Name:__________________________

**To Drop or Not to Drop the Atomic Bomb**

**PART A - SHORT ANSWER**

The documents below relate to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Examine each document carefully and then answer the question or questions that follow.

**Documents 1-3: Drop the Bomb**

**Document 1**

"Having found the bomb we have used it. We have used it against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbor, against those who have starved and beaten and executed American prisoners of war, against those who have abandoned the pretense of obeying international laws of warfare. We have used it in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans.

- *President Truman defends his decision to drop the atomic bombs, August, 1945*

How did Truman justify the use of the atomic bomb? ________________________________

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_____________________________________________________________________________
**Document 2**

Back in August 1944, the government had issued a decree, officially classifying all Japanese citizens (what’s left of them, mostly women, children, and the elderly, as all young men had already been mobilized) as military combatants and armed them all with bamboo spears. Yes, bamboo spears.

The women and children were told to fight the invading American ground forces with their bamboo spears until death. They were told that to surrender and be captured by the enemy was the ultimate shame and that they should die fighting instead. They were absolutely prepared to die fighting the American soldiers with their bamboo spears.

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Why did the Japanese refuse to surrender?  

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**Document 3**

"The day was August 6, 1945. I was a G.I. who had weathered the war in Europe and now awaited my place in the storming of Japan's home islands. On Truman's orders, the first atomic bomb ever wielded in war exploded over Hiroshima. For Americans in uniform and those who waited for them to come home, outrageous as this might appear from the moral heights of hindsight, it was a sunburst of deliverance."

—Lester Bernstein, New York Times, 10/24/65

Why did Bernstein feel "a sunburst of deliverance" when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima?  

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Documents 4-6: Don’t drop the bomb

Document 4:

"The use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender...

"In being the first to use it, we . . . adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children."
— Admiral William E. Leahy, President Truman’s Chief of Staff, in his memoirs "I Was There"

Why did Admiral Leahy feel the use of the atomic bomb on Japan was unnecessary and unethical? ________________________________
"The view where a moment before all had been so bright and sunny was now dark and hazy... What had happened? All over the right side of my body I was bleeding... My private nurse set about examining my wounds without speaking a word. No one spoke... Why was everyone so quiet? The heat finally became too intense to endure... Those who could fled; those who could not perished...

Hiroshima was no longer a city but a burned-over prairie. To the east and to the west everything was flattened. The distant mountains seemed nearer than I could ever remember... How small Hiroshima was with its houses gone."


What observations did the doctor make about the effects of the bombing on his city?
Images of Nagasaki, 1945

Source: Yamahata photographs © Shogo Yamahata, The Day After the Nagasaki Bombing. The Japan Peace Museum (www.peace-museum.org)

Describe the effects of the bombing, as seen in these photographs.
PART B - ESSAY

Directions: Using information from the documents in Part A and you decide whether the atomic bomb should have been dropped or not.

I believe the atomic bomb should have / should not have (circle one) been dropped.

The first reason I believe this is because ______________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

The second reason I believe this is because ______________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

The third reason I believe this is because ______________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________