

**The Cruel Savior:**

The Necessary Reasons to Drop the Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki

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November 16, 2020

On that fateful morning, Hiroshima had been woken by several air raid sirens, which had all proved to be false. So, despite the active siren, when the Enola Gay reached Hiroshima around eight o'clock, no one took it seriously. "In a blinding flash, and with temperatures as hot as the sun, the bomb detonated." It destroyed a five-mile radius, killed almost 100,000 people, and later sickened more than tens of thousands of Japanese citizens (Porter). After the mission, Pilot Paul Tibbets, one of the members on the Enola Gay, stated that they were 10 miles away when the blast went off but still felt the shockwaves. When they looked back on the spot where the little boy was dropped, all they saw was an enormous mushroom cloud that turned the day into dusk (Porter).

Since the attack on Pearl Harbor four years earlier, Japan had expressed their unwillingness to surrender in desperate situations. By 1945, Japan's allies had either been defeated or surrendered. The Japanese military believed that continuing the war against the United States on the Pacific side would grant them a better surrender term. Ultimately, the United States' decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan was not only the most effective way of ending the war, but also it reduced the number of unnecessary deaths on both sides.

Initially, the United States . The United States had just experienced one of the most significant economic depressions in history, and the entire country was still trying to stabilize the economy by exporting weapons and other resources to European allies. This all changed on December 7th, 1941.

On that day that would "live in infamy," "183 aircraft of the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked the United States Naval base at Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu, Hawaii" ("What Happened At Pearl Harbor?"). Within three hours, the attack killed about 2,500 Americans and destroyed over 200 United States aircraft and warships. This invasion left the United States no

other option but to declare war on Japan. This was shortly followed by a declaration of war against the other Axis forces--Germany and Italy. Four long years later, the war was reaching its conclusion. "The Allied powers had already defeated Germany in Europe. Japan, however, vowed to fight to the bitter end in the Pacific, despite clear indications (as early as 1944) that they had little chance of winning" ("Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki"). To reduce as many casualties as possible, the United States government and military had decided to drop an atomic bomb on Japan's continent and hoped to end the war immediately.

On August 6th, 1945, the United States dropped the first atomic bomb, the Little Boy, on Hiroshima, and over a hundred thousand citizens were killed immediately. Nonetheless, the deaths caused by the atomic bomb did not seem to stop the Japanese army's invasion on the Pacific side. A data file from the Japanese military during WWII shows that "the Imperial Japanese Army never contemplated surrender" ("Was the U.S. Justified in Dropping Atomic Bombs"). As the Japanese government forced all men to fight to their death since the beginning of the war, there were even civilians "mobilized and forced to fight with bamboo spears and satchel charges to act as suicide bombers against Allied tanks," and the Japanese documents indicated that the government and army were prepared to accept up to 28 million civilian deaths during the war ("Was the U.S. Justified in Dropping Atomic Bombs"). This data file suggests that the deaths caused by the first atomic bomb were nowhere close to the Japanese government's estimation; in other words, the number of deaths was still acceptable.

On the citizens' side, a Japanese reporter who lived in Akiota (a city next to Hiroshima) had stated that, after the dropping of the first atomic bomb, "the bulk of the Japanese people did not consider themselves beaten; in fact, they believed they were winning despite the terrible punishment they had taken" (Compton). The Japanese government, the army, and its people were

still trying to fight against the United States, believing that they had a chance of winning the war on the Pacific side. As a response to Japan's intransigence, President Harry S Truman stated: "All a commander or political leader can hope to assess is whether a particular course of action is likely to reduce the loss of life. Faced with the Japanese refusal to surrender, we had little choice" ("Was the U.S. Justified in Dropping Atomic Bombs"). Japan's eagerness to fight left the United States' military and President Truman with no option but to drop the second atomic bomb.

The second atomic bomb, the Fat Man, was dropped on August 9th, and there were two main reasons why the United States had chosen Nagasaki as the location of dropping. First, Nagasaki was one of the cities with fewer citizens in 1945. Second, since Nagasaki is a city with basin terrain, its geographic environment would reduce the radiation impacts by slowing the radiation from spreading. Thus, it is evident that the purpose of the second bomb was to cause fewer casualties. Besides, according to the United States government's data, the purpose of dropping Fat Man was to convey the message: "the first atomic bomb was not an isolated weapon, and there were others to follow. With the dread prospect of a deluge of these terrible bombs and no possibility of preventing them, the argument for surrender was made convincing" (Compton).

After the second atomic bomb, conflicts occurred between the Japanese military and civilian leaders. The Japanese government's data shows that the civilian leaders in Japan, who were closest to the emperor, were trying to surrender by arguing that the safety of the emperor should be prioritized; on the other hand, "the military argued that Japan could convince the Soviet Union to mediate on its behalf for better surrender terms than unconditional surrender and therefore should continue the war until that was achieved" ("Was the U.S. Justified in

Dropping Atomic Bombs”). This piece of information suggests that the Japanese army, despite experiencing two devastating bombs, was not planning on surrendering but to keep fighting in order to earn better surrender terms. In addition, the citizens in Japan were not planning on surrendering as well. The Japanese military, trying to gain the government’s allowance to keep fighting, had surveyed Japanese citizens. The survey had shown that “two atomic bombs did not have much immediate effect on the common people far from the two bombed cities; they knew little or nothing of it” (Compton). However, the two devastating bombs had stunned Emperor Hirohito, who decided not to keep watching any of his citizens die or suffer. On August 11th, two days after the dropping of Fat Man, Emperor Hirohito spoke to the entire Japanese nation “via a recorded radio broadcast...that the military should no longer keep on fighting nor causing any unnecessary deaths, but to end this war and cease hostilities” (Allen).

Despite causing a high amount of deaths with the two atomic bombs, the Little Boy and Fat Man were not only necessary for ending World War II but also reduced casualties in a significant amount. After the United States dropped the first atomic bomb, the Japanese generals “were reluctant to surrender. They were willing to allow 20 million more Japanese to die on the home islands to fight an allied invasion. The atomic bomb only killed about 150,000” (Allen). The difference between the two numbers, 20 million and 250,000, indirectly indicates that Japan planned not to surrender despite the dreadful punishment of the first atomic bomb.

Furthermore, even after the second atomic bomb was dropped, Okada Keisuke, one of the most respected Japanese generals during WWII, gave a speech to the remaining Japanese soldiers. He stated, “Japan would have kept on fighting until all Japanese were killed, but we would not have been defeated.”) This speech shows Japan is more likely to fight until their last man other than being disgraced by surrendering (Compton). Ultimately, an estimation from the

United States military shows, “while just over two hundred thousand people were killed in total by the atomic bombs, three hundred thousand to five hundred thousand Japanese people (many of whom were civilians) died or disappeared in Soviet captivity. Had the war continued, that number would have been much higher. Suppose Japan was to continue fighting against the United States. In that case, the estimated number of deaths is about thirty thousand per month,” in which the war is estimated to continue for over a year (“Was the U.S. Justified in Dropping Atomic Bombs”). According to the data above, it is reasonable to estimate that the number of deaths, if the war had continued, would surpass 300,000 after a year, which is already more than the deaths caused by the two atomic bombs.

One of the most famous Japanese emperors, Jimumu Temuwuh, once said: “There is no such thing as a bad person, only plenty of desperate situations that catch people up.” The two atomic bombs ended the second World War. However, historians and human rights activists argued for the past century that the two atomic bombs were not necessary for ending the war, and it only caused unnecessary casualties. However, according to the data released by the Japanese military, they would have fought until the last man because they do “not want to get disgraced by the lost” (Compton). Hence, in a tremendous irony, Little Boy and Fat Man were saviors that massively reduced the estimated number of deaths in a war estimated to lose over 400,000 human beings.

## Annotated Bibliography

Allen, Dirk Q. "[VOICES: Nonsense! Dropping the Atomic Bomb Was Not a War Crime.](#)" *Journal*, Journal News, 1 Sept. 2020. Accessed 26 Oct. 2020.

This source focuses on the topic "whether dropping an atomic bomb is a war crime," and its tone is relatively neutral. This source is really helpful for its providing thoughts of Japanese government, the Japanese emperor, and the Japanese military.

"[Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.](#)" *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 18 Nov. 2009. Accessed 6 Sept. 2020.

This source talks deeply about the history of WWII, especially the part when the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Japan. It will help me on my speech by providing historical evidence that would integrate my speech. Also, it provides introductory information to the Manhattan project, which is the scientific experiment that the U.S. had on developing the atomic bomb.

Compton, Karl T. "[If the Atomic Bomb Had Not Been Used.](#)" *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 19 Feb. 2018. Accessed 26 Oct. 2020.

This source briefly talks about the entire story of the bombing, and it provides a lot of information on the United States' perspective. It also talks about surveys and estimations researched by the United States government which is a helpful numeric source for my persuasive essay. Most importantly, it provides a Japanese Army officer's thoughts about the war and the bombing which will contribute to my understanding of the big picture.

Fisher, Richard. "[Can Nuclear War Be Morally Justified?](#)" *BBC Future*, BBC, 2020. Accessed 26 Oct. 2020.

This source doesn't only talk about the atomic bomb during WWII; instead, it talks about the overall impact that atomic bombs might bring and examines whether nuclear weapons should be morally justified or not. It also provides some perspectives from the United States and Japan, and stands on the Japanese side to tell the story.

Krieger, David. "[Were the Atomic Bombings Necessary?](#)" *Nuclear Age Peace Foundation*, 2 Apr. 2014. Accessed 26 Oct. 2020.

This source focused on the United States' perspective. Despite talking less about the reason why the bombs weren't necessary, it provides different well-known people's thoughts on the atomic bomb, such as Eisenhower, Szilard, and Albert Einstein. This source will highly contribute to my persuasive essay by providing reliable voices which will become parts of my textual evidence.

Porter, Tom. "[Hiroshima: Enola Gay Pilot Had No Regrets About Dropping First Atom Bomb.](#)" *Task & Purpose*, Task & Purpose, 6 Aug 2020. Accessed 7 Dec. 2020.

This source provides brief background information about the pilot who dropped the atomic bombs, and it focuses on the story of the bombing on the pilots' perspectives which contribute to my paper as an objective prospect and an interesting story to introduce. Also, it gives some minor information about the plane and the pilots' emotions which helps me further understand the story of the bombing.

"[Was the US Justified in Dropping Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the Second World War?](#)" *HistoryExtra*, 8 July 2020. Accessed 26 Oct. 2020.

This source provides many different perspectives and stories told by historians. The evidence includes photos and different perspectives from various parts of Japan, such as the government, the military, the civilian leaders, and the citizens themselves. Moreover, it analyzes whether the bombings are necessary from different reasons that led might to the bombing.

"[What Happened At Pearl Harbor?](#)" *Imperial War Museums*, 2008. Accessed 13 Nov. 2020.

This source provides a clear image and necessary information to understand the entire story of the Pearl Harbor Attack. It includes deaths, the number of established aircrafts on both sides, and the entire timeline of the story.