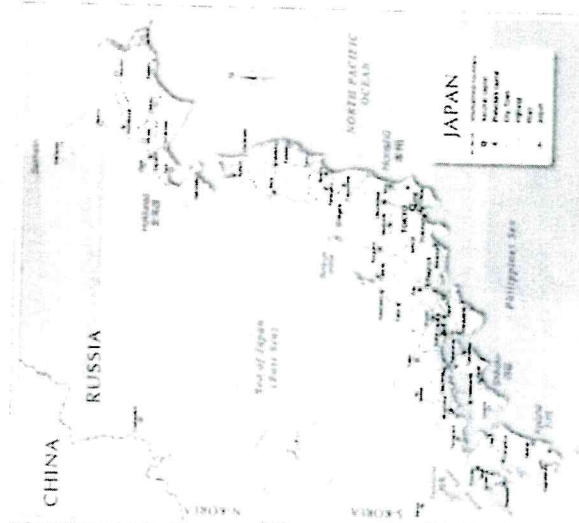


Document D: Japanese Defenses of Iwo Jima, 660 miles south of Tokyo

"...seeing that it was impossible to conduct our air, sea, and ground operations on Iwo Jima toward ultimate victory, it was decided that in order to gain time necessary for the preparation of the Homeland defense, our forces should rely solely upon the established defensive equipment in that area, checking the enemy by delaying tactics. Even the suicidal attacks by small groups of our Army and Navy airplanes, the surprise attacks by our submarines, and the actions of parachute units, although effective, could be regarded only as a strategic ruse on our part. It was a most depressing thought that we had no available means left for the exploitation of the strategic opportunities which might from time to time occur in the course of these operations."

On the eve of the American invasion of the Japanese-held island of Iwo Jima, how was the mood of the Japanese defenders of the island?

Document E: Physical Map of Japan



By the summer of 1944, American military strategists were planning "Operation Olympia", a full-scale invasion of the Japanese home islands. Based on the map above, what would be difficult in conducting an invasion of Japan to force its surrender?

Based on your prior knowledge of the Battle of Iwo Jima, for what other reason(s) would an invasion of the Japanese islands be a concern for American military planners?

4. Should the Allies have launched an invasion of Japan? Explain

POINT

"The only way to end the war against Japan was to bomb the Japanese mainland."

Many advisors to President Truman, including Secretary of War Henry Stimson, had this point of view. They felt the bomb would end the war and save American lives. Stimson said, "The face of war is the face of death."

Some scientists working on the bomb agreed—even more so as the casualty figures from Iwo Jima and Okinawa sank in. "Are we to go on shuddering American blood when we have available a means to a steady victory?" they petitioned. "Not if we can save even a handful of American lives, then let us use this weapon—now!"

Two other concerns pushed Americans to use the bomb. Some people feared that if the bomb were not dropped, the project might be viewed as a gigantic waste of money.

The second consideration involved the Soviet Union. Tension and distrust were already developing between the Western Allies and the Soviets. Some American officials believed that a successful use of the atomic bomb would give the United States a powerful advantage over the Soviets in shaping the postwar world.

CONTRAPPOINT

"Japan's staggering losses were enough to force Japan's surrender."

Many of the scientists who had worked on the bomb, as well as military leaders and civilian policymakers, had doubts about using it. Dr. Leo Szilard, a Hungarian-born physicist who had helped President Roosevelt launch the project and who had a major role in developing the bomb, was a key figure opposing its use.

A petition drawn up by Szilard and signed by 70 other scientists argued that it would be immoral to drop an atomic bomb on Japan without fair warning. Many supported staging a demonstration of the bomb for Japanese leaders, perhaps by exploding one on a deserted island near Japan, to convince the Japanese to surrender.

Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower agreed. He maintained that "dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary" to save American lives and that Japan was already defeated. He told

Secretary of War Henry Stimson, "I was against it [the bomb] on two counts. First the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing. Second, I hated to see our country be the first to use such a weapon."

After reading both points of view, should the U.S. have used the atomic bomb against Japan? Provide two pieces of evidence from one of the readings to support your position.