

Was the use of the atomic bomb moral?

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As much as Harry Truman thought otherwise (he wouldn't lose one minute of sleep), the decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a moral one. This decision is by no means a light one, as more than 100,000 people died from the two bombs combined. Thus the nagging question arises: Was the decision the "right" thing to do? I believe the United States did the right thing by dropping two atomic bombs on Japan for a number of reasons.

First, the Japanese cabinet was "dominated by militarists from the Japanese Imperial Army and the Japanese Imperial Navy, all of whom were initially opposed to any peace deal" (Wikipedia 7). Even the bottommost soldiers were all willing to fight to the very last man, which only further shows how unyielding the Japanese were.

Second, an invasion of Japan would have cost more than 500,000 American lives. Clearly, this motive is enough justification for using the atom bomb, as a nation seeks first and foremost, to protect the lives of its citizens.

Lastly, under a utilitarian argument, dropping the atomic bomb might have actually been best for the Japanese people in the long run. If we did not drop the atomic bomb, the Russians would have entered the war. This scenario seems plausible if and only if we did NOT have the bomb. Japan is lucidly a conflict of interest, insofar as political ideologies go. We already saw how the Soviets left the conquered Germany. If the Soviets and Americans jointly conquered Japan, it is indubitable that Japan would be divided up into a North and South, or an East and West. The East German people were not very happy with their Soviet overlords, and in much the same fashion, the Japanese people under Soviet influence would not be too pleased. The Soviets aside, there is one other reason why the Japanese are better off because we used atomic bombs. While between 100,000 and 200,000 Japanese (over 90% were civilians) died, more Japanese civilians would have died from a full out invasion of Japan. With a complete Allied blockade, "some estimated that 10 million people were likely to starve to death" (Wikipedia 8). 10 million is 50 times as many people as 200,000!

For the aforesaid reasons, the United States was justified in dropping atomic bombs on Japan. Using the Atomic bombs to quickly end the war not only liberated POWs, Dutch, and Indonesians, but it also liberated the Japanese people from militarism.

<http://www.philosophyparadise.com/essays/wastheuseoftheatomicbombmoral.html>