TRUMAN, CLAUSEWITZ, AND THE BOMB:
Did Harry S. Truman Apply Clausewitzian Logic to Nuclear Weapons During the Cold War?

Department of History
611-75

Timothy J. Pifer

4 December 2006
INTRODUCTION

The objective of this paper is to provide a biographical and historiographical examination of Harry S. Truman’s rhetoric and handling of the atom bomb during the earliest period of the late Twentieth Century global contest called the Cold War. Specifically, the paper seeks to answer the following question: Did Truman have a deliberate and consistent policy on the employment of nuclear devices as related to the nation’s Cold War policy? In particular, did Truman regard the atomic bomb as a weapon of last resort in the conflict with the Soviets or was the threatened use of atomic weapons in times of crisis an acknowledged instrument of policy designed to block communist advances? To put it another way, did Truman agree with the noted military thinker Carl Von Clausewitz that military capability, in this case nuclear weapons, means nothing unless used as an instrument of rational policy to support a political objective? If so, is there any proof that Truman intended the threat to use atomic weapons as a diplomatic signal to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) that the stakes in a particular situation were vital to the national interests of the United States? Alternatively, did Truman believe that the massive destructive capability of nuclear weapons require a change to Clausewitz’s paradigm in that its threatened use should fall outside the conventional instruments of governmental power and only be contemplated as a last resort?

This issue remains relevant since the Truman White House’s actions regarding the use of nuclear weapons at the end of World War Two, along with the nuclear stratagems selected during the first crises of the Cold War are still being referenced by media and governmental agencies. More importantly, an understanding of Truman’s actual or de facto policy on nuclear weapons is critical to any historical study of the United States’ position on the use and employment of nuclear weapons in the Cold War period.
Truman is well worth studying since he was in a unique position to establish the underpinnings of a national policy that lasted throughout the decades-long conflict with the former USSR. Additionally, he was the first to handle the myriad different facets included in the global contest including an arms race involving nuclear and conventional weapons, a system of defensive alliances, economic warfare, trade embargos, propaganda, espionage, and proxy wars. As an aside, it should be noted that all these facets of the Cold War are still in play around the world and remain viable stratagems in the world arena. More to the point of historiographical analysis, some historians have described Truman's Presidential role as being uniquely indispensable to the early Cold War idiom and national policy throughout the entire period. In fact, historian Robert L. Ivie goes so far as to say, “…By presenting ideological differences in life or death terms, Truman's rhetoric increased the nation's feelings of insecurity and constrained future foreign policy decisions.”\(^1\) Therefore, no study of the United States nuclear strategy in the Cold War period is complete without a study of Truman’s personal philosophy and his management of the nation’s nuclear arsenal. For that reason, Truman and atom bombs are perfect fodder for further research and debate on the contentious and controversial subject of nuclear warfare.

The first point of order is a thorough understanding of Clausewitz’s philosophy and his theory of “War as an Instrument of Policy.”\(^2\) Carl Von Clausewitz along with Sun Tzu, Antoine Jomini, Helmuth Von Moltke, and other notable military theorists developed the core ideas that make up a fundamental set of principles governing warfare.\(^3\) These ‘Principles of War’ are the generally accepted rules used by military and civilian leaders to understand all things encompassed in the way of organized conflict.\(^4\) Therefore, these noted military theorists’ ideas and philosophies normally serve as a litmus test on how revolutionary weapons, methodologies, or concepts fit
into the existing framework of warfare. Clausewitz, a Napoleonic era Prussian officer, authored a number of fundamental concepts later designated in popular jargon as the ‘Fog of War’, ‘Center of Gravity’ and the self-titled “Absolute War” which is a darker concept that warfare tends towards absolute violence and complete annihilation for the loser. More important to the subject of this paper, Clausewitz was also noted for penning the idea that war was a valid and coherent extension of diplomacy or governmental policy. As Clausewitz said, “War is nothing else than a continuation of political transaction intermingled with different means.”

This concept of war or the threat of war as an instrument of policy contains various aspects pertinent to this paper. One feature is “that war is only a part of political intercourse, therefore by no means an independent thing in itself.” Consequently, a government’s policies provide the mold or framework for coherently understanding a particular nation’s dealings with national conflict and warfare. Furthermore, there is a natural unity between a government’s planning, conduct of diplomacy, and instruments of warfare. The conclusion drawn is that purely military decisions are both unwise and unnatural when applied by a government at the national level. This need to link other forms of governmental power with a subordinate role for the military probably hearkens back to Clausewitz’s premise on the all encompassing nature of violence and brutality found in unconstrained warfare. Clausewitz also thought that it was important for the political leadership of a Nation-State to understand the nature of warfare and harmonize their military elements of power with the other elements of governmental power. He believed that if the leadership failed to recognize the dangers of unlimited warfare it could devour the State. “The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purposes.” Clausewitz was convinced that all these factors lead to the ascendancy of political leadership over military policies and consequentially this
dominance produced moderating effects on the competitions between nations. In many ways Clausewitz’s concept of war merges well with the Constitution’s establishment of the President as both the political leader of government and the armed forces’ Commander-in-Chief.

Consequently, according to Clausewitz, it would have been essential to the United States’ Cold War foreign and domestic policy to include in the planning phase the use of all existing military forces. Thus, if nuclear weapons were part of the national arsenal then they logically would be considered a fundamental part of governmental policy and diplomacy. In fact the use, or threatened use, of nuclear weapons would simply be part of the routine processes found at the highest levels of government as would the use, or threatened use, of other, more traditional, weapons and military assets. A classic peacetime example of military force being integrated into the diplomatic process is the deployment of aircraft carriers and ship-based marines to trouble spots around the world. Typically, these naval operations provide not only the ability to respond quickly in the event of an emergency but by their very presence also threaten adversaries, especially when such tactics are reinforced with other diplomatic pressures and rhetoric. These intimidation techniques are not limited to the navy but can also be practiced by the army and air force through such things as training exercises and forward basing of men and material. Even procedures such as limited, or surgical, military strikes and covert military operations well short of conventional war can be used as part of an overarching diplomatic strategy.

Conversely, Clausewitz would have considered it illogical for the President to exclude nuclear weapons from foreign policy planning and execution. In other words, if Truman adhered to Clausewitzian logic he would include the nation’s nuclear arsenal in planning his Cold War dealings with the Soviet Union, China, and others. On the other hand, if Truman believed nuclear weapons were too destructive to use and that they threatened the very existence of
civilization he would exclude their use or threatened use from any diplomatic process or governmental rhetoric. Moreover, this repudiation of nuclear weapons would directly affect the Post-World War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. This rejection of the atomic bomb would then result in a post-Clausewitzian mind-set applying to both the nuclear weapons influence on governmental policies and the diplomacy practiced by Truman.

COL. TRUMAN, U.S. ARMY RESERVES

If Truman practiced a Clausewitzian or non-Clausewitzian mental process when thinking about the bomb, was he actually aware of the theories of Clausewitz? This particular question, while not critical to the paper’s underlying inquiry, is no doubt relevant to the analysis of Truman’s understanding of the relationship between nuclear weapons and his administration’s policy. Lack of comprehensive understanding of Clausewitz's generally accepted theories governing the practice of war does not necessarily exclude Truman's use or rejection of the general theorem. For instance, everyday people adhere to generally accepted customs governing human nature without understanding the underlying methodology which controls their actions. Indeed, these methodologies are only codified and categorized into observable principles after scientific study.12 This understanding of human nature is a basic tenet of Psychology and Sociology and is certainly no less relevant to the application and study of military force. Noted military historian, John Keegan stated, that Clausewitz “influenced every statesman and soldier interested in war for the past 100 years”13 while another, R. D. Hooker Jr., rightly added, “most never actually read or grasped him.”14 Still, it would be useful to know whether Truman deliberately accepted or rejected Clausewitz’s theorem on the interrelationship of warfare with other governmental forms of power or whether his actions were strictly intuitive.

The comprehensive study of Clausewitz’s theories and principles of war has not been of
general interest in the United States. Nevertheless, Clausewitz has been of continuing interest to a select group of people since the 1800s. This group includes historians, students of military history, and various armed forces. Clausewitz’s book *On War* was posthumously published in 1831 by his widow and by the mid-Nineteenth Century had found its way into the hands of most European militaries. The book was first published in the English language in 1873\(^{15}\) and reissued in 1908 in what turned out to be a more popular edition edited by Colonel F. M. Maude, British Army.\(^{16}\) Since that time the insights of Clausewitz have been integrated into basic United States military doctrine including the Army’s primary book of strategy, *Field Manual 100-5, Operations*, and have been the subject of endless debates in modern military circles.\(^{17}\) During the years between the World Wars Clausewitz was not the focal point of military thought but his principles were well-known to the United States Army Officer Corps.\(^{18}\) Historian Christopher Bassford, in his 1994 book on Clausewitz’s influence on Anglo-American militaries, stated, “It certainly can be demonstrated that Clausewitz was discussed by American military educators, journalists, and historians during the interwar period and World War Two...”\(^{19}\) Throughout this period the most intellectually active military branch was the Field Artillery which developed strategies such as concentrated fires, improved communications, and branch interoperability which were later used in World War Two.\(^{20}\) It was during this same period that Captain Truman attended annual required military training events and eventually rose to the reserve rank of Colonel in the Field Artillery.

It is generally known that Truman was a Captain and served as an Artillery Battery Commander in combat during World War I. He was quite proud of his wartime service record and maintained close ties with the soldiers that served under him. Later, he even credited the leadership skills he learned in the Army with his successful leap into politics. One of Truman’s
famous quotes was "My whole political career is based upon my war service and associates from the war."²¹ What is not generally known was that Truman did not sever his ties with the military after World War I.²² He continued to serve in the Army Reserves throughout the twenties and thirties taking pride in going to train with his reserve unit and serving in ever higher positions of authority. He also spent many hours taking the required professional courses by correspondence. These courses, required for promotion to major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel, would include a concentration of military theory and strategic planning not needed at the lower military ranks.²³ Truman even served as a military instructor for reserve officers at training camps and night schools from 1920 to 1940.²⁴ He once said, “While I was a colonel in the field artillery reserve I read all the army manuals on how a staff officer ought to function, and I know what the book says.”²⁵ He displayed his in-depth knowledge of military planning as President when he compared politics to military tactics in a way that demonstrated he was very familiar with the subject;

   The maneuvers in a battle are like the maneuvers in politics. In the military they have what they call a five paragraph order. In the first paragraph you make an estimate of the enemy, his condition and what he can do. In second paragraph you make estimate of your own condition and what you can do. In third paragraph you decide what you are going to do. In the fourth paragraph you set up your logistics and supply sources to carry out what you are going to do. And in the fifth paragraph, you tell where you are going to be so that everybody can reach you. That is all there is to politics.²⁶

When the Second World War began Truman was confident enough in his tactical skills that he even went to General Marshall in uniform and asked to return to active service as a field artillery instructor for a new generation of officers.²⁷ Wisely, Marshal told Truman he could better serve the country by returning to his civilian job as United States Senator.²⁸ So, as a result of the training that he received during his decades in the reserves and active army, it is reasonable to assume that Truman was exposed at some point to Clausewitz and his principles of war.
Besides his military background Truman was a student of history and throughout his life habitually read military history books and biographies. While in a conversation about past people and events Truman once told Clark Clifford that he would rather have been a history teacher.\textsuperscript{29} And during an interview for a book on his presidency Truman discussed the importance of history to life, “There is nothing new in the world except the history you do not know.”\textsuperscript{30} In the same interview he demonstrated a more thorough knowledge of military leaders and tactics throughout history than one would expect from the average man on the street.\textsuperscript{31} Moreover, in Truman's private correspondence are found numerous examples of his love of reading and his knowledge of historical events and persons. For example, in a letter to Bess Truman he says, “Have found another book on the Civil War, by Colonel A. H. Burne, an Englishman.”\textsuperscript{32} In his autobiography Truman wrote about his admiration for historical figures such as “Cincinnatus, Hannibal, Cyrus the Great, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, Washington and Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and J. E. B. Stuart.”\textsuperscript{33} Later, in the same book, Truman said, “Readers of good books, particularly books of biography and history, are preparing themselves for leadership.”\textsuperscript{34} Additionally Truman, whose formal education ended at high school, prided himself on self-education and continued it earnestly throughout his life. He was especially studious in any effort that he deemed important to his advancement. An example of the success of his intellectual efforts came during a high level meeting in the White House when his grasp of an international crisis was questioned by a general. Truman responded by lecturing all present on various aspects of the problem to include a detailed geographic and historical analysis of the causes. Secretary of State Dean Acheson remembered the lecture, “none of us doubted he understood fully all the implications of our recommendations.”\textsuperscript{35} In fact, Acheson was quoted as being in awe of Truman’s exhaustive comprehension of all things historical.\textsuperscript{36} Given his wide
ranging interest in history and military biographies it can reasonably be inferred that during Truman’s lifelong study he encountered some semblance of either Clausewitz’s writings or his principles of war.

Actual proof of Truman’s knowledge about Clausewitz’s theories, particularly the Prussian’s view on the role of the military within a government apparatus, came after his time in office. Despite Yale Professor John Gaddis’ 2005 book on the history of the Cold War there is strong evidence that Truman was familiar with Clausewitz. In the Truman section of the chapter discussing nuclear weapons Gaddis contends that there was no proof that Truman ever read Clausewitz while at the same time implying Truman had never risen above the wartime rank of captain and thus lacked any true military credentials. As previously noted, Truman had a long personal association with the United States Army after the First World War. More importantly, when discussing the question of unconditional surrender during World War Two in his published 1955 memoirs Truman said the following:

Von Clausewitz long ago pointed out that “war is a continuation of diplomacy by other means,” and many of our generals, as well as a large proportion of the public, concluded from this that, once war has begun, all decisions become military in nature. Von Clausewitz, however, said a great deal more than just that easily remembered sentence. He said that both diplomacy and war are merely means to an end and that the nature of that end is a matter for political determination.

This statement in Truman's memoirs indicates that he not only knew about Clausewitz but that he had a much more detailed knowledge and understanding than the average person and even some contemporary military leaders. While he was not talking about the issue of nuclear weapons in relationship to Clausewitz’s theories Truman could easily have made the intellectual leap as he developed his own position and philosophy concerning the atom bomb.

As can be seen from this examination of Truman, it seems probable that he was exposed to Clausewitz during his long association with the military. This is especially likely after he
achieved field grade rank (Major and above) an echelon of the military that requires a firm background of theoretical knowledge. In addition to his background in the military, Truman most likely reinforced his exposure to Clausewitzian rational through a lifelong love of history, particularly books about military leaders. Finally, he demonstrated in his memoirs that he was able to integrate Clausewitz’s theories into the practicalities of political life at the highest levels of government. As he said when discussing the military with one of his advisors at the White House, “I know how they are, they are trained not to give up. I know because I am one of them.” This combination of Truman’s military training and love of history probably exposed him to the Clausewitzian idea of the military serving in a subordinate role to the affairs of state.

Based on the arguments previously advanced it is reasonable to surmise that Truman had both a theoretical and practical understanding of Clausewitz’s principles of war. Clausewitz’s premise provides not only the tools to evaluate and measure Truman’s stance on nuclear weapons but also the key to the rationale for his decisions. Thus the link between the Prussian general and the Midwest farmer turned politician is doubly important to the subsequent analysis of Truman’s understanding of the relationship between nuclear power and other forms of power within the government. In the next sections Truman’s philosophy will be fleshed out using his words, deeds, and reflection on the advice of select advisors about the nuclear question.

GENESIS OF TRUMAN’S NUCLEAR PHILOSOPHY

Any discussion about Truman’s philosophical beliefs on nuclear weapons must begin with his decision to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Although Truman’s decision to bomb Japan was not directly linked to his dealings with the Russians nevertheless it plays a role in understanding his later policy decisions. This is said in spite of some unsubstantiated attempts to claim that Truman bombed the two Japanese cities to impress the Russians. Nonetheless, it was the
world’s introduction to mankind’s harnessing the power of the universe. With this astonishing
discovery, the leaders in the post-war world began their analysis of the nuclear bomb and its
effect upon the international balance of power.

At the end of World War Two was also the time that Truman developed his understanding of
the vast destructive power of the atom bomb. Truman did not appreciate the might of nuclear
devices until subsequent analyses by the scientists that originally developed the bomb and, later,
the military. In the beginning, Truman believed that atomic weapons were just new, very
powerful, explosives that the government had invested an astonishing amount of wartime
resources and money in developing. Around the timeframe of the first two blasts Truman even
compared the devices to powerful artillery pieces. Truman said, “I regarded the bomb as a
military weapon and never had any doubt that it should be used.” In his memoirs he discussed
the correctness of using the bombs by relating them back to conventional weapons, “In deciding
to use this bomb I wanted to make sure that it would be used as a weapon of war in the manner
prescribed by the laws of war.” He did not feel the need to publicly explain the rationale to use
the weapons on the Japanese other than by comparing them to other weapons systems. Still, this
statement gives some indication that, early on, Truman felt that the new nuclear weapons were
different from other explosive devices since he went out of his way to justify their use under the
rules that governed previous weapon systems. More telling, was a July 25, 1945 diary entry by
Truman, “It seems to be the most terrible thing ever discovered, but it can be made the most
useful.” Another sign of Truman’s early concern came in a private meeting with a key advisor
where Truman was both anxious about shortening the war and at the same time troubled about
how the atomic bomb was going to reshape history. This is the first sign, but not the last, that
Truman was of two minds concerning the use and effect of atomic weapons.
Later, Truman would routinely describe the use of the atomic bombs in World War Two as a way to save American soldiers’ lives by averting a costly invasion of the Japanese homeland and as a means to shorten the war. This response became his habitual reaction to the recurring question about the dropping of the bomb. He repeatedly said that given the same situation, he would again make the same decision without regret, though later in life Truman became very defensive about his decision. For example, in a 1959 letter to Eleanor Roosevelt Truman responded to an article by Pearl S. Buck, “the men who were on the ground doing their jobs share my opinion that their lives and the lives of a half million other youngsters were saved by dropping the bomb.” The point of this paper is not whether or not he made the right decision but rather the role that decision played in shaping Truman’s views on the bomb. The bomb’s effect on Hiroshima and Nagasaki no doubt helped form his ideas about nuclear weapons, not only as weapons of war, but also regarding the impact that nuclear power would have upon mankind. Truman reviewed various classified reports about the bomb’s destructive force such as the United States Strategic Bombing Survey’s summary report for the Pacific Theater. This survey included not only the findings of scientists and soldiers but also eyewitness accounts of the blasts. This report revealed a weapon that resulted in much greater damage than that which was typical for a conventional warhead. For instance, the report’s description of the blast results at Hiroshima are grim, “Killed and Missing - 70/80,000, Injured - 70,000, Square miles destroyed - 4.7, Mortality rate per sq mile - 15,000, Casualty rate per sq mile - 32,000.” In addition to the fire ball and the shock wave of the initial blast there were also the lingering effects of deadly radiation. The report noted that, “The majority of radiation cases who were at greater distances did not show severe symptoms until 1 to 4 weeks after the explosion.” In addition to the effects of the radiation, the report calculated that to achieve the results of just one
plane with a single atomic device “would have required 220 B-29s carrying 1,200 tons of incendiary bombs, 400 tons of high-explosive bombs, and 500 tons of anti-personnel fragmentation bombs.”

According to the report the result was “fear [and] uncontrolled terror, strengthened by the sheer horror of the destruction and suffering witnessed and experienced by the survivors.”

Calculations about the atom bomb’s true power changed sharply as evidence was gathered after its first use in war and as later tests drastically increased the estimated number of casualties and amount of expected destruction. This evolving understanding was clearly demonstrated in July 1945 when General Groves advised Truman that the yield of the bombs would be equal to just 500 tons of TNT, far short of the actual results of the aftermath as listed in the Strategic Bombing Survey.

In addition to these sobering facts, which helped shape Truman’s early views on the atomic bomb, other influences came in human form.

HENRY STIMSON

One of Truman’s earliest and closest advisors on how to deal with the nuclear bomb’s impact upon America’s relationship with the Russians was Secretary of War Henry Lewis Stimson. Stimson was intimately involved with the beginnings of the atomic era since he oversaw the developmental project for the initial bombs. He was also the first person to advise Truman on nuclear policy and he chaired the Interim Committee which advised the President to use the weapons on Japan. In his original meeting with the new President, Stimson put forth the seed of the idea that the atomic bomb would deeply influence relations with other countries and fundamentally shape the history of mankind.

Stimson was especially influential since his nuclear stance was adopted by some other prominent advisors of nuclear policy and helped to point Truman toward an early course of action concerning the future role of nuclear energy.

While overseeing the Interim Committee’s decision recommending against inviting the
Russians to the Los Alamos tests, Stimson did originate the compelling idea of sharing nuclear knowledge with the world.\textsuperscript{53} This idea would later gain popularity with several leading presidential advisors’, but, more importantly, it appealed to Truman himself who described Stimson as “a man of great wisdom and foresight.”\textsuperscript{54} Stimson counseled the Interim Committee on the dual nature of nuclear power saying that it was either, “the doom of civilization” or “the perfection of civilization.”\textsuperscript{55} A short time later, in a private conversation with Truman, Stimson advanced the idea that nuclear power was not just the United States’ problem but one for the whole of civilization. This private conversation provides some insight into Truman’s later statements concerning the ability of nuclear power to achieve a new age of man.\textsuperscript{56} Stimson’s beliefs can also be detected in Truman’s conviction that nuclear knowledge needed to be shared, in some manner, with the rest of the world. The interplay between Stimson and Truman leads the way to argue that Truman considered nuclear power as being more than just a Clausewitzian tool of the military. According to Clausewitz’s logic a military capability of such power would not be shared but instead would remain a closely guarded secret.

The idea of sharing nuclear knowledge was an admirable goal but one difficult to reconcile with the growing problems experienced with the Soviet Union. The first indication of a more characteristically Clausewitzian approach arose during the 1945 Potsdam Conference after a successful test of the nuclear device. While Truman was clearly pleased with the test results and beginning to comprehend the sheer power of the new weapon, he was presented with his first practical test of the bomb’s role in diplomatic matters. If he had been fully won over by Stimson’s argument of a brave new world of nuclear energy perhaps he would have given the Russians some idea of the successful test’s implications and the real nature of the device. This would have opened the door to future exchanges of information between the nations and would,
perhaps, have reduced the chances for a nuclear arms race.

Instead, Truman, who had been in office less than 90 days, was circumspect and withdrew into the Clausewitzian paradigm which assumed that a powerful weapon should be safeguarded, protected, and used to enhance the nation’s diplomatic position and strategic aims. Thus, Truman’s only discussion with Stalin about the atom bomb occurred after one of the diplomatic sessions in a very brief exchange and he only told Stalin that the United States had tested a bomb of “unusual destructive force.” In this case, the pressure on a new and clearly unsure President to be cautious may have been too much to overcome and break free of the feeling that he needed to safeguard his new weapon.

Indeed, there is even some evidence to suggest that Truman might have wished to use the newly developed weapon as a lever to further diplomatic aims in his talks with Stalin. However, other than apparently boosting his self-confidence when dealing with Stalin and Churchill, the successful test apparently did not translate into a more favorable shift in the talks for the United States. All the same, since the Japanese surrendered so quickly after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki the Soviets were prevented from making significant gains in the Far East despite their entry into the war against Japan as promised at the earlier Yalta Conference and reconfirmed at Potsdam. This result, however, was not actually a valid example of Clausewitz’s application of military force to achieve a specific diplomatic outcome since the consequence was really a by-product of Japan’s rapid surrender and not the intended conclusion. Given that Truman was new to his position and uncertain about interacting with his powerful English and Soviet counterparts perhaps the Potsdam Conference was an unfair test of Truman’s true stance on the nature of atomic bombs and nuclear energy with respect to Clausewitzian logic and the Russians.
MILITARY AND CIVILIAN CONTROL

The next test for Truman provided a clearer picture of his possible view of nuclear weapons. By 1946 the nation’s nuclear program had moved beyond the developmental phase into constant production involving numerous elements of commerce, defense, and research. No longer was the nuclear program a massive, but secret, military effort to develop a weapon to end, or shorten, the Second World War. Such a change necessitated a reassessment of the new nuclear sphere and compelled a determination about who would control the growing arsenal of atomic bombs.

The debate within the Truman administration was whether there should be military or civilian control over nuclear weapons and it clearly fell along Clausewitizian lines. The forces supporting the military’s control included key members of Congress, the military, and the general public. In this case Truman, who was still maturing as President and whose understanding of the potential destructive power of nuclear weapons was still evolving, chose to assume the task of leading the counterargument. When presented with this challenge he was willing to stand up to these combined and formidable opponents and take a clearly non-Clausewitzian position.

Truman’s response to these pressures was to sign the Atomic Energy Act on August 1, 1946. This act moved control of nuclear energy from the military to a civilian agency called the United States Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). The act explicitly placed control of nuclear weapons clearly and without exception in the hands of the AEC with the following statement:

The Commission is authorized and directed to . . . have custody of all assembled or unassembled atomic bombs, bomb parts, or other atomic military weapons, presently or hereafter produced, except that upon the express finding of the President that such action is required in the interests of national defense, the Commission shall deliver such quantities of weapons to the armed forces as the President may specify. 60

With this statement Truman removed nuclear weapons from military control unless
specifically authorized by the President. Thus was Truman able to arrange for nuclear weapons to be outside traditional military controls and he successfully excluded nuclear weapons from their Clausewitzian position with respect to the military forces. The AEC provided the mechanism that placed nuclear weapons outside military authority unless extraordinary events demanded their deployment and subsequent employment against another nation as ordered by the President. Truman’s actions revealed someone far different from the new President who a year earlier had essentially left it to the military and the Interim Committee, under the Secretary of War’s supervision, to determine the timing and location for dropping the bombs on Japan.61

This new Truman took direct, personal action to initiate and guide the AEC legislation through Congress. Truman, after consultation with his cabinet on the idea, called upon key Senators Tom Connally and Arthur Vandenberg to propose a new direction for the control and management of nuclear weapons.62 Truman then promoted his position with a public message to Congress pushing for a law to establish a national policy on nuclear energy. In this address Truman outlined some of the principles he envisioned with the new law and resulting agency. Reminiscent of Stimson’s words, Truman began the address with the peculiar duality of atomic energy, “Never in history has society been confronted with a power so full of potential danger and at the same time so full of promise for the future of man and for the peace of the world.”63

Further analysis of the key points of Truman’s address and the actual Atomic Energy Act passed by Congress shows practically no difference in the two documents. With these actions Truman skillfully established a new precedent which placed nuclear weapons outside the realm of military principles as they were practiced in the past and he continued to explore options beyond Clausewitzian logic throughout this period. Truman next dealt with the initiative of sharing nuclear secrets and ending the United States’ monopoly on nuclear knowledge.
SHARING NUCLEAR KNOWLEDGE

Heretofore, the United States, except for sharing some knowledge among scientists from the United Kingdom and Canada, had maintained a virtual monopoly in atomic secrets. Yet the problem of controlling the flow of atomic information seemed to be one that demanded attention accordingly, in November 1945 Truman met with the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom and Canada to discuss how to reduce the chance of spreading those secrets while still promoting the peaceful use of nuclear power. As with many difficult governmental problems without easy answers they agreed, “that a commission be established within the framework of the United Nations to explore the problems of effective international control of atomic energy.”

At that time the Russians’ successes in securing atomic secrets were not fully understood and therefore not relevant to the argument over sharing information. Most people, inside and outside the government, believed that the Russians were many, many years away from developing nuclear weapons. In fact, the United States’ monopoly on atomic bombs and nuclear power was an incontrovertible reality to most of the world in the mid-1940s.

This apparent monopoly on knowledge seemed to be a practical solution to protecting the United States new military weapon and preserving it to further governmental policy and diplomatic goals. If Truman wanted to protect the atomic bomb as an instrument of governmental policy, according to Clausewitz, he would safeguard its secrets from other Nation-States. However, if he believed that the weapon was so powerful that it was beyond the scope of traditional military uses then new thinking would need to be applied. This was the choice that Truman explored during the debate on sharing nuclear knowledge.

The argument over control of nuclear secrets devolved into two distinct camps within the Truman administration and both vied to convince the President to accept their position. One
group followed traditional Clausewitzian thinking and wanted to keep tight control over nuclear secrets. The opposing group supported a new approach to dealing with the entirely new realm of nuclear energy and found their answer in the shape of international control. The idea of international control was in keeping with the new world order being encouraged by the United States in the shape of the newly created United Nations (UN). This way the United States could introduce an element of internationalism into the control of nuclear weapons while still, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and leading world power, maintain a degree of control over nuclear energy. The leadership of these two factions fell largely on two individuals.

The first bloc, which supported the traditional Clausewitzian position, was lead by Secretary of State James Byrnes, a hold-over from the Roosevelt administration. He was a long-time foreign policy hardliner and had pressed for both dropping nuclear weapons on Japan and not informing Stalin of the Alamogordo test detonation during the Potsdam Conference. Byrnes believed that the United States had paid the price for its nuclear secrets and that Truman should not surrender them to the world or, to be more precise, the nefarious Russians. He and his followers believed that the Russians only understood raw power and that nuclear weapons provided the military clout needed to advance the United States’ diplomatic agenda around the world. As a Senate colleague who had helped Truman during his difficult 1940 reelection bid to the United States Senate, Byrnes was an early and important White House advisor. As such, his counsel was very influential during the time of this debate. Later, in 1947, Byrnes would leave his post after disagreements with Truman came to a head. Nevertheless, his stance on maintaining the nation’s nuclear secrets was one that possessed great merit at the time. More importantly, Byrnes’ position also reflected Truman’s growing distrust of the Russians and their true objectives. That same distrust was voiced in public surveys and manifested by important
Senators such as Vandenberg and Connally. If there was to be a future conflict between the United States and Russia it would have been totally non-Clausewitzian to provide the projected foe with the information needed to build a powerful weapon. This conventional treatment of nuclear weapons and associated knowledge was a persuasive argument for the vast number of defenders of the status quo regarding atomic secrets.

As Byrnes’ advisory role to Truman was fading the spokesman for the other side of the argument was a star on the rise. Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson took up the banner of Stimson promoting an innovative solution to the new problem of nuclear energy. Acheson believed that the secrets of the atomic bomb were scientific in nature and could not be locked away for forever. Acheson and many others also assumed that in time the Russians, through their own research, would discover these same scientific principles and produce their own bombs. Acheson, along with David Lilienthal, proposed the non-Clausewitzian answer of international control over nuclear weapons to end the threat of future nuclear wars. Their plan was laid out in the Acheson-Lilienthal Report which called for all fissionable material to be owned and distributed for peaceful purposes by a United Nations agency rather than relying on a complex program of international inspections. The report also called for the United States to give the Soviets the secrets to nuclear weapons in exchange for an agreement by both sides not to produce atomic bombs in the future. Ideally, this would effectively remove the threat of nuclear weapons, and Clausewitz’s principles of warfare would no longer apply.

These then were the two choices concerning the future of nuclear energy available to Truman in March 1946 when the Acheson-Lilienthal Report was released to the public. On the surface it appeared that Truman accepted the non-Clausewitzian solution, embracing the report in its broadest terms. Yet the report’s introduction clearly stated that it was, “not intended as a final
plan but a place to begin, a foundation on which to build.” Later, Truman explained his understanding of the report by saying, “the Acheson-Lilienthal Report was very plainly marked as a working paper and not as an approved policy document.” And though Truman seemed to support the report’s non-Clausewitzian viewpoint the actual execution of the proposal took on a much more Clausewitzian aspect when dealing with the Soviets.

Truman appointed Bernard Baruch as the United States representative to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (UNAEC). In this role Baruch was given the mission to turn the Acheson-Lilienthal report into a working agreement. Truman also countermanded the Acheson-Lilienthal report’s recommendation concerning the lack of international inspections telling Baruch that, “We should not under any circumstances throw away our gun until we are sure the rest of the world can’t arm against us.” Baruch then presented his ‘Baruch Plan’, the Acheson-Lilienthal plan except it included the requirement for international inspections, to the United Nations. Truman wrote a telling statement in a rough draft of his memoirs between the typed lines pertaining to the Baruch Plan, “The plan was the plan of the President.” With Truman’s guidance and Baruch’s own strong distrust of the Russians the issue of inspections was nonnegotiable from the start. After much international debate the issue of inspections reached an impasse and thwarted any attempts to establish international control over nuclear programs. Of course, it takes two sides to achieve a diplomatic agreement and the Russians, well on their way to producing their own nuclear weapons, were never really interested. Truman says in his memoirs that Russian cooperation on the issue of inspections was never seriously contemplated and died in the United Nations Security Council. What initially had seemed to be a departure by Truman from the Clausewitzian formula was never really likely to happen. With the exception of now retired Stimson and Acheson, Truman’s closest advisors and powerful political
leaders like Vandenberg endorsed this cautious approach. Truman summed up the situation surrounding the issue of international control of nuclear energy and weapons in a statement Clausewitz would understand, “... then, if the Russians should launch an atomic armament race, our present advantage and security gained by our discovery and initiative would be wiped out. . . . We were prepared, in any event, to safeguard our own national interest.” Unlike his non-Clausewitzian removal of nuclear weapons from military oversight, Truman maintained a more traditional path in the case of international control.

An examination of Truman’s early polices on nuclear energy and atomic weapons were a mixed bag concerning his adherence to Clausewitz’s principles. He took a bold step in placing atomic weapons under a civilian agency and demonstrated a desire to place them in an exclusive category. Yet, in the case of nuclear weapons and the rest of the world Truman was much more conservative in his approach. At the Potsdam Conference he showed reluctance to bring Stalin into the nuclear club. Truman again demonstrated no desire to seek any type of compromise with the Russians during the debates over the Baruch Plan even though failing to reach a compromise might well result in a costly arms race. The common factor in these two cases was Truman’s growing distrust of the Russians, a sentiment echoed by many Americans. In four Gallup polls conducted in late 1945 and throughout 1946 68 to 75 percent of Americans did not want to give up control of the atomic bomb because they feared the Russians. As for Truman, he believed that “Russia seemed bent upon taking advantage of war shattered neighbors for imperialistic ends.” If the Russians were the main reason for Truman’s reluctance to demilitarize nuclear weapons then how was this reflected in his other Cold War policies and doctrine, especially since he was simultaneously trying to reduce the size of conventional military forces and still confront apparent Soviet aggression around the world?
TRUMAN’S COLD WAR POLICES

As the Second World War ended Truman was presented with a fresh test to the United States’ vision of a new world order. By 1947 Communist rule had been established in East Germany, Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia, and the Cold War was off and running. This latest challenge called for an innovative set of advisors who were capable of helping Truman devise original policies and responses to the Soviet’s new-found status in the world. These individuals faced an uncertain future and while drafting new strategies were tempted to incorporate nuclear weapons into the equation. For instance, the Clifford-Elsey Report about responding to Soviet actions, said in Clausewitzian fashion, that military forces should be forwarded based around the world. The report also advised Truman that “the United States must be prepared to wage atomic and biological warfare.” The effect the report had on Truman was unknown but he did draw heavily upon it when he gave the speech to Congress which later became known as the Truman Doctrine. Yet, during the speech, he gave no sign that he was planning to deploy nuclear weapons. Against this background of policy-making, Truman’s vision of nuclear energy began to take a clearer shape. Not as a single unified policy, but as a series of precedents not unlike what is found in case law. The first source of analyses is Truman’s own policies pertaining to the perceived Communist threat around the world.

The Truman Doctrine defined a more active role for the nation’s diplomacy endeavors in order to counteract the perceived aggression of the Soviet Union. Those 1947 containment policies, and the ones that followed, incorporated typical Clausewitzian applications of military force to achieve the nation’s diplomatic aims. For example, the United States publicly supported Greece and Turkey with military aid and, in addition to supplies, Truman’s March 12, 1947 address to Congress asked to send:
… military personnel to Greece and Turkey, at the request of those countries, to assist in the tasks of reconstruction, and for the purpose of supervising the use of such financial and material assistance as may be furnished. I recommend that authority also be provided for the instruction and training of selected Greek and Turkish personnel.  

This action was just the first in a series of containment moves by the United States. There followed economic and military aid to Western Europe under the guise of the Marshall Plan and more direct forms of military containment with the 1947 Rio Treaty and the 1949 creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). A review of Truman’s public letters from 1945-1952, maintained by the National Archives and Records Service, failed to reveal any public mention of an intent to incorporate nuclear weapons into these policies. When asked if he would consider employing nuclear weapons Truman always downplayed the possibility. A typical Truman response to the question of using nuclear weapons can be found in remarks to new congressmen on April 6, 1949, “I had to make a decision back in July 1945 . . . on the basis of the welfare not only of this country but of our enemy country. . . . Now I believe that we are in a position where we will never have to make that decision again…” Still, the real test of Truman’s convictions regarding whether or not nuclear weapons should fall under Clausewitz’s principles would not come through rhetoric concerning the administration’s Cold War doctrine, rather those convictions were tested through the crises which occurred during his Presidency.

**COLD WAR CRISES AND TRUMAN’S NUCLEAR THREATS**

The two crises that provide the best analysis of Truman’s convictions were the Berlin Crisis and the Korean War. Other Cold War crises, such as Iran, Greece, and China, though of great national interest, lacked the same urgent importance to the United States. During the Berlin and Korean affairs, Russia and the United States actually seemed to be on the brink of open warfare. Therefore the possibility that nuclear weapons would need to be deployed and perhaps even used was debated at the highest levels of government. Truman’s response in each situation provides
true insight as to his actual convictions concerning the use of nuclear weapons in furtherance of the nation’s foreign policy goals. The first crisis took place in the old capital of Nazi Germany, Berlin. As Truman wrote Lyndon Johnson in a private letter on December 11, 1956 the stakes were high, “If I had set still and let the Russians take Berlin … we would have been isolated and already in another world war.”91

BERLIN AIRLIFT

The Potsdam Agreement called for Germany to be divided into four occupation zones with Berlin likewise being divided into four sectors, later called East and West Berlin. The ultimate result was that the United States, French, and British sectors of Berlin ended up being well within the Soviet occupation zone and became a source of tension between Russia and the other occupying powers.92 The sparks that set off the crisis were Stalin’s unanswered demands for reparations from West German industry and the introduction of the Deutsche Mark as a way to push for the reunification of Germany. On June 24, 1948 the Russians denied the western power’s land access to Berlin virtually isolating West Berlin, and Truman was faced with a crisis he believed he could not afford to lose.93 At that time the United States had an army of limited capability because of post-war reductions and a growing arsenal of 250 atomic bombs, each five times more powerful than those which were used in World War Two.94

Truman responded to the crisis with a massive aerial supply mission known as the Berlin airlift. The military-managed airlift was not the only avenue that Truman pursued to end the crisis but his options were limited. For example, a Top Secret memorandum from General Clay, then the United States Commander of Forces in Germany, stated that his military forces were in such poor condition that ground operations, to include forcing a ground convoy into Berlin, were risky at best. The same memorandum also discussed strictly diplomatic measures such as direct
talks with Stalin and placing the problem before the United Nations. However, the memorandum concluded that the best hope of breaking the blockade was to boost the size of the airlift and place military forces on alert thus subscribing to the Clausewitzian application of military force in order to pursue diplomatic objectives. The conclusion of the memorandum also included a brief discussion of what to do with the B-29 bombers in England.\textsuperscript{95}

The Boeing B-29 Superfortress was the aircraft which had dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and, at the time of the Berlin Crisis, was still the only plane capable of delivering a nuclear payload to target. With this in mind, on June 28, 1948 Truman ordered three squadrons of B-29s to be stationed at British airfields. These particular bombers were not configured to carry nuclear weapons and could only drop conventional bombs but that fact was not known to the rest of the world and, most especially, the Russians.\textsuperscript{96} For this analysis the issue is whether Truman subscribed to Clausewitzian thinking and used the deployment of the B-29s as some sort of a nuclear show of force. The answer is plainly yes, that it was a nuclear show of force through omission. The B29s in question were strictly conventional bombers yet Truman allowed the impression to remain that they were nuclear capable. In this manner Truman was able to introduce the United States’ nuclear arsenal into the diplomatic equation without actually deploying the weapons, thus avoiding any diplomatic consternation about atomic weapons being on foreign soil. While a brilliant move, this action may also reveal reluctance on Truman’s part to consolidate nuclear weapons, with other military weapons, in the hands of the armed forces. During a White House meeting early in the crisis Truman emphatically turned down a request to give the military nuclear weapons,

I don’t think we ought to use this thing unless we absolutely have to. It is a terrible thing to order the use of something that (pause), that is so terribly destructive, destructive beyond anything we have ever had. . . . This is no time to be juggling an atom bomb around.\textsuperscript{97}
This is another example of Truman’s duality of thought concerning nuclear weapons. His practical need to exploit them in support of his diplomatic aims was in direct conflict with his desire to actually use them. While the Berlin Crisis was perhaps the best example of Truman truly using nuclear weapons within a Clausewitzian framework of military force supporting diplomatic objectives, the Korean War also created demands upon the President to play the nuclear card.

**KOREAN WAR**

Whereas the Berlin Crisis threatened to escalate into war the Korean Crisis began as one, with the June 25, 1950 North Korean invasion of South Korea. Like the Berlin Crisis, this confrontation erupted along another Cold War fault line formed at the end of World War Two where Soviet and American occupation zones intersected. Truman, seeing the North Korean invasion as a move directed by the Russian government, sent troops to block the invasion. At that point the United States’ intervention, under the auspices of the United Nations, was generally understood to be limited in nature and there were no real discussions about using nuclear weapons. However, this would all change with General Douglas MacArthur’s success at Incheon. With the North Korean army retreating behind the 38th Parallel, an overconfident MacArthur pursued them all the way to the Chinese border which drew the People’s Army of China into the conflict and raised the specter of atomic warfare.98

This second phase of the war was when the nuclear option was raised by key political figures, in various public debates, and even by Truman’s closest advisors.99 During this period the United States nuclear arsenal had grown to nearly 500 bombs while the Soviet Union’s arsenal was still comparatively small.100 With that many weapons available the military began to routinely consider their employment and made that a regular part of strategic planning. For
example, a Joint Chiefs of Staff report to the Nation Security Council specifically discussed the planning factors that were used to select nuclear targets. Of particular significance to the subject of strategic planning was a verbal exchange between Air Force General Hoyt Vandenberg and President Truman during a strategy meeting in December 1950 when Vandenberg proposed to include an atomic bombing campaign to push the Chinese army back across the border. Vandenberg said, in a very matter-of-fact manner, that the strategic doctrine drawn up by the Pentagon in response to this contingency called for the application of nuclear power. Truman snapped back at once with, “No! Go get a new strategic doctrine.” The fact that this retort by Truman finally seemed to settle the issue for the military leadership is indicated by the minutes of various National Security Council meetings during that time. The memorandums from those meetings discuss the seriousness of the situation and various courses of action such as withdrawing United State forces to Japan in a Dunkirk type of evacuation, or conversely, staying the course. In both cases there was concern about not doing anything that might trigger a wider world war. The admonition to avoid escalation effectively precluded certain actions against China such as a naval blockade, conventional bombing campaign, guerrilla operations, or launching nationalist forces from Formosa. Nowhere in debating these contingencies was any discussion given to the use of nuclear weapons. The Pentagon requested no meeting on the subject with Truman even after General MacArthur sent the Joint Chiefs of Staff a list of targets for 34 nuclear bombs on December 24, 1950 which would be used in order to create a deadly radioactive wasteland which would permanently block any future Chinese incursions. This is not to say that the Pentagon stopped planning and preparation to conduct contingency operations, rather, it indicates that the military leadership did not discuss using nuclear weapons with the President in the same cavalier manner. The military could plan
all types of nuclear contingencies but only Truman could give the final word to execute those contingencies. Still, there were other circumstances during this crisis that raised the specter of nuclear weapons.

For instance, General Vandenberg may have been encouraged to bring up the use of nuclear weapons after a presidential press conference on November 30, 1950. In the question and answer portion of that conference Truman was asked if there was active consideration of the United States using atomic bombs in Korea and, not thinking his remarks through, he replied "There has always been active consideration of its use. I don't want to see it used. It is a terrible weapon, and it should not be used on innocent men, women and children who have nothing whatever to do with this military aggression. That happens when it is used."105 That same day the White House Press Office issued a statement that downplayed Truman’s comment, “Consideration of the use of any weapon is always implicit in the very possession of the weapon. However, it should be emphasized, that, by law, only the President can authorize the use of the atom bomb, and no such authorization has been given,”106 Despite the disclaimer, Truman’s off-the-cuff response resulted in a political firestorm within the United States and alarmed the international community, to include close United States allies. Prime Minister Clement Attlee of the United Kingdom even made a public statement that he was going to talk to Truman face to face about using the bomb in order to thwart growing public outrage.107 When the Prime Minister met with the President in Top Secret talks Truman confirmed he was not planning to use nuclear weapons and indeed hoped that they would never have to be used.108 In his memoirs Truman explained that he was just trying to truthfully answer the question that the United States did have an arsenal of nuclear weapons available but that he had not meant to give the impression that he planned to use them and start World War Three. Truman believed that the
emotional atmosphere at the time of the crisis, with the myriad of rumors which were circulating, is what caused the mere mention of atomic bombs to be taken out of context.\textsuperscript{109} Truman’s comments on November 30, 1950 while initially sounding very Clausewitzian in nature by threatening the use of weapons in order to influence the enemy, lost their Clausewitzian overtones in the aftermath of the political damage control instigated by the President and his staff. In reality Truman’s comments indicate that he was actually opposed to using nuclear power. Instead of viewing nuclear weapons as just another tool to further his national aims he dreaded the possibility of having to use them. The theme of duality once again recurs, with Truman apparently believing that the use of nuclear weapons may be inescapable at some point but, knowing the inevitable devastation that would follow, fervently hoping such would not be the case.

In early 1951, the military situation from the United States’ perspective was dire and Truman was forced, once again, to contemplate the possibility of dropping nuclear weapons. During the spring of 1951 nuclear capable B-29s, and essential non-nuclear components, were deployed to Guam in response to the circumstances in Korea.\textsuperscript{110} This happened again in 1952 in reaction to a worsening military situation.\textsuperscript{111} These measures were not publicized like the 1949 deployment of B-29s to England, instead they were covertly conducted in order to support contingency plans developed by the Pentagon. The 1951 transfer from the AEC to the Air Force of enough nuclear material to construct nine bombs and the simultaneous deployment of the B29s did not indicate a major policy shift by Truman. While these actions were significant in their own right they appear to have signaled nothing more than a desire to ensure proper pre-positioning of assets in the event of an emergency.\textsuperscript{112}

Truman understood the need to constantly revise and update military contingency planning
which always looks at both the best and worst case scenarios. He also understood that,
“Occasionally some newspaperman gets wind of the existence of certain military plans and
reports them as the fixed position of the government.”\textsuperscript{113} And he was quite clear about his desire
to thoroughly understand a situation and explore all the options before making a choice, “Many
times I was fairly convinced in my own mind which course of action would be the right one, but
I still wanted to cover every side of the situation before coming to a final decision.”\textsuperscript{114}

Truman always ensured that he had personal control over the nation’s nuclear arsenal and it
has even been implied that apprehension about losing that control was the real reason behind the
firing of General MacArthur.\textsuperscript{115} Truman essentially says as much during an interview for his
memoirs, “If I had been in that frame of mind I could have knocked out Peiping, Shanghai, and
Canton and killed 17 or 18 million people. But that would have just been murder. That’s why
MacArthur and I fell out. That’s what he wanted to do.”\textsuperscript{116} The deployment of nuclear assets
during the Korean War was yet another demonstration of Truman’s conflicted position pertaining
to nuclear weapons. On the one hand he was compelled to plan and prepare for the use of
nuclear weapons as a military necessity; on the other hand even in crisis situations he maintained
extremely tight civilian control of the nuclear arsenal and distributed only the minimum number
of weapons deemed necessary for contingency planning. So it seems that even when drawn by
Clausewitzian logic to employ nuclear weapons in support of his foreign policy objectives
Truman remained loath to do so. In a 1954 memorandum Truman explained the difference
between deciding to drop the atomic bombs in 1945 and his unwillingness to use them in Korea.

We were trying to end it [World War Two] in order to save the lives of our soldiers and
sailors. The new bomb was a powerful new weapon of war. In my opinion it had to be
used to end the unnecessary slaughter on both sides. It was an entirely different situation
from Korea. . . . In Korea we were fighting a police action . . . We had held the Chinese
after the North Koreans and whipping the Russian Air Force. I just could not make the
order for a Third World War. I know I was right.\textsuperscript{117}
In the memorandum he also alluded to how much the world changed in just the few short years after 1945 with the Russian explosion of its first nuclear device.

PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR POWER

In addition to the Cold War crises he dealt with during his tenure Truman also had to handle the beginning of the arms race and the explosion of nuclear advancements. With the failure of the international community to reach consensus on the Baruch Plan there is little doubt that competition for global nuclear supremacy was accelerated on August 29, 1949 with the first successful Russian test of an atomic bomb. As characterized by Clausewitz’s theory this competition was ultimately just another example of trying to use military capability to achieve a government’s foreign policy goals. Theoretically, the nation with greater military strength would be encouraged to take greater international risks since it could threaten any adversaries with its superior destructive power. Truman responded in true Clausewitzian fashion by increasing both the quality and quantity of the nation’s nuclear arsenal.

Truman, who professed the desire to never use nuclear weapons, nevertheless increased nuclear capability in every possible way while in office. At the end of World War Two the United States had one bomb remaining in the arsenal, by 1947 the number was fourteen, by the time the B-29s were sent to Guam in 1951 there were hundreds, and when Truman left office in 1953 the number was well over a thousand. At the same time new bomber aircraft, such as the B-36, were specifically developed to extend the range and capacity of the nuclear payload. There was also an effort to expand nuclear weapons from the strategic sphere into the tactical realm with the development of atomic land mines and artillery shells. Moreover, Truman readily pursued ever more powerful atomic tools, including the hydrogen bomb which was so powerful that it was called the super bomb for its cataclysmic potential. He also oversaw the
increase in the production of fissionable material to fuel the new weapons.\textsuperscript{122} At the same time recommendations regarding atomic weapons production objectives, preparatory deployment, and use were formalized by the National Security Council.\textsuperscript{123} Nuclear weapons became the key element for every Pentagon contingency plan such as the ones code named: Broiler, Trojan, Half-Moon and Fleetwood.\textsuperscript{124} However, weapons, including a new nuclear submarine, were not the only ways that Truman pressed to expand nuclear capability. He also sought to direct nuclear energy toward more peaceful endeavors. He spoke eloquently of his desires at the keel laying ceremony for the first nuclear powered submarine, the U.S.S. Nautilus, when he spoke of a positive future and of how, “This vessel is the forerunner of atomic-powered merchant ships and airplanes, of atomic power plants producing electricity for factories, farms and homes.”\textsuperscript{125} Truman believed that, “Eventually it will be the greatest source of power in the world.”\textsuperscript{126} Ultimately, Truman spent billions more on nuclear energy than the original Manhattan Project, with the bulk going to weapons and their delivery systems.\textsuperscript{127}

Truman justified spending nearly seven billion dollars on nuclear projects in two ways.\textsuperscript{128} First, he cited the Cold War threat from the Russians. He pointed out that nuclear weapons provided a deterrent which undoubtedly curtailed some of the more aggressive Russian moves. It is probably no accident that Truman approved a National Security Council document, NSC-68, which called for a massive military build-up to counter the Soviet threat, the same day he decided to build the hydrogen bomb.\textsuperscript{129} Equally important to Truman’s mind was the fact that the Russians were building a nuclear arsenal. To safeguard the security of the United States he believed he needed to offset the Soviet capability by having even more nuclear weapons. For instance, Truman believed that the Russians were in the process of developing the hydrogen bomb and that he had no choice but to build one first.\textsuperscript{130} He stated this idea succinctly in 1950,
“I’ve always believed that we should never use these weapons, I don’t believe we ever will have to use them, but we have to go on making them because of the way the Russians are behaving.”131 And another time Truman expanded this notion with, “we have got to have it [the atomic bomb] if only for bargaining purposes with the Russians.”132 The second way Truman defended his nuclear expenditure was by articulating his belief that nuclear energy was to be the salvation of mankind. As he put it, “It will always remain my prayer that the world will come to look upon the atom as a source of useful energy and a source of important healing power . . .”133

When it came to the proliferation of nuclear energy and weapons, Truman was very much Clausewitzian in practice. His goal was to increase the nation’s ability to wage nuclear war in order to further foreign policy. Yet, his rhetoric with regards to the arms race and the reasons he gave for wanting more nuclear capability was non-Clausewitzian. His rationale being that having a greater number of more powerful nuclear devices precluded their actual use and thinking that, given time, nuclear energy would transcend its destructive role and turn out to be a boon for all mankind. Truman’s views and actions concerning nuclear weapons and the resultant proliferation of nuclear devices during his administration again reflect a duality of ideas and conflicting beliefs. The same complexity of ideas and contradictions can be seen when comparing his public rhetoric and his private comments regarding nuclear weapons.

TRUMAN’S POSITION ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

It is perhaps not surprising that Truman’s public and private comments on the nature of nuclear energy and atomic weapons offered various opinions on the subject. His viewpoints presented varying perspectives on the nuclear issue as well as displaying an evolutionary quality. Of particular interest is the clear distinction in his statements between the weapons used in World War Two and his subsequent comments about the Cold War period. His remarks about
the bombs used in World War Two contain no regrets, “I regarded the bomb as a military weapon and never had any doubt that it should used.”¹³⁴ This was a position that he would maintain for the rest of his life. In a 1964 letter Truman responded to an inquiry about his decision with, “I have never worried about dropping the bomb. It was just a means to end the war and that is what was accomplished.”¹³⁵ No doubt this attitude helped justify, in his own mind, his decision to drop the bombs. Another piece to understanding why it was deemed appropriate to use these immensely powerful weapons during World War Two may lie in the fact that the destruction they caused was comparable to the conventional ‘carpet’ bombing campaigns of the time. That type of bombing operation used hundreds of sorties in concentrated areas and resulted in massive destruction such as when the fire storms swept through Dresden, Germany. As a case in point, the results of the Strategic Bombing Survey showed that more people were killed and injured in the raids on Tokyo than at either Hiroshima or Nagasaki.¹³⁶ Add that perspective to the fact that after four years of war people had become accustomed to a level of carnage which would have horrified them at the war’s onset and the stage is set to use weapons capable of almost unthinkable devastation. Then too, there exists the oft debated argument that ultimately lives were saved by shortening the war. Truman described this point during a 1949 speech, “And I made that decision because I thought 200,000 of our young men would be saved by making that decision, and some 3 or 400,000 of the enemy would be saved by making the decision.”¹³⁷ Finally, because the weapons were so new, their effects were not fully understood, and since no one knew about the devastating effects of the radiation the atomic bomb seemed like just another, albeit very powerful, explosive device.¹³⁸ All these factors help to explain Truman’s comments which compared the atomic bomb to other, more familiar weapons.

After World War Two and the beginning of the Cold War era there is perceptible change in
Truman’s comments about nuclear weapons. As he said at the end of time in office, “Starting an atomic war is totally unthinkable for rational men.”

He compares nuclear weapons to conventional weapons and explosives less frequently until the relationship finally fades out completely. Instead, nuclear weapons take on qualities of their own becoming weapons never to be used again and things that will end the world. Truman said, “...we’re going to use this (atomic power) for peace and never use it for war. I’ve always said this, and you’ll see. It’ll be like poison gas (never used again).”

The reasons for the transformation of Truman’s ideas are multifaceted. One reason, very personal to Truman, was the burden of being the only man to ever approve their use against fellow humans. Truman said in his memoirs, “Ever since Hiroshima I had never stopped thinking about the frightful implications of the atomic bomb.”

Moreover, the weapons were changing as ever more powerful atomic weapons, such as the hydrogen bomb, were developed. These new, enhanced weapons were tens, and even hundreds of times more powerful than the bombs which were used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Additionally, with each nuclear test the nature of radiation became better understood and feared. Lastly, to add another level to the already high stakes of nuclear warfare was the dread that the Russians could use their atomic bombs against the United States. These concerns, coupled with the growing threat of nuclear warfare, effectively changed Truman’s outlook, making the Clausewitzian belief that weapons should be used to further governmental policies less relevant.

Truman explained why nuclear weapons should be outside the normal boundaries of conventional weapons, “The thought that frightens me is the possibility of the deliberate annihilation of whole peoples as a political-military objective. There were indications of such madness in the Nazi leadership group, and it could happen elsewhere.”

Truman’s shifting perspectives reflected his greater comprehension of nuclear weapons actual effects, the
transformation of the weapons fundamental nature over time, and the enormous changes that were occurring throughout the world during this period.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

An examination of the five previously referenced Truman biographies provide similar accounts concerning Truman’s decision to bomb Japan as well as his Cold War actions related to nuclear weapons. David McCullough’s book, Truman, offered the greatest number of references relating to Truman’s dealings in the realm of atomic bombs. McCullough portrays Truman as an intelligent, though not brilliant man, and one far more complex than recognized by the public.\textsuperscript{145} As for using the bomb in World War Two, McCullough’s account describes a situation in which the groundwork had already been laid and by the time Truman became involved it was essentially a foregone conclusion not involving any intellectual debate.\textsuperscript{146} During the Cold War crises McCullough details an introspective Truman who yearned to avoid the use of nuclear weapons. He describes Truman as, at heart, a nineteenth-century man, whose strong ideological beliefs compelled the avoidance of nuclear conflict if possible.\textsuperscript{147} McCullough’s depiction of Truman did not show that he had ever drawn upon Clausewitz for inspiration. Robert Ferrell’s biography, Harry S. Truman: A Life, and his editing of Truman’s notes into an autobiography, The Autobiography of Harry S. Truman, is different in that it points out that Truman’s military career extended well beyond World War One and that he understood the military mind much more clearly than some would suggest. Nevertheless, Ferrell’s insights do not really differ much from McCullough’s, instead they reinforce the point that, morally, Truman did not want to use the bomb.\textsuperscript{148} Alonzo Hamby, in his Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman, repeatedly made the point that, in spite of his reputation, Truman was not rash in his decision making and fully analyzed the input from his advisors.\textsuperscript{149} Hamby’s Truman was also a man who believed
that “one could achieve idealistic ends by realistic means.”\textsuperscript{150} Hamby, like McCullough, claimed that nineteenth-century ideology was the foundation for Truman’s decision making process. Hamby also noted that Truman tended to deal with problems in the foreign policy arena as they arose.\textsuperscript{151} None of the biographers made the point that Truman’s extended exposure to the armed forces enabled him to analyze the nuclear issue using military philosophy or that he might have possessed a working knowledge of theorists like Clausewitz. Conversely, these same authors did not show that applying Clausewitz’s principles to the issue of nuclear weapons was antithetical to Truman’s personality.

The book titled \textit{Personality, Character, and Leadership in the White House: Psychologists Assess the Presidents} does analyze the personalities of American Presidents, to include Truman. The authors, both distinguished psychologists, asked 120 biographers, historians, presidential advisers, and others to evaluate Presidents using standardized personality tests covering personality, intelligence, and behavior. While the results are in no way conclusive, they are certainly intriguing and portray a Truman, “[who] was not charismatic; he had a direct, uncomplicated approach. He relied on his staff, deciding among options they recommended, while asserting his own judgments.”\textsuperscript{152} Truman also stood out when compared to other modern Presidents by his high scores for conscientiousness and character.\textsuperscript{153} Interestingly, the study found that “the simple man from Missouri showed a number of contradictions and complexities.”\textsuperscript{154} The book’s conclusions do reinforce the biographer’s observations that Truman was a deeper thinker than he is generally given credit for, a man who carefully analyzed problems and one which possessed a strong ideological compass. While not proving that Truman used Clausewitzian principles to analyze the role of nuclear weapons with respect to governmental policy the analysis does reveal that he probably would have had a penchant to
apply such tools if he was familiar with them.

John Gaddis’ book *The Cold War*, does contend that Truman unknowingly applied Clausewitz’s logic to the nuclear question and he makes two interesting assertions in his arguments. First, Gaddis implied that Truman never heard of Clausewitz since his military career ended abruptly after World War One at the rank of captain. Thus, given the fact that there is no documented proof of Truman’s familiarity with Clausewitz, when he issued the orders to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki Truman must have intuitively understood Clausewitz’s principle “…that war must be the instrument of politics, rather than the other way around.” The second part of his reasoning was that Truman placed supervision of nuclear energy under the AEC because he apparently did not trust the military to be content in their subordinate role. Therefore, to ensure that the military remained an instrument of diplomacy and governmental policy Truman placed management of the nuclear program firmly under civilian control. This view, that distrust of the military was the foundation for Truman’s actions, differs from the one espoused in this paper which asserts that Truman trusted the military but believed that nuclear energy was so powerful that it transcended the military’s realm and should remain uninvolved in the diplomatic process unless absolutely necessary. Yet, Truman did use nuclear power in its traditional Clausewitzian role as a tool to support foreign policy objectives when the situation demanded such as when the B-29s were deployed to England during the Berlin Crisis and later when they were deployed to Guam during the Korean War. Further, Truman ultimately achieved the rank of Colonel and displayed his familiarity with Clausewitz by quoting the military theorist in his memoirs. Nevertheless, Gaddis agreed that Clausewitz’s principle about the role of the military applied to the problems inherent to nuclear weapons.
CONCLUSION

Did Truman agree, knowingly or unknowingly, with Clausewitz that military capability, in this case nuclear weapons, must serve as an instrument of rational policy to support a political objective? If not, how did Truman differ from Clausewitz? Did Clausewitz’s principles of war provide a means for Truman to frame the nuclear question? Furthermore, was Truman’s personal philosophy at variance with the policies he actually implemented concerning nuclear weapons and nuclear energy? These were the questions examined in an attempt to understand Truman’s Cold War policy about nuclear energy in general, and nuclear weapons in particular.

With regard to the question about whether Clausewitz’s principles were an important tool for Truman to use in analyzing the nature of nuclear weapons, the answer was yes. As stated in an earlier section, for a long time these principles of war have been widely accepted and extensively used as doctrine by civilian and military leaders. As such, they were a logical tool for Truman to use to evaluate the situation since he had no precedent to apply and he had to develop a fresh set of standards for this new class of weapon. Furthermore, based on his military background, it is reasonable to suppose that his start point would have been the accepted principles, first established by Clausewitz, on the application of military force by governments.

So, did Truman have a deliberate and consistent policy on the employment of nuclear devices? The answer is obviously, no. Truman worked through the issue of nuclear weapons employment while dealing with a series of international crises. He began with the decision to bomb Japan with nuclear weapons trying to speed up the end of World War Two. In this situation, the atomic bombs were used in a classic role subordinate to governmental policies, they were a powerful weapon system and they were employed to achieve the nation’s goals. As the outcome of the first blasts became apparent Truman started to realize that the use of nuclear
weapons could result in a level of devastation never before seen. These weapons were not simply tools to be used to achieve foreign policy aims rather; they were developing into instruments that could wipe out entire civilizations. Yet, despite the threat that nuclear weapons posed, they also symbolized a source of unimaginable new technologies and power that could reinvent mankind. These dual aspects of nuclear power are what changed the dynamic between this new form of military power and political objectives for Truman. Truman appears to have started out by agreeing with Clausewitz and considering nuclear weapons in strictly a traditional manner but later changed his mind and believed they should be outside the realm of conventional military force. He demonstrated this conviction in two ways; external to the United States he attempted to internationalize control over nuclear power through the Baruch Plan, and internal to the United States he pushed for civilian control over the program through establishment of the AEC. The Baruch Plan was never able to achieve any type of international consensus but Truman was more successful inside the United States where he was able to firmly place the nuclear program under civilian authority. Cold War contingencies caused yet another clash between Truman’s ideas and methods. His aspirations to make nuclear energy a tool of progress for mankind were hinder by the Cold War reality that nuclear weapons also served in the traditional Clausewitzian role of military force. The best examples of Truman using nuclear weapons during the Cold War in such a traditional role were the Berlin Crisis and Korean War. In both cases, Truman indicated a willingness to use atomic bombs to further his foreign polices. In the end, it seems apparent that Truman wanted to move nuclear weapons outside of their traditional Clausewitzian role as an instrument to achieve governmental objectives once he understood their potential destructive power. However, the contingencies of an unfriendly and uncertain world kept drawing him back and forcing him to use the nation’s nuclear capability in
a more traditional way. As recognized by his biographers, Truman was a complex man who internalized the debate between the hope that nuclear power offered for mankind and the realities of nuclear weapons. Regrettably, he did not document this struggle in a way which established Clausewitz’s role in the argument. Nevertheless, given his military experience and training it is not difficult to see Clausewitz’s influences as Truman grappled with the nuclear question.
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS


The book is an examination of deliberate deceptions by various 20th Century presidents and the impact such deceptions have upon subsequent politicians and the public.


The book is a broad overview of events and important people in the field of American diplomacy.


The book tells how Clausewitz's principles have been integrated into military doctrine and theory of both the United Kingdom and the United States and how Clausewitzian ideas are reinvented and sometimes misinterpreted by each new generation.


The book is from an author who has written eight previous books on Truman. While Ferrell respects Truman he nevertheless was critical of his subject. He depicts Truman as a shrewd politician who worked to become President. Ferrell also made the case for Truman’s bombing of Japan with nuclear weapons.


The book provided an understanding of the process that went into the decision of President Truman to drop the atomic bombs on Japan by providing the basic documents that influenced his choice.


The book was meant chiefly for a new generation of readers for whom the Cold War was never current events. It provided an overview Cold War in a concise manner by focusing each chapter on significant themes.


The book is an entertaining biography that looks at Truman’s entire life. It provides an overview of Truman’s life with little analysis. Hamby does focus on some important events like the decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan.


The book is by a journalist friend of Truman by the name of William Hillman. It is a friendly but superficial treatment of Truman though it does have an interesting section about Truman’s life-long love of history.


The book is an examination of the evolution of combined arms tactics since World War One.


The book introduces the leaders in government, diplomacy and economics whose personalities and actions helped bring order to the post World War Two chaos. The collective biography included Robert Lovett, John McCloy, Averell Harriman, Charles Bohlen, George Kennan, and Dean Acheson.


The book is a history of the Truman administration’s foreign policy during the Cold War. It examines the origins and misconceptions of the Cold War.


The book was intended to present a scholarly assessment of President Truman’s administration by covering the broad ground between biographies and journalistic accounts. In short, the book attempted to evaluate both Truman and his administration successes and failures.


The book provides a comprehensive look at Truman’s life, from his upbringing on a farm until his departure from office and return to Missouri. Author presents a Truman that was a truly amazing individual worthy of presidential greatness. He point out some faults such as his
continued friendship with fellow Missourian and World War One veteran Harry Vaughan even after a series of embarrassing scandals. But the author always presents Truman as a man of great honor and integrity.


The book was a text on the role of psychology in modern life and how people exercise principles of psychology in everyday life without any formal training.


The book is a collection of letters between Eleanor Roosevelt and Truman. The letters establish the fact of their friendship which allowed them to discuss, among other things, the Korean War and nuclear weapons.


The book argues that President Truman made a good military decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan in order to save countless lives and that he was not motivated by racism or trying to use the action as a political maneuver to threaten the Russians.


The book examined the beginnings of the Cold War Arms Race and presented the argument that the Korean War completely disrupted the United States normal disarmament process. Instead, the United States and its allies reversed the process and built up the forces needed to block Soviet aggression.


The book looks at the government-sponsored propaganda program during the early Cold War era and the rise of presidential rhetorical. Specifically, how Presidents have begun going directly to people to make their political points.


The book looks at the relationship between Western Civilianization and its wars. It is an overview from the ancient Greeks until the end of the Twentieth Century.

The book lays out the results two psychologists obtained when they surveyed more than 120 experts concerning the Presidents. Each expert was asked to complete a 592-item questionnaire and the authors then used their knowledge of personality traits, methods of measurement, and statistical techniques to produce the information.


The book is an analysis of Truman’s Presidential speeches. The theme of the book is that Truman’s public words helped establish much of the Cold War rhetoric and that his militant tone helped cause the Korean War.


The book consists primarily of one large “core” manuscript together with several smaller autobiographical accounts. President Truman had read several books that detailed his life which he felt contained more misstatements and false quotations than they contain true facts so he undertook this autobiography to set the record straight.


The book contains a collection of private letters from Harry to Bess Truman that were only made available to the public in March 1983 after Bess Truman’s death. Most of the letters cover Truman’s early life.


The book contains previously unpublished letters that Harry Truman wrote to different people. Also included are other writings such as high school essays, and family letters.


The book is the first of a two volume set of memoirs provided by President Truman in an attempt to accurately record the significant events of his administration. This first volume covers the year 1945 when he first assumed the mantle of the Presidency. He wanted to put down the events as he saw them to help inform people of the circumstances under which he made certain decisions and to set out the facts for all to know.
The book is the second of a two volume set of memoirs provided by President Truman in an attempt to accurately record the significant events of his administration. This second volume covers the years from 1946 to his departure from the Presidency in 1953. He wanted to put down the events as he saw them to help inform people of the circumstances under which he made certain decisions and to set out the facts for all to know.

The book contains the private papers of Harry S. Truman, in and out of the White House, beginning in 1945 and ending in November 1971, a few months before his death.

The book contains most of the public messages and statements of the President of the United States that were released by the White House during the period April 12-December 31, 1945.

The book contains most of the public messages and statement of the President of the United States that were released by the White House during 1946.

The book contains most of the public messages and statements of the President of the United States that were released by the White House during 1947.

The book contains most of the public messages and statements of the President of the United States that were released by the White House during 1948.

The book contains most of the public messages and statements of the President of the United States that were released by the White House during 1949.
The book contains most of the public messages and statements of the President of the United States that were released by the White House during 1949.


The book contains most of the public messages and statement of the 33d President of the United States that were released by the White House during 1950.


The book contains most of the public messages and statement of the 33d President of the United States that were released by the White House during 1951.


The book contains most of the public messages and statement of the 33d President of the United States that were released by the White House during the period January 1, 1952-January 20, 1953.


The book provides selected quotes by Harry S. Truman broken into general categories and covering such subjects as politics, civil rights, nuclear energy and war. The quotes sources are public speeches and letters and the quotes were selected to showcase Truman’s down home wisdom and humor.


The book provides a portrait of Harry S. Truman by his daughter. It encompasses the full sweep of his life and offers a rare inside view of the minds, the personalities, and the politics behind some of the most awesome and fateful acts of the 20th century.


The book is an English language edition of the famous book that established Clausewitz as a great military philosopher. The book contains such concepts as the Fog of War, Friction, Centers
of Gravity, the Unpredictability of War, Mass and the relationship between political objectives and the military.


The book is another English language translation of Clausewitz’s famous work.


The book provides a concise study of the period from April to August 1945 and attempts to provide a general history of Japan’s attempt to surrender and the United States’ decision to drop the atomic bombs.


The book presents the case that Truman had other options for ending the war quickly. However, these other options had major flaws which made the use of nuclear weapons an easy and obvious decision for Truman. The author also takes issue with the idea that Truman was trying frighten the Soviet Union rather than end the war.


The book brings together political leaders and scholars to examine Truman’s national security legacy. The subjects covered are NATO, the United Nations, foreign aid, integration of the armed forces, the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine.


GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS AND PERSONAL PAPERS


Recommends that a council be appointed consisting of the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and the Chainman of the Atomic energy Commission to deal with super bomb.

The memorandum presents the committee chairman’s position that the United States should build the super or thermonuclear bomb only because the Russians may build one. He also felt that Truman should appear before United Nations try to pressure the Russians to stop efforts to build the bomb.

Congress of the United States Joint Committee on Atomic Energy memorandum. General Advisory Committee Advising against the Super Bomb (Declassified). Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, November 1, 1949.

The memorandum said that in spite of General Advisory Committee advising against the super bomb the recommendation to continue research would receive unanimous support.

Congress of the United States Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. Some Comments on Tactical Atomic Weapons (Declassified). Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, August 15, 1951.

The memorandum discussed how the introduction of tactical nuclear weapons would revolutionize land warfare.


The memorandum was a summary of several major newspapers and periodicals stories favorable to the Acheson-Lilienthal Report.

Florida Times Union. Atomic Energy Planning Gaining Momentum. Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, March 30, 1946.

The newspaper article discussed the pros and cons of placing nuclear energy under international control. The article supported the idea of the United States controlling nuclear power.

General Advisory Committee to the United States Atomic Energy Commission. Memorandum for the President (Declassified). Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, December 14, 1950.

A summary of the growth of the United State’s nuclear industry was presented in the memorandum. A point highlighted was that the field of nuclear energy had matured to point that the peaceful use of the atom had come into its own.

Joint Chiefs of Staff Evaluation Board for Operation Crossroads. The Evaluation of the Atomic Bomb as a Military Weapon (Declassified). Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, 30 June 1947.
This report analyzes the effects of the atomic bomb and its use as a military weapon of mass destruction. The report describes the atomic bomb as the ultimate horror in war, able to nullify any nation's military effort and depopulate vast areas of the earth's surface but one which is a necessary evil until such time as a peace can be established and maintained through international cooperation based upon agreement and understanding.


The article was supportive of placing nuclear energy under United Nations control. However, the article questioned whether that idea was possible given the political climate in the nation.


The concepts agreed upon included the use of atomic weapons, atomic weapons stockpile custody, military nuclear weapon requirements, and classification data.


The memorandum discussed possible courses of action in the event of war with Russia and the Department of Defense’s perceived need to control the weapons needed for contingency plans.

National Security Council memorandum. Increased Production of Fissionable Material (Declassified). Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, August 3, 1950.
The memorandum discusses the need for a study to examine the impact of increasing the production of fissionable material.

National Security Council memorandum. Memorandum for the President (Declassified). Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, October 2, 1950.

The subject of the memorandum was the increasing the production of fissionable material.


National Security Council memorandum. Minutes of the 75th meeting of the National Security Council (Declassified). Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, December 14, 1950.

The memorandum discussed approval of National Security Council draft report NSC 68/3.

National Security Council memorandum. Minutes of the 77th meeting of the National Security Council (Declassified). Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, January 4, 1951.

The memorandum presented an update on the Korean situation by General Bradley and possible courses of action against China using conventional weapons.


Subject of the memorandum was the best time to release information on nuclear tests.


The memorandum discussed accelerating the mobilization efforts within the United States and decreasing support to NATO. The support to NATO would stress air power augmented with nuclear weapons.

National Security Council memorandum. United States Courses of Action with Respect to Korea. Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, 15 November 1950.

Memorandum discussed possible options to use in Korea, none referred to the use of nuclear bombs.
National Security Council memorandum to the President. Report on the scale and effort required to increase production of fissionable material during the immediate future (Declassified). Independence, MO: President's Secretary's Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, 2 October 1950.

This report deals mainly with the production of plutonium and uranium 235 and recommends a program to be immediately implemented.

National Security Council report. Results of Conversations Between the President and the British Prime Minister (Declassified). Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, December 12, 1950.

Within the report, there is a statement that Truman told the Prime Minister the United States would not use nuclear weapons in Korea.

National Security Council report. Terror and the Terror Weapons. Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Atomic File; Truman Library.

This report discusses the effects that nuclear weapons have in terrorizing a population.


This report responded to a request by the President for an evaluation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff proposal to accelerate the atomic energy program. After an in-depth analysis, the committee recommended approval of the initiative.


This report provided a detailed account of the destruction caused by the two nuclear weapons to include estimated wounded and dead.


This was an extract from the Pacific War report in summary form of the destruction caused by the two nuclear weapons.

Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. View of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Unclassified). Independence, MO: President's Secretary's Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, November 9, 1950.
The memorandum contains recommended courses of action against the Chinese and all the
courses of action used conventional weapons. The Chiefs of Staff recommended the withdrawal
of United Nations forces from Korea should the Russians threaten a world war.

Providence Journal. *World Atom Control*. Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files,
Truman Papers; Truman Library, March 31, 1946.

The article was favorable to placing nuclear energy under United Nations control.

Secretary of Defense memorandum. *Operation Windstorm (Declassified)*. Independence, MO:
President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, May 21, 1951.

The memorandum requested that the President approve the moving the nuclear test location
from Amchitka Island to the United States. The main reason for the request was to save money.

Secretary of State, United States Department of State memorandum. *Memorandum of
Conversation with Under Secretary Lovett (Declassified)*. Independence, MO: Papers of
Dean Acheson; Truman Library, 2 December 1950.

The memorandum discussed the fact that Mr. Baruch believed that the atomic bomb should be
used in Korea. Furthermore it suggested that when the President meet with Mr. Attlee he should
inform him that the bomb might be used in order to acquire greater support to push for a
diplomatic solution.

Secretary of State, United States Department of State. *Report to the National Security
Council on Results of Conversations Between the President and the British Prime
Minister*. Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library
12 December 1950.

Secretary of War. Office of the United States War Department memorandum. *Relations with
Russia (Declassified)*. Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers;
Truman Library, September 11, 1945.

The memorandum was Stimson’s appeal to Truman to start talks with the Russians and
establish international control of nuclear energy. Stimson was not hopeful but believed the
attempt should be made for the sake of humanity.

Senate Special Committee on Atomic Energy. *Atomic Energy Act of 1946. Hearings on S.
1946.

Special Committee of the National Security Council on Atomic Energy. *Memorandum for the
President (Declassified)*. Independence, MO: President's Secretary's Files, Truman Papers;
Truman Library, September 10, 1952.
A list of concepts agreed upon by the committee concerning nuclear weapons. A point of interest was that the Department of Defense should be responsible for stockpiling nuclear weapons outside the United States.


Truman, Harry S. *Address of the President at the Keel Laying of the First Atomic Energy Submarine*. Independence, MO: David D. Lloyd Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, June 14, 1952.

During the address Truman talks about the importance of nuclear energy in peaceful endeavors.


Truman’s response to Mrs. Klein’s question about his decision to drop the atomic bomb on the Japanese during World War Two. Truman said he never worried about the decision because it shortened the war and saved lives.

Truman, Harry S. *Memorandum Attention: M. Lilienthal (Declassified)*. Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, January 31, 1950.

Truman approved polices to study the concept of building a thermonuclear bomb and directed the Secretaries of State and Defense to review strategic plans. This memorandum was in response to the Russians working to build their own thermonuclear bomb.

Truman, Harry S. *Memorandum to Dean Acheson*. Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, May 7, 1946.

The memorandum talks about how Robert Oppenheimer came to Truman’s office and acted like a crybaby, bemoaning the blood on their hands because of the nuclear bomb.

Truman, Harry S. *Personal Diary Entry 25 July 1945*. Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, 25 July 1945.

The diary entry discussed a successful nuclear test and how the bomb should only be used on a military targets.


Page five of the draft memoirs included a passage about the atomic bombs that were dropped on Japan and how he viewed them as just another military weapon.

Under Secretary of State, United States Department of State. *Memorandum for the President (Declassified)*. Independence, MO: President's Secretary's Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, December 14, 1950.

The memorandum was a warning to Truman that at the next press conference the Washington Post was going to ask whether the United States had promised the United Kingdom the atomic bomb would not be used without first conferring with allies.


The minutes of a National Security Council meeting concerning the thermonuclear bomb. The key objective was getting a decision from the President to move the project from the testing stage to the production stage.


A memorandum from the commissioner agreeing with Truman’s comment in his farewell speech that atomic war was totally unthinkable for rational men.

United States Bureau of the Budget memorandum. *Atomic Warfare and the B-36 Procurement Program (Declassified)*. Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, April 5, 1949.

The memorandum discussed buying B-36s to support the military plan of using nuclear weapons on seventy Russian cities upon the outbreak of war.


The memorandum discussed the possibility of transferring nuclear material to the military. It ended up recommending that atomic weapons remain under the control of the civilian agency.

United States Cabinet memorandum. *Atomic Bomb (Declassified)*. Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, September 21, 1945.

The memorandum contained the minutes from a cabinet meeting to discuss releasing classified atomic information to the world.
The memorandum contained terms of reference for use in the event that Russia developed a thermonuclear bomb in the immediate future.

The memorandum contains comments by George Kennan that the United State should talk to the Russians about ending the Korean War. However, the United States should speak from a position of strength and perhaps threaten to spread the war to China.

Although the memorandum was undated, it contained references to a 3 December 1950 conversation. The document serves as a record of the conversation. The items discussed include the problems in Korea and possible responses.

A joint report from the War and Navy Departments proposing a test of nuclear weapons on naval ships.

The press release contained the President’s statement that an atomic bomb had just exploded on Hiroshima.

The press release contained comments downplaying Truman statement that he was considering using nuclear weapons in Korea.

PERIODICALS

The author attacks Keegan and historians critical of Clausewitz. His defense relies heavily on the idea that the critics have failed to study Clausewitz sufficiently to understand his concepts.


This article contended that some believe President Truman was closer to using nuclear weapons in Korea than President Eisenhower.

Fleming, Bruce. “Can Reading Clausewitz Save Us from Future Mistakes?” *Parameters: War College Quarterly* (Spring 2004): 62-76.

The article argues that the reason Clausewitz is so hard to understand is that his writings are too ambiguous.


The article dealt with the evolution of the principles of war within the United States’ military. Case in point was the development of a new level of principles called the principle of operations. These principles worked in a manner similar to the classic principles of war but at the lower operational and tactical levels.


The article contends that the most important theorist about war for civilian and military leaders remains Carl von Clausewitz. His principles of war have shaped Western civilizational’s understanding of war since their publication. The author asserts that they are as valid today as when Clausewitz wrote them.


The article discussed the fact that Cold war issues of American vulnerability to the Soviets came more from Truman’s rhetoric than any other source.


The article discussed the various deployments of nuclear weapons by the United States since 1945.
END NOTES


6 Ibid.,102-103.


8 Clausewitz, ed. Anatol Rapoport, 402.

9 Ibid., 401-410.


11 Preston, 239-240.


15 Preston, 239.

16 Clausewitz, ed. Anatol Rapoport, 77.

17 Bruce Fleming, “Can Reading Clausewitz Save Us from Future Mistakes?” Parameters: War College Quarterly, (Spring 2004), 62-76.


19 Ibid., 153.


22 Ibid., 23.


30 Hillman, 81.

31 Ibid., 97-106.


34 Ibid., 115.


36 Ibid., 371.


39 McCullough, 528.


42 Ibid., 421.


44 Hamby, 331-332.

46 Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey: The Effects of the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Declassified)*, (Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, 19 June 1946) 37.

47 Ibid., 22.

48 Ibid., 24.

49 Ibid., 25.


51 Hamby, 324-325.


53 McCullough, 390-391.


55 Ibid., 392.

56 McCullough, 392-393


59 Ibid., 61.


61 Walker, 61.


63 Ibid., 531.


65 McCullough, 443.

66 Walker, 4.

67 Ibid., 66.

68 Ibid., 62.
69 McCullough, 244.

70 Hamby, 494-495.

71 Ibid., 352.

72 Isaacson, 325.

73 Hamby, 350-351.


76 Ibid., 11.


78 Ibid., 11.

79 Hamby, 350.

80 Ibid., 11.


83 Hamby, 368-369.


86 Ibid., 73.

87 McCullough, 545.


89 Ibid., 179.


91 Harry S. Truman, Off The Record, 344.

93 Melvyn P. Leffler, A Preponderance of Power National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press 1992), 217.

94 Raymond P. Ojserkis, Beginning of the Cold War Arms Race: The Truman Administration and the U.S. Arms Build-Up (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 34.


96 McCullough, 630-631.

97 Hamby, 445.

98 Bailey, 819-822.

99 McCoy, 229.

100 Hamby, 537.


102 Watson, 57.


106 Ibid.

107 McCoy, 245.

108 Secretary of State, Report to the National Security Council on Results of Conversations Between the President and the British Prime Minister (Truman Library: File B. President's Secretary's Files: Truman Papers; 12 December 1950).


Norris, 29; Dingman, 72; Leffler, 406.


Ibid., 306.

Leffler, 406.


Harry S. Truman, *Off The Record*, 304

Hamby, 400; Ojserkis, 143.

United States Bureau of the Budget, memorandum *Atomic Warfare and the B-36 Procurement Program (Declassified)* (Independence, MO: President's Secretary's Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, 5 April 1949).


Ojserkis, 12.

Harry S. Truman, *Address of the President at the Keel Laying of the First Atomic Energy Submarine* (Independence, MO: David D. Lloyd Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, June 14, 1952).


Ojserkis, 94.

McCoy, 289.

Hamby, 527.
McCoy, 273.


Gaddis, 62.


Ibid., 419.

Harry S. Truman, *Letter to Mrs. Haydon Klein, Jr.* (Independence, MO: President’s Secretary’s Files, Truman Papers; Truman Library, 4 August 1964).

Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Strategic Bombing Survey*, 37.


Watson, 56.

Hamby, 617.


Leffler, 327.


McCullough, 326.

Ibid., 440-445.

Ibid., 670.

Ferrell, *A Life*, 344.

Hamby, 325.

Ibid., 638.

Ibid., 641.

153 Ibid.

154 Ibid., 193.

155 Gaddis, 55.

156 Ibid., 55-58