democracies are impatient with long-lasting burdens—none more so than America."

And there may be the rub, says Krauthammer. How long the "unipolar era" lasts "will be decided at home. It will depend largely on whether it is welcomed by Americans or seen as a burden to be shed. . . . The choice is ours. To impiously paraphrase Benjamin Franklin: History has given you an empire, if you will keep it."

Hiroshima Revisited

"'A Score of Bloody Okinawas and Iwo Jimas': President Truman and Casualty Estimates for the Invasion of Japan" by D. M. Giangreco, in *Pacific Historical Review* (Feb. 2003), 487 Cramer Hall, Portland State Univ., Portland, Ore. 97207–0751.

Is an end finally in sight to the controversy over the motivation behind President Harry Truman's decision to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima in August 1945?

Looking back on that fateful decision, Truman said he had been advised that an invasion of Japan might mean up to one million Americans dead or wounded. Revisionist historians have scornfully dismissed that and similar statements as ex post facto rationalizations, unsupported by archival evidence. They charge that Truman's decision was based on a combination of racism and crass strategic calculation—an assertion that caused a national controversy in 1995 when curators at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum planned to incorporate it into a special exhibit on the *Enola Gay*. But a wealth of documentary evidence supporting Truman's assertion has recently been discovered at the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri, reports Giangreco, an editor at *Military Review*.

It's long been known that former president Herbert Hoover wrote a memo for Truman in May 1945, based on secret Pentagon briefings, warning that an invasion could result in 500,000 to one million American deaths. Those figures implied total casualties of two to five million. Historian Barton J. Bernstein has maintained that there's no proof Truman ever saw the memo.

The newly unearthed documents show that the president not only read the memo, says Giangreco, but "ordered his senior advisers each to prepare a written analysis before coming in to discuss it face to face. None of these civilian advisers batted an eye at the casualty estimate."

At a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on June 18, Truman heard the participants come at the question another way—by examining the ratios of Americans to Japanese killed in recent operations (1 to 2 for the Okinawa campaign, for example). They used these ratios, Giangreco says, to suggest "how battle casualties from the much larger Japanese and U.S. forces involved in the first of the two lengthy invasion operations on Japanese soil might play out."

Admiral William Leahy, Truman's chief of staff, said the U.S. casualty rate on Okinawa had been 35 percent, and "that would give a good estimate of the casualties

New evidence supports the view that President Harry S. Truman dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima after he was told that up to one million Americans would die in an invasion.

to be expected" in the opening invasion of the southernmost Home Island, Kyushu. None of the others at the meeting disputed Leahy's view. General George C. Marshall, army chief of staff, reported that 766,700 U.S. troops (not counting replacements for losses) would be needed during the first 45 days of the invasion. With the war then projected to last through 1946, the longer-term implications were clear to Truman and the others present: Unless some means other than invasion were found to end the war, hundreds of thousands of Americans would die.

Economics, Labor & Business

Is Global Inequality Rising?

"Inequality Among World Citizens: 1820–1992" by François Bourguignon and Christian Morrisson, in *The American Economic Review* (Sept. 2002), 2014 Broadway, Ste. 305, Nashville, Tenn. 37203.

There's a growing effort among economists to measure global economic inequality, but it's been hampered by the scarcity of reliable data and other factors. Bourguignon and Morrisson say there's another problem: Economists have, in effect, been barking up the wrong tree.

It doesn't make much sense, they argue, to look at the problem strictly in terms of inequality among countries, as most other economists have done. (Bourguignon is an economist at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, Morrisson at the Sorbonne.) Pretending that everybody in, say, Costa Rica, takes in the nation's median income of $4,040 doesn't give a very accurate picture of the world. So the two men set out to measure trends in inequality over the long term—from 1820 to 1992—by incorporating measures of inequality *within* countries as well as among them. Their results are a kind of bad-news, good-news package: Earlier studies "clearly" underestimated the amount of global inequality in the past, yet it appears that the long-term rise in inequality "almost leveled off" around 1950.

From 1820 to 1950, according to the authors, global economic inequality increased almost continuously, though the pace slowed after World War I. Social scientists use something called the Gini coefficient to measure inequality; a Gini coefficient of 1.0 represents maximum inequality. The world's Gini coefficient grew from 0.5 in 1820 to 0.61 in 1914, and to 0.64 in 1950. By 1992, it had reached 0.657. This is a high degree of inequality—even today's more inegalitarian countries have Gini coefficients below 0.6, the authors note. (However, the post-1950 rise is partly offset by positive developments in other income indicators: Between 1980 and 1992, for example, the poorest of the poor actually increased their share of the world's total income for the first time since 1820.)

Rising global inequality after 1820 did not mean that the poor were getting poorer. On the contrary, say Bourguignon and Morrisson, "the extreme poverty headcount fell from 84 percent of the world population in 1820 to 24 percent in 1992." The rich simply got richer faster.

The authors' biggest innovation comes in identifying the sources of inequality. In 1820, within-country inequality accounted for 80 percent of the world's inequality. In other words, there wasn't a great rich-poor disparity among countries, but there was *within* each country. By 1950, however, within-country inequality accounted for only 40 percent of the global total.

What happened? Through 1950, the "dominant" drag on equalization was Asia's slow economic growth, particularly in China and India, the two demographic giants. Asia's economies grew "some 4.5 times slower than the world average and 6 times slower than the average for the Western European region, including its offshoots." (It's an interesting illustration of the perils of such studies that Asia's "little dragons," by jumping so far and so fast after World War II, actually contributed to an *increase* in at least one measure of global inequality.)

Remarkably, there doesn't seem to be much connection between population growth and global inequality. One reason is that the relative size of regional populations hasn't changed that much. And to the degree that, say, poverty-stricken Africa's population has grown rapidly