war in Japan speaking after the war – from *The Emperor's Guest*, by Fletcher Cooke, 1972.

There is no doubt in my mind that these atomic bombs saved many more lives than the tens of thousands that they had killed. They saved the lives of tens of thousands of Japanese – for, let there be no mistake, if the Emperor had decided to fight on, the Japanese would have fought to the last man.

Source H: Secretary to the Japanese war cabinet speaking in 1974.

At that time the army felt it would be a great shame to surrender. The A-bomb sacrificed many people other than military men. This provided us with an excuse – to stop the war to save innocent civilians. If the A-bomb had not been dropped we would have had great difficulty finding a good reason to end the war.

Source I: American scientist advising the government, June 1945

A demonstration of the bomb might best be made on the desert or on a barren island. Japan could then be asked to surrender.

Source J: Henry Stimson, American Secretary for War, writing in 1945.

A demonstration in an uninhabited area was not regarded as likely to make Japan surrender. There was the danger of the test being a dud. Also we had no bombs to waste.