Necessity Of Dropping Atomic Bombs On Hiroshima And Nagasaki In 1945

Debate has always circulated around the use of nuclear warfare and how in war it can be seen as a justified source of use, however the devastation it can ultimately bring to our natural environment and eco system does arise the discussion of how ‘humane’ detonating atomic bombs are in the act of preventing further casualties of war. On August 6th and 9th, two atomic bombs were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan furthermore it is this leading argument that questions the necessity of such an act and if there could have indeed been an alternative outcome.

May 7th 1945 saw an end to the Nazi regime, with an unconditional surrender signed off by Gen. Alfred Jodl for the chief allied powers. Regardless of this, the Japanese still sought to continue the raging war that had surrounded the majority of the world for 5 years of anguish. After forcing the United States’ involvement in the war with the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbour naval base that took the lives of 2,403 sailors, soldiers and civilians , the USA saw it fit to use nuclear warfare as a means to retaliate and force the Japanese into unconditional surrender along with the Germans. President Harry S. Truman stated in a speech regarding the events that ‘We (US military forces) shall destroy their docks, their factories, and their communications’ as well as ‘completely destroy Japan’s power to make war’ (Truman,1945). The forcefulness and direct aim at potentially all sources that would supply the Japanese military force as well as the Japanese people presents the idea of if this was organised purely out of vengeance for Pearl harbour and as an arms race instead of the quest for’ long term maintained peace’. It is clear that as the last standing force against the chief allied countries (therefore having no long term substantial power themselves with zero allies and a nearly destroyed navy) that Japan would eventually come to a surrender themselves without the US pushing forward that decision with such a catastrophic choice.

Tradition plays a vital part in the ongoing refusal to end the war on the Japanese’s end. Looking further into teachings, traditions and beliefs we can take away the fact that many believed war as an act that could purify the self, the nation and ultimately the whole world. (Powers, 2014) It was this on going code of ethics in the samurai heritage that was known as ‘Bushido’ and can easily be seen as a major factor in why the US felt it to be a necessity in detonating such weapons of mass destruction – the war would not have ended with any other case scenario. This ideology and the understanding that for many Bushido was the way of dying almost justifies the weaponry to some degree and the humanity behind knowing that millions of lives were taken but ultimately saved through no US and Japanese deployments.

To this day, The United States of America remains the first country to manufacture nuclear weapons and the only country to have ever used them in combat. This not only asserts US dominance in some regard but also shows a lack of consideration for long term consequences of such an action that countries worldwide seem to share. Although the Japanese may have held onto their belief in the art of war and sacrifice, morale would have probably been exceptionally low to a number of civilians and families who were effected most by the decision to drop the bombs. The bombs ‘little boy’ and ‘Fat Man’ being detonated on to both Japanese cities not only immediately wiped out a number of the populations due to the force of the bomb

reaching the ground and the heat of the explosions, but a large number also died from acute radiation exposure. These numbers ranged from 90 to 166,000 in Hiroshima and 60 to 80,000 in Nagasaki. (Listwa ,2012) The comparison to the recorded Pearl Harbour casualties is astoundingly immense and shows the extreme difference in air defence and nuclear weaponry. A conventional bomb does not have a heat wave however once hit the ground below the bomb soared to a temperature of 3 to 4,000 degrees Celsius. Steel itself starts to melt at 1,530 degrees (Takahashi, 1995) supporting the extremity of the effects of the bomb itself and completely going against the humanitarian argument both the US president and the federal government seemed to present. With a prolonged attack on Japan, not only could the number of innocent victims dramatically decreased, but scientists could've developed a deeper understanding of the bombs and what it entailed for the Japanese people to help their own nuclear experiments in the future.

Bikini Atoll served as the area chosen for the site of a huge US hydrogen bomb test in 1954 that dropped down with a thousand times more power than those used in 1945 during the war. The unexpected and unforeseen levels of radiation exposed many to fallout and up until 1978, residents were still ingesting high levels of radiation from eating foods grown on the former nuclear test site. (Agence France Press in Majuro, 2014). This failed attempt on nuclear advancement conveys the lack of knowledge scientists had almost 10 years after the events of World war II, suggesting that the decision to move forward with the plans on Hiroshima and Nagasaki could've been rash and almost a violent act to again assert US dominance and power with little to no consideration for the Japanese people in the coming years once they had established their ' well maintained peace'

The United states made a choice in 1945 that concluded the war and served as a retaliation to the unprovoked attack on Pearl Harbour, meaning that in their eyes they were completely justified. Over the years, notable figures including former US president Barack Obama have opposed the decision even stating that technology as devastating as nuclear arms demands a 'moral revolution' (Harris ,2016). You could easily view dropping the bombs as a necessity in order to revel in a newfound peace for the majority of the world and provide hope that future conflicts will cease to take place however as a human race that empathises with others and rejects hate and violence, it can only be seen as an act of extreme evil. War effects the lives of so many innocent individuals, leaving the opinion that the course of actions were indeed justified. It is then though that we can empathise with Japan and find it within ourselves to then think about their innocent victims and think about if US actions were justified with all the deaths that went on to occur from their choice. The bombs were necessary but again, also weren't. The opinion changes with each individual moral compass and what they believe to be right and wrong and necessary for the continuation of our race.