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Recent Literature on Truman's Atomic Bomb Decision: A Search for Middle Ground

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In a poll conducted in 1999, the Newseum, a museum of the news media in Arlington, Virginia, asked a panel of sixty-seven American journalists to rank the top one hundred stories of the twentieth century. The event that

placed first in the survey of “prominent reporters, editors, broadcasters, photographers, and cartoonists” was the atomic bombing of Japan in 1945; its closest competitors were the landing on the moon, the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the first successful flight by the Wright brothers.¹ In accordance with the importance that the panel of journalists assigned to the use of atomic bombs, the subject has, over the period of nearly six decades, received a great deal of attention from scholars. It has also produced bitter and highly polarized controversy. The publication of an enormous body of literature has failed to resolve the...

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