

Drop the Atom Bomb: The American People

Teacher Created Materials, Inc. World War II.

There is no question that United States military leaders should use the atomic bomb and the plutonium bomb to end the war in the Pacific. President Harry Truman has already been notified by his commanders about estimates regarding casualties if American forces invade Japan. If America undertakes the invasion of Kyushu, Shikoku, Honshu, and Hokkaido, the home islands of the Japanese empire, our armed forces would suffer one million casualties. Our sons have bled enough. This is a war the Japanese started when they attacked Pearl Harbor, and enough American boys have died on Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. Now it's time to put a finish to it, and end it all as quickly as possible. The Japanese are capable of fighting with mindless fury and total disregard for human life, inflicting horrendous losses on our boys.

In the Philippines, the Japanese lost 450,000 men and turned Manila into a wide-open combat zone that resulted in 100,000 Filipino deaths. American boys who died in the Philippines number in the thousands. Entire garrisons of Japanese soldiers on many of the Pacific islands fought to the last man. There were very few prisoners taken. In the battle for Okinawa, 123,000 Japanese and Americans killed each other. In the naval actions offshore, 5,000 American sailors died in the fanatic *Kamikaze* attacks. The Japanese fighting man is strongly influenced by cultural traditions dating back several centuries when Japan was a feudal society and ruled by a shogun and the samurai class. The officers of the modern Japanese Imperial Army maintain the old traditions, carrying a sword at their side along with their modern weapons of war.

It is *Bushido*, the "way of the warrior," that instills discipline and the martial spirit within the ranks of the army. A samurai would fight to the death and would rather take his own life than be disgraced by surrender. *Bushido* is the guiding principle of the officer class of the Japanese Imperial Army, and his belief is physically beaten into the rank and file of their armed forces. The common soldier in the Japanese army is expected to fight until he dies in combat or kills himself, regards the act of surrender as personal humiliation and shame, and looks with utter contempt upon any enemy who surrenders. When American, British, Australian, and Chinese soldiers laid down their weapons and surrendered, they were subjected to brutal beatings and killed, for the Japanese had no respect for fighting men who gave up. At Nanking, in 1937, Chinese prisoners were used for bayonet practice by Japanese soldiers, and hundreds were beheaded by Japanese officers even after they had surrendered. The American people still remember the Bataan "Death March," when the Japanese made their prisoners walk over 80 miles in broiling heat without food and water, shooting and killing 2,000 American boys and 10,000 Filipino soldiers who fell by the roadside.

Military intelligence indicates that the Japanese remain a formidable enemy; it is estimated that there are close to two million fighting men on the home islands; two million stationed in Korea, Manchuria, China, and on the island of Formosa; 200,000 in French Indochina, Thailand, and Burma; 500,000 throughout the East Indies and in the Philippines; and more than 100,000 garrisons on some of the islands American forces by-passed. There are close to five million Japanese soldiers primed to continue the fight in the same tenacious manner encountered by American forces everywhere in the Pacific campaign. We have already taken 300,000 casualties in initial attacks on Japan's outer perimeter of defense. We shudder to think of what awaits the boys on the beaches of Kyushu, or Honshu, the first of the islands that will be invaded. It will be the most savage fighting of the entire war, and there remains the possibility that it could go on right through November 1946. If this is what American boys will have to face when they invade Japan, we say use the weapons of mass destruction and get the Japanese to sign the surrender papers on the dotted line.