

# PRO

## **The Dropping of the Atomic Bombs on Japan Was Justifiable.**

### **Why the bombs were needed or justified:-**

- In 1945 the war between the US and Japan in the Pacific had been raging for almost 5 years
- The Japanese had demonstrated fanatical resistance, fighting to the last man on the Pacific islands and unleashing kamikaze attacks at Okinawa.
- Calls for Japan to surrender were ignored by their military leadership
- Had the atomic bombs not been used, a full-scale invasion of Japan would have been necessary; resulting in hundreds of thousands more lives being lost.

### **The cost in lives of an invasion:-**

- In August 1945, hundreds of thousands of GIs, who had managed to survive the war in Europe, were getting ready to leave for the Pacific. There they would meet up with a million more young US recruits, to start fighting the Japanese. At least 50-80% of these soldiers were expected to die in the invasion of the Japanese home islands, which everyone believed would be a bloodbath.
- The two battles held immediately before it was decided to drop the atomic bombs were Iwo Jima and Okinawa. In these battles the Japanese fought to the death and the cost in American casualties was horrific.
- It was predicted that the invasion of the Japanese mainland at the Island of Kyushu -- scheduled for November of 1945 -- would be even worse.
- The Americans believed that the entire Japanese military and civilian population would fight to the death.
- American casualties -- just for that initial invasion to get a foothold on the island of Japan would have taken up to an estimated two months and would have resulted in up to 75,000 to 100,000 casualties with up to 20,000 dead. And that was just the beginning.
- Once the island of Kyushu was captured by U.S. troops, the remainder of Japan would follow, with enormous casualty figures.
- It is difficult to estimate the cost in injuries and lives of a full-scale land invasion, however military historians have suggested that there would have been a minimum of 250,000 US casualties and possibly as many as 1 million Japanese civilian casualties.
- It is not beyond the possibility that up to or more than 500,000 Americans could have been killed had they landed because the Japanese were ready and waiting for the land invasion.
- A major problem was that many of the roads around the landing areas were too small for the US tanks and without the tanks playing a major role, casualties would have been severe.

### **The Japanese were not willing to consider surrender:-**

- The Japanese system of honour taught that death was preferable to surrender.
- This meant that the Japanese people believed surrender was a disgrace so terrible that they could never give in.
- Conventional firebombing had killed 100,000 in Tokyo but this had had no affect on the Japanese military government.
- The Japanese military government was fanatical and needed a strong message to force them into surrendering.
- There were still hundreds of thousands of the Japanese military in Japan and women were being trained to fight. Propaganda stories of what the Americans would do to them if they surrendered meant that most were determined to fight to the death, rather than surrender.

## **Dropping the bombs saved lives**

- Hiroshima and Nagasaki would have been firebombed anyway, before any land invasion had taken place.
- More Japanese people would have died from a prolonged campaign of conventional firebombing.
- The use of the bombs ended the war with Japan more quickly and, consequently, saved more lives.
- The largest number of people killed in a single raid was not at Hiroshima, but at Tokyo, with conventional firebombs. Some 80,000-100,000 people killed. This type of bombing would have continued until the end of the war.
- The atomic bomb gave Emperor Hirohito the argument he needed to persuade the military that the time had come for Japan to surrender. It was one thing to surrender in the face of battle against an enemy with conventional bombs and weapons. It was another thing to face the force of the new atomic weapons.
- In fact the atomic bombs actually killed fewer Japanese per city and than conventional firebombs.
- The dropping of the bombs took many fewer Japanese lives than if the USA had tried to invade Japan, because the Japanese casualties were expected to be 5 to 10 times that of the Allies in an invasion.
- While the atomic bombs, just as like any bombs, were a terrible way to die, in the long run it saved lives and brought WW 2 to an end.
- How many Japanese would have died as America invaded the islands of Japan?
- Every city could have been levelled.
- In this destruction, what the bullets and bombs didn't kill the diseases that followed would finish. Certainly the figure would have far exceeded those that died from the two bombs that were dropped.
- After having fought through Iwo Jima, Saipan, Guam, and Okinawa, there was no doubt that the Japanese people and their leaders would fight until the last man, woman, and child.
- If the Emperor had not instructed his subjects to stop fighting after Nagasaki they were prepared to resist tanks and artillery with sticks and stones until the last man, woman, and child perished.

## **All nations in WWII killed civilians**

- All the countries involved in the war killed civilians.
- The British night time bombing of the German cities killed at least 300,000 civilians and injured up to 800,000 more. The German cities were devastated. Incendiary bombs created fire storms, where the flames 'ate' up all the oxygen and sucked in oxygen from the surrounding areas at such speeds that hurricanes were made which pulled everyone into them.
- Hamburg was one of the cities that suffered a firestorm-  
"... Children were torn away from their parents' hands by the force of the hurricane and whirled into the fire."  
Written by Hamburg's police chief in 1943.
- There was little distinction between civilians and soldiers in WWII because of the industrial nature of the war. The military needed the civilians to make the weapons, tanks and bombs they needed and the other side needed to destroy that industrial capacity.
- So cities with industrial capacity were targets for each side to bomb and civilian casualties were seen as unavoidable
- There was also a deliberate tactic of bombing civilians to foster terror. The British hoped the bombing of the German cities would make the German people turn against Hitler.

## **The Japanese were not innocent**

- Just four years earlier the Japanese invaded us at Pearl Harbor without warning, bringing the US into World War II. We at least gave Japan a warning and they still wouldn't surrender.

## **All war is unjust but the dropping of the Atomic bombs was not a war crime.**

- The USA had a right to drop the bomb, under international law of the time because the Japanese had started the war with America when it attacked the US fleet at Pearl Harbor, without warning.
- The USA committed no crime of any national or international kind when dropping the Atomic bombs. America was at war with Japan and the objective of war is to defeat your enemy and keep your own men alive.

## **Japan wanted to bomb the US**

- The Japanese also had a secret atomic bomb project. There can be no doubt that the Japanese would have used it against America if they perfected the bomb in time.

## **It was the Atomic bombings that ended the war**

- Japan was not about to surrender. Even after the bombs, when the Emperor Hirohito was surrendering, a group of diehard military officials tried to steal his tape of surrender. The coup failed but it shows that some of the Japanese military would never have given in.
- The U.S. asked Japan to surrender before the dropping of the first bomb, but there was no response.
- After the first bomb the Japanese were asked again to surrender and yet again there was no response and so the second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.
- Even after the second bomb was detonated, the Japanese still did not surrender for another week. The US kept up round the clock conventional bombing of the other Japanese cities until the moment of surrender.

## **Other arguments**

- Some people argue that the Americans should have dropped a bomb on a remote area, without a civilian population, to show them what could happen to them. However, with only two bombs ready it was too risky to "waste" one in a demonstration.
- Immediate use of the bomb convinced the world of its horror and prevented future use when nuclear stockpiles were far larger.
- The bomb's use impressed the Soviet Union and halted the war quickly enough so that the USSR did not demand joint occupation of Japan.
- The atomic bombs ended a conflict which the Japanese were largely responsible for starting.