Tentative chronology of part played by scientists in decision
to use the bomb against Japan

1. Early 1944 "Everyone took for granted that the new bombs
would be used in Europe if they were ready in
time." (Compton, p. 211; for complete refer-
ences see attached bibliography)

2. Early 1944 The men on the metallurgical project beginning
to think about the future of atomic energy.
(Compton, p. 231)

3. Early 1944 N.B. Myrth presented A.H. Compton with an
outline of major questions relating to future
of atomic energy. (Compton, p. 232)

4. Summer, 1944 At request of Metallurgical Project Council
the Jeffries Committee was appointed by Com-
ton to study "postwar work on nuclearists.
(Compton, p. 235)

5. Autumn, 1944 The Tolman Committee was appointed by Gen.
Groves to look into future possibilities of
atomic energy. Formed background for much of
work of Interim Committee in spring of 1945.
(Compton, p. 235)

6. Nov. 10, 1944 Jeffries Report, "Nucleonics Prospects,
was submitted to Compton with a covering
letter (unpublished) signed by Enrico Fermi,
James Franck, T.B. Heppen, and Jeffries,
chairman, A.H. Compton, secretary, R.S.
Stone, and C.A. Thomas.

7. Dec. 28, 1944 Tolman Committee handed its report to Gen.
Groves on future of atomic energy (Compton,
p. 235)

8. Early 1945 Conversations between Groves and A.H. Compton
on use of bomb. Groves brings to Stimson's
attribution the concern of scientists about
immediate uses and long-term planning. (Compton,
p. 235)

9. March, 1945 Stimson prepares memo. for Roosevelt (Stilb
"memo")
10. April 1945 Compton appointed a committee of three to inform him of the bomb. (Stimson and Daniels).

11. Spring 1945 Stimson tells Truman briefly about new bomb. (Compton, p. 231)

12. April 1945 Stimson tells Truman briefly about a new weapon. (Truman, p. 13)

13. April 15, 1945 Stimson tells Truman briefly about new bomb. (Truman, p. 13)

14. April 20, 1945 Stimson discusses the bomb with Truman. (Stimson & Bundy, 1953)

15. April 25, 1945 Stimson discusses with Truman the relation of the bomb to foreign policy and presents a memorandum discussing security and international control. (Truman, pp. 85 and 87; Stimson & Bundy, 1953)

16. April 25, 1945 Appointment of Interim Committee by Truman for recommending action to the executive and legislative branches. (Stimson "Decision"

17. May 26, 1945 Stimson presents his March memo (which had not reached Roosevelt before his death) to the Interim Committee. (Stimson, "Memo")

18. May 31, 1945 Interim Committee discusses use of the bomb. (Stimson, "Memo")

19. June 1, 1945 Interim Committee after consultations with Scientific Panel unanimously decided: 1) that the bomb should be used against Japan as soon as possible. 2) dual target, military and other buildings; 3) should be used without prior warning. (Stimson, "Decision")
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20. June 1, 1945  Conclusions of Int. Com. & Sc. Pan. brought to Truman by Stimson. (Truman, p. 419)
   Ralph Bard later changed his views and dissented from recommendation No. 3 of the June 1st report. (Stimson, "Decision")

21. June, 1945  "Eventually, in June, 1945, the suggestions of these various subcommittees (of the Jeffries Committee) were collected into a combined report for the use of the Interim Committee and its successors." (Compton, p. 220)

22. About June 9, 1945  Scientific panel to Interim Committee (Lawrence, Fermi, Oppenheimer, and A. H. Compton) to prepare report on possible non-military demonstration. (Compton, p. 240)

23. June, 1945  Hearing that Truman was consulting Stimson about use of the bomb, Franck "and certain members of his committee hastened to draft their conclusions." (Compton, p. 235)

24. June 11, 1945  Franck report presented to Stimson; drawn up by committee of 3 physicists, 3 chemists, and 1 biologist; "dispatched to Washington" six days before explosion. (Editorial, Bull. Am. Sci., May, 1946); cf. Compton, p. 236
   Which states that Franck was in Washington, but Stimson was away and report was left for him with Geo. L. Harrison, his assistant.

25. June 11-16, 1945  Interim Committee and its scientific panel consider the Franck report (Stimson states, "The Interim Committee and the Scientific Panel also served as a channel through which suggestions from other scientists...were forwarded to me and to the President. Among the suggestions thus forwarded was one memorandum which questioned using the bomb at all against the enemy." Stimson, "Decision")

26. June 16, 1945  Scientific Panel reports to Interim Committee that they can propose no technical demonstration likely to end war and see no alternative to direct military use. (Stimson, "Decision")
27. 1945
Sillard circulates petitions in Chicago; urges others to do so in Oak Ridge and Los Alamos, requesting that the atomic bomb should not be used in World War II.
(Compton, p. 241)

28. see below
Sillard petition in original form gets almost no support. Sillard turns revised petition over to Compton for delivery to Washington, indicating that it was signed by 67 scientists residing in Chicago.
(Compton, pp. 241-242) (*Sillard says about 65 signatures.*

29.
Counter-petitions to Sillard's circulated at Chicago and Oak Ridge.
(Compton, p. 241-242)

30. July 2, 1945
Stimson sends memo to Truman discussing issue of strong warning to Japan of destruction if she does not surrender. (Bomb not specifically mentioned 1) because of secrecy and 2) because not yet tested.
(Stimson "Declaration")

31. July 6, 1945
President's party, including Byrnes but not Stimson, leaves Washington for Potsdam (this and some of the following items are included as relevant because of the question of what key officials were in Washington to receive the opinions of scientists that were expressed after this date.)

32. July 12, 1945
Fall taken in Met Lab at Chicago.
(Compton & Daniels)

33. July 15, 1945
Truman, Byrnes and others arrive in Berlin; greeted by Stimson at airport. (Truman, p. 339; on date of Stimson's arrival cf. also #35.)

34. July 16, 1945
Bomb successfully tested at Alamogordo.

35. July 16, 1945
News of test flashed to Truman at Potsdam by Stimson. (Truman, p. 445; cf. Byrnes' statement, p. 266, that it took several days for de-classing. Stimson & Bunky, II p. 673, says word of test was received at Potsdam on July 15th.)

36. July 17, 1945
Stimson flew to Potsdam and gave Truman full details of test.
(Truman, p. 445)

36-a July 17, 1945
Revised Sillard petition.-Sillard says about 67 signatures.
37. July 17 to 24, 1945
Truman makes the decision to use the bomb against Japan when it is ready for delivery unless surrender has taken place. Truman does not date this decision exactly, but says as soon as he received details of test from Stimson on July 17th he called together chiefs of staff to review military strategy in light of successful test. (p. 415) Truman also says when he talked with Churchill he favored use of bomb (p. 419) Compton (p. 245) says that Truman later told him that it was at that meeting with the Joint Chiefs that he gave his “final assent” to use of bomb.

38. July 17, 1945
As soon as Stimson arrived in Potsdam, (Truman here uses the date given in #36) Truman called in Byrnes, Leahy, Marshall, Gen. Arnold and Adm. King; they reviewed military strategy in light of the successful test. (Truman, pp. 419-21)

39. July 23, 1945
Col. Nicholas asks Compton at Oak Ridge for results of the poll at the Met. Lab. C. wrote out a message summarizing the results of the “votes and petitions” as objectively as he could. An hour later Nicholas came back wanting to know what C. himself thought; gave opinion favoring use. (Compton, p. 245)

40. July 24, 1945
The War Department “was given orders” to instruct Gen. Spaatz that first bomb would be dropped as soon after August 3rd as weather permits. Truman told Stimson that order to Spaatz would stand unless Truman notified him of favorable Japanese reply. (Truman, pp. 420-21)

41. July 24, 1945
Truman tells Stalin of “new weapon of unusual destructive force.” (Truman, p. 416)

42. July 26, 1945
Allies broadcast demand that Japan surrender or face destruction.

43. July 28, 1945
Frasier of Japan rejects Potsdam ultimatum as unworthy of notice. (Stimson, “Decision”; Truman, p. 421)
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4. Between decision to use bomb and leaving Potsdam.

5. August 2, 1945. Truman leaves Potsdam; flies to England; home by ship. (Truman, pp. 405, 421, ff.)

6. August 3, 1945. 1st day scheduled for dropping bomb; weather permitting. (Truman, p. 421.)


8. August 8, 1945. Molotov informed Amb. Harriman in Moscow that Russia would consider itself at war with Japan as of Aug. 9th. Truman received this news on August 8th and immediately announced it at press conference. (Truman, p. 432)

9. August 9, 1945. Nagasaki bombed. ("We gave the Japanese three days in which to make up their minds to surrender, and the bombing would have been held off another two days had weather permitted." Truman, p. 436)

10. August 10, 1945. Japanese offer surrender on Potsdam terms but with reservations about sovereignty of emperor. (Stimson, "Decision")