

# Government Documents

Stimson diary, 6 June 1945, recording remarks to President Harry S. Truman on the conduct of the war against Japan.<sup>11</sup>

I told him how I was trying to hold the Air Force down to precision bombing but that with the Japanese method of scattering its manufacture it was rather difficult to prevent area bombing. I told him I was anxious about this feature of the war for two reasons: first, because I did not want to have the United States get the reputation of outdoing Hitler in atrocities; and second, [I] was a little fearful that before we could get ready the Air Force might have Japan so thoroughly bombed out that the new weapon would not have a fair background to show its strength. He laughed and said he understood.]

<sup>11</sup> Stoff, Manhattan Project, 130-31. Original source: Henry L. Stimson Papers, Sterling Library, Yale University.

NOTICE

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Important considerations bearing on the 1 November date rather than a later date are the weather and cutting to a minimum Jap time for preparation for defense. If we delay much after the beginning of November, the weather situation in the succeeding months may be such that the invasion of Japan, and hence the end of the war, will be delayed up to 6 months.

... [A] lodgement in Kyushu is essential, both to tightening our stranglehold of blockade and bombardment of Japan and to forcing capitulation by invasion of the Tokyo Plain.

... It seems that if the Japanese are ever willing to capitulate short of complete military defeat in the field they will do it when faced with the completely hopeless prospect occasioned by (1) destruction already wrought by air bombardment and sea blockade, coupled with (2) a landing on Japan indicating the firmness of our resolution, and also perhaps coupled with (3) the entry or threat of entry of Russia into the war.

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There is reason to believe that the first 30 days in Kyushu should not exceed the price we have paid for Luzon [Luzon in the Philippines where 31,000 American were killed, wounded, or missing]. It is a grim fact that there is not an easy, bloodless way to victory in war . . . .

An important point about Russian participation in the war is that the impact of Russian entry on the already hopeless Japanese may well be the decisive action levering them into capitulation at that time or shortly thereafter if we land in Japan.

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President Truman's meeting with advisers, 18 June 1945, reviewing the planned invasion of Japan.<sup>12</sup>

[GENERAL MARSHALL noted the selection of] 1 November as the target date to go into [the Japanese island of] Kyushu because by that time:

- a. If we press preparations we can be ready.
- b. Our estimates are that our air action will have smashed practically every industrial target worth hitting in Japan as well as destroying huge areas in the Jap cities.
- c. The Japanese Navy, if any still exists, will be completely powerless.
- d. Our rear action and air power will have cut the Jap reinforcement capability from the mainland to negligible proportions.

<sup>12</sup> Attending the meeting were Secretary of War Stimson, Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal, Stimson adviser John J. McCloy, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Stoff, Manhattan Project, 151-53. Original source: Records of the War Department, General and Specific Staffs (Record

GENERAL MARSHALL said that it was his personal view that the operation against Kyushu was the only course to pursue. He felt that air power alone was not sufficient to put the Japanese out of the war. It was unable alone to put the Germans out. . . . Against the Japanese, scattered through mountainous country, the problem would be much more difficult than it had been in Germany. He felt that this plan offered the only way the Japanese could be forced into a feeling of utter helplessness. The operation would be difficult but not more so than the assault in Normandy [on the French coast opening Germany to direct assault from the west]. He was convinced that every individual moving to the Pacific should be indoctrinated with a firm determination to see it through.

ADMIRAL KING<sup>13</sup>[:] . . . . It was his opinion that a realistic casualty figure for Kyushu would lie somewhere between the number experienced by General MacArthur in the operation on Luzon and the Okinawa casualties [41,700 army and navy killed, wounded, or missing].

THE PRESIDENT . . . . asked if the invasion of Japan by white men would not have the effect of more closely uniting the Japanese.

MR. STIMSON thought there was every prospect of this. He agreed with the plan proposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as being the best thing to do but he still hoped for some fruitful accomplishment through other means.

THE PRESIDENT said that he considered the Kyushu plan all right from a military standpoint, and, so far as he was concerned, the Joint Chiefs of Staff could go ahead with it; but we can do this operation and then decide as to the final action later.

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<sup>13</sup> Ernest J. King was a fleet admiral serving as chief of naval operations and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.