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Reactions...

The scientists frantically worked on the Manhatten Project so that the world would not be overtaken by Germany's facist rulers. That was a moral decision on their part to keep something they valued — a more free world, one on which they wanted to live. That was their moral justification of the production of the bomb.

The Government and Army was also justified in the Bomb Project as long as their primary goal was the preservation of the Free World. Self-preservation is *always* a moral choice.

Once it was determined that Japan and Germany were for practical purposes beaten, defeat being only a few weeks away, it was no longer necessary to drop the bomb.

The destruction of Nagasaki and Hiroshima were not necessary to win the war, and so not necessary for the self-preservation of the United States. Those two cities were destroyed because those who made that decision wanted to show the US as an All-Powerful entity in the postwar years, just like the bully who everyone is afraid of.

Alternatives could have been a demonstration on a uninhabited or purely military target. The scientists knew that destruction was unnecessary at this point, and they made several pettitions to prevent the government from dropping it.

On the other hand, actually demonstrating the bomb on a target in a war setting would make much more of an impression on other nations that if it was just detonated in a desolate area — they wouldn't take as much notice of is as they would if it was used matter of factly on a target.