

Hiroshima and Nagasaki

6 & 9 August 1945 – 2 bombs, killing 200,000+



Preventing casualties - Churchill argued the bombs prevented the loss of “a million American and a quarter of a million British lives”.

Speedy end to the war – each month 250,000 people were dying, and POWs were at risk.

Japan would never have surrendered – according to the ‘way of the warrior’, surrender was dishonourable.

Militarily un-necessary – standard bombing/naval blockade would do.

Russians were coming – meaning inevitable defeat for Japan.

War crime – the League of Nations outlawed intentional bombing of civilians.

Fundamentally immoral- dehumanising and setting a terrible precedent.

Nuclear Disarmament



Gandhi and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament called for countries to get rid of nuclear weapons as a step towards world peace.

United Nations resolution 1653 says the use of nuclear weaponry “would exceed even the scope of war and cause indiscriminate suffering and destruction to mankind and civilization and, as such, is contrary to the rules of international law and to the laws of humanity”.

In 2017, 9 countries have nuclear weapons, but only 5 are legal: China, France, Russia, the UK, and the USA.

Nuclear disarmament would prevent the possibility of nuclear war, whether on purpose or by accident.

If no countries had nuclear weapons, we would lose the peace brought about through nuclear deterrence.

Deterrence



The UK government claims that we need nuclear weapons to “deter the most extreme threats to our national security and way of life, which cannot be done by other means”. It is also argued that having countries with nuclear weapons prevents large scale conflicts like world wars.

It's an empty threat – there is no point having weapons that everyone agrees it would be wrong to ever use.

Small scale conflicts – there have been lots of proxy wars and minor conflicts

No WW3 – mutually assured destruction has prevented major super powers from fighting.

A stable world – nuclear weapons have made the world much safer than it would otherwise have been

Non Proliferation



The Non-Proliferation Treaty came into force in 1970. It is an agreement that those states without nuclear weapons will not acquire them, those with nuclear weapons will pursue nuclear disarmament, and nuclear energy will be used peacefully.

It's widely agreed to - 191 countries adhere.

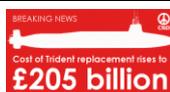
It was crucial – at the time they predicted 25 extra nuclear weapon states within 20 years: we now have only 4.

It's working – the total number of weapons fell from 60,000 to 15,000.

It's not fair - those who have weapons can keep them, but no-one else is allowed to have them.

It doesn't work – India, Pakistan and North Korea openly have and test ‘illegal’ weapons and the UN can't stop those with nuclear reactors making nuclear weapons.

Cost



Nuclear weapons cost \$100 billion a year, which is around \$300 million every day. The UN Secretary General said: “*The world is over-armed and peace is under-funded.*”

It provides jobs – 15,000 in the UK alone

It's worth it – having a stable world economy means we now have the highest standard of living in human history

It's not that much really – even USA and Russia spend less than 5% of GDP on the military

It could be better spent – we spend twice on nuclear weapons than what is given to the poorest countries in aid

There are other costs – damage to the environment through testing; health costs through workers' exposure to radiation

Risks

Terrorists - One concern about having nuclear weapons is that they could end up in the hands of terrorists. The argument is that nuclear deterrence doesn't work at all against terrorist groups, and that if terrorists were to get hold of nuclear weapons, they would be more likely to use them than official governments.

Accidents – Following an earthquake in Japan in 2011, 100,000 people were evacuated from around the Fukushima nuclear power plant. This raises concerns about the safety of nuclear weapons, as natural disasters could affect how they are created or stored.

Cuban Missile Crisis – In 1962, there was a 13 day confrontation between America and Russia that is the closest we have come to a full-scale nuclear war. The more nuclear weapons we have, the greater the risk of a conflict of personalities leading to a terrible mistake.