**The Dropping of the Hiroshima Bomb**

***‘Now I am become Death, the destroyer of world’***

Oppenheimer quoting a Hindu Scripture after the successful atomic bomb test at Los Alamos

At approximately 8.15am on 6 August 1945 a US B-29 bomber dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, instantly killing around 80,000 people. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, causing the deaths of 40,000 more. The dropping of the bombs, which occurred by executive order of US President Harry Truman, remains the only nuclear attack in history. In the months following the attack, roughly 100,000 more people died slow, horrendous deaths as a result of radiation poisoning.

Since 1942, more than 100,000 scientists of the Manhattan Project had been working on the bomb’s development. At the time, it was the largest collective scientific effort ever undertaken. It involved 37 installations across the US, 13 university laboratories and a host of prestigious participants such as the Nobel prizewinning physicists. Later, the project was centralised and moved to an isolated laboratory headed by physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer in Los Alamos, New Mexico. On 16 July 1945, scientists carried out the first trial of the bomb in the New Mexico desert. President Truman received news of the successful test whilst negotiating the post-war settlement in Europe at the Potsdam Conference.

Although voices within the US Military expressed caution regarding the use of the new weapon against Japan, Truman was convinced that the bomb was the correct and only option. Six months of intense strategic fire-bombing of 37 Japanese cities had done little to break the Hirohito regime’s resolve, and Japan continued to resolutely ignore the demand for unconditional surrender made at Potsdam. In such circumstances, the use of the atom bomb was seen as the best means of forcing Japan to surrender, and ending the war. The alternative, of an Allied invasion of the Japanese home islands, was expected to cost hundreds of thousands of casualties.

The effects of the attack were devastating. The predicted Japanese surrender, which came on 15 August - just six days after the detonation over Nagasaki - ended World War II. Yet the shocking human effects soon led many to cast doubts upon the use of this weapon. The first western scientists, servicemen and journalists to arrive on the scene produced vivid and heartrending reports describing a charred landscape populated by hideously burnt people, coughing up and urinating blood and waiting to die.

**Questions**

1. **In which country is the city of Hiroshima?**
2. **On what date was the bomb dropped on Hiroshima?**
3. **How many people did the bomb kill?**
4. **Where was a bomb dropped three days later?**
5. **Who was the president at the time the bomb was dropped?**
6. **What killed the people after the dropping of the bomb?**
7. **What was the name of the project that was given to the development of the bomb?**
8. **Why did Truman believe that the bomb had be used against the Japanese?**
9. **What were the allies worried about if they did not use the bomb?**
10. **What were the effects of the bomb?**

**Just War Theory**

**Explain how the use of the atomic bomb may go against the clauses of the Just War Theory**

**Do you believe that using the bomb was the right thing to do?**