

Options in Brief

Option 1: Make This a Time for Peace

Japan is defeated. Japan's top military officials have undoubtedly recognized the hopelessness of their position. The main stumbling block to Japan's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration is the confusion surrounding the status of the Japanese emperor. The Japanese believe that the emperor is a direct descendent of the gods who created their islands and their people. The United States must now step forward and assure the Japanese that we do not intend to put their emperor on trial as a war criminal. To unleash the power of the atom against a desperate, defeated people would damage the moral leadership that the United States has gained during the war. Once the guns fall silent, we will need all the good will we have earned to build a world of peace and democracy. In the name of American values and honor, we should clear away the last obstacles to Japan's surrender.

Option 2: Take Responsibility for a New Era

The atomic bomb must be used as a force to end the war and strengthen the peace. The United States should demonstrate the power of the atomic bomb to the world by staging an explosion on a deserted island in the Pacific. Americans have paid too high a price to accept anything less than Japan's unconditional surrender. However, how our country ends the war against Japan will have an enormous impact on the postwar world. By demonstrating the atomic bomb, we can begin the process of constructing a postwar world based on peace and respect for human rights. Inevitably, other nations will unlock the secrets of atomic energy. Before long, humanity will possess the power to destroy the entire planet. How the United States uses these first products of the atomic age will serve as an example for the rest of the world. Let us act firmly and responsibly.

Option 3: Push Ahead to Final Victory

For four years, Americans have willingly sacrificed their lives and their resources to overcome the evil forces of fascism and militarism. Now, with final victory within reach, we owe it to our troops to end the war as quickly and decisively as possible. Dropping atomic weapons without warning on Japan's cities, at reasonable intervals, is the surest method of ending the war on our terms and preventing further American casualties. We must not deceive ourselves. The Japanese will admit defeat only in the face of overwhelming military force. Victory over fascism and militarism has not been achieved through hesitation and halfway measures. As the defenders of democracy and freedom, we must remain strong and confident in our convictions.