

Ideology Challenge

All individuals have their own ideas and beliefs about the world and their place in it. We call this an **ideology** or **world view**. Invariably, in our globalizing world, people's principles, values and beliefs are going to clash. How far should individuals go to defend their ideologies?

Read the following stories and think about the following question: *which of the following case studies represent 'principled actions' and which one's represent 'dishonorable conduct'?* Ultimately, are there limits on the extent with which we defend our ideology?

Norman Morrison (December 29, 1933 - November 2, 1965), born in Erie, Pennsylvania, was a Baltimore Quaker best known for committing suicide at age 31 in an act of self-immolation to protest United States involvement in the Vietnam War. On November 2, 1965, Morrison doused himself in kerosene and set himself on fire below Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's Pentagon office.

Morrison's individual act of protest can also be viewed in a larger context: that of the phenomenon of acts of self-immolation during the 1960s. Filmmaker Errol Morris interviewed McNamara at length on camera in his documentary film, "The Fog of War." McNamara says, "[Morrison] came to the Pentagon, doused himself with gasoline. Burned himself to death below my office." McNamara then posits, "How much evil must we do in order to do good? We have certain ideals, certain responsibilities. Recognize that at times you will have to engage in evil, but minimize it." Perhaps the most detailed treatment of Morrison's death appears in, "The Living and the Dead: Robert McNamara and Five Lives of a Lost War", by prizewinning author Paul Hendrickson, published in 1997.

The Washington Post. Washington, D.C.: Nov 4, 1999. pg. C.14. Morrison took his daughter Emily, then one year of age, to the Pentagon, and either set her down or handed her off to someone in the crowd before setting himself ablaze. Morrison's reasons for taking Emily are not entirely known. However, Morrison's wife later recalled, "Whether he thought of it that way or not, I think having Emily with him was a final and great comfort to Norman... [S]he was a powerful symbol of the children we were killing with our bombs and napalm--who didn't have parents to hold them in their arms.

In a letter he mailed to his wife, Morrison reassured her of the faith in his act. "Know that I love thee," Morrison wrote, "but I must go to help the children of the priest's village." Robert McNamara described Morrison's death as "a tragedy not only for his family but also for me and the country. It was an outcry against the killing that was destroying the lives of so many Vietnamese and American youth." He was survived by his wife Anne Welsh and three children, Ben, Christina and Emily. Supporters of his actions portrayed Morrison as devoutly and sincerely sacrificing himself for a cause greater than himself. In Vietnam, Morrison quickly became a folk hero, his name rendered as *Mo Ri Xon*. North Vietnam named a Hanoi street after him, and issued a postage stamp in his honor. Possession of the stamp was prohibited in the US due to the US embargo against North Vietnam. One week after Morrison's action, Roger Allen LaPorte performed a similar act in New York City, in front of the United Nations building.

Principled action
or dishonorable
conduct?

CASE STUDY 1

Thich Quang-Duc

(Adapted from Edward Doyle (editor). "The Buddhist Factor" in *The Vietnam Experience: Setting the Stage*. Boston: Boston Publishing, 1981, p. 67.)

On June 11, 1963, Thich Quang-Duc, a 73-year-old Buddhist monk, set himself afire. He did so in public at a main intersection in Saigon (Vietnam) surrounded by three hundred monks and thousands of observers. The horror of the event aroused worldwide attention. The monk's death was to protest against the religious oppression and corruption of the President of South Vietnam. One American called this event "an act of savagery, violence, and fanaticism, requiring a condition of mental imbalance."

Thich Quang-Duc's dramatic suicide had powerful religious and political significance. Buddhists believe that offering oneself as a sacrifice is a sign that the person is free of physical need and is prepared to enter upon a full spiritual existence. Spiritually, fire is considered a rite of passage and necessary to enter a state of eternal peace. Politically, the monk's act of self-sacrifice shamed the government by contrasting his virtue with the President's dishonesty and intolerance.

The fiery death of the Buddhist monk changed the course of the Vietnam War. Following the monk's example, additional protesters burned themselves to death in an attempt to regain religious freedom under the American-supported government of South Vietnam. Less than six months after the monk's suicide, on November 1, 1963, the regime was overthrown by a military take-over, and the President was executed.

Principled action
or dishonorable
conduct?

CASE STUDY 2

Kamikaze Pilots - Japan's Last Weapon

(www.2worldwar2.com/images/kamikaze-pilots)

Kamikaze, which means "Divine Wind" in Japanese, was Japan's last attempt to balance the ever increasing technological and material advantage of the American forces advancing to Japan. The Kamikaze attack tactic was suggested on October 19, 1944, by vice-Admiral Onishi of the Japanese Navy, when he was assigned to command the air attacks against the huge American invasion fleet off the Philippines, and then realized that he had less than 100 operational aircraft for this task. There was no way to sink or even severely damage the American fleet in any conventional tactic, so the Admiral needed a force multiplier, a way to get a significantly greater striking power from a given force.

The solution was obvious. Guided weapons provide dramatically greater accuracy and lethality than unguided weapons, producing much greater damage per weapon unit and per sortie. Such weapons already existed and were operational for over a year then, but not in Japan. The German Air Force successfully used large radio-guided Fritz-X bombs against battleships and cruisers since September 1943, but Japan had no such weapon, and therefore Admiral Onishi suggested that volunteer pilots will guide their bomb-carrying aircraft all the way to an explosive suicide collision with their American warship targets, acting as a living guidance system, literally becoming "smart bombs".

The new tactic was adopted immediately. Large numbers of pilots, initially qualified and experienced pilots and later air cadets with minimal training who were asked to volunteer, were assigned to "Special Attack" air wings, the official name of the Kamikaze units. Their goal and motto was "One man - one ship".

In the first of these Kamikaze attack waves, 355 Kamikaze pilots attacked the American fleet off Okinawa, together with 341 conventional attack aircraft, and in coordination with a naval attack which included the super-battleship Yamato. The result of this massive air strike was six sunk ships and ten severely damaged.

When Japan ran out of ordinary combat aircraft for Kamikaze attacks, slow trainer aircraft were also used. Another aircraft used was the Okha (cherry blossom), Japan's latest new weapon. The Okha was specifically designed as a Kamikaze missile. It was a small rocket-powered aircraft with a large 1200kg warhead in the nose that was carried by a bomber and dropped 20-30 miles from its target, where its Kamikaze pilot ignited the rockets and streaked to its target. In its final dive, the Okha reached a top speed of 576mph, much faster than any other aircraft, but most Okhas were shot down by American fighters before even being dropped from the carrying bombers.

A total of about 5000 Kamikaze pilots were launched, mostly in the Battle of Okinawa, consuming much of the remaining human and material resources of Japanese air power. The result of their effort was 36 sunk American ships and landing craft, and 368 damaged. The ferocity of watching wave after wave of Kamikaze pilots hurtling down through a dense hail of anti-aircraft fire, and the enormous fiery explosions which followed, terrorized the Americans, but the Kamikaze campaign failed to achieve its strategic goal of stopping the American advance, and American air attacks were launched against the Kamikaze air bases in southern Japan in order to reduce their numbers. Japan lost its last battle despite the enormous sacrifice of its fanatic warriors, and lost the war.



Principled action
or dishonorable
conduct?

CASE STUDY 3

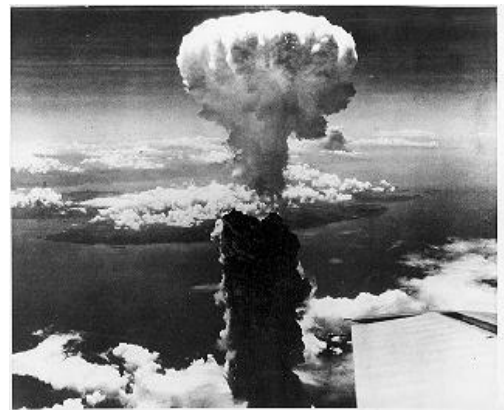
September 11, 2001.

CASE STUDY 4

Truman and the Bomb, 1945

In the early morning hours of July 16, 1945, great anticipation and fear ran rampant at White Sands Missile Range near Alamogordo, New Mexico. Robert Oppenheimer, director of the Manhattan Project, could hardly breathe. Years of secrecy, research, and tests were riding on this moment. "For the last few seconds, he stared directly ahead and when the announcer shouted Now! and there came this tremendous burst of light followed abruptly there after by the deep growling of the explosion, his face relaxed into an expression of tremendous relief," recalled General L. R. Groves of Oppenheimer, in a memorandum for Secretary of War George Marshall. The explosion carrying more power than 20,000 tons of TNT and visible for more than 200 miles succeeded. The world's first atomic bomb had been detonated.

With the advent of the nuclear age, new dilemmas in the art of warfare arose. The war in Europe had concluded in May. The Pacific war would receive full attention from the United States War Department. As late as May 1945, the U.S. was engaged in heavy fighting with the Japanese at Iwo Jima and Okinawa. In these most bloody conflicts, the United States had sustained more than 75,000 casualties. These victories insured the United States was within air striking distance of the Japanese mainland. The bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese to initiate United States entrance into the war, just four years before, was still fresh on the minds of many Americans. A feeling of vindication and a desire to end the war strengthened the resolve of the United States to quickly and decisively conclude it. President Harry Truman had many alternatives at his disposal for ending the war: invade the Japanese mainland, hold a demonstration of the destructive power of the atomic bomb for Japanese dignitaries, drop an atomic bomb on selected industrial Japanese cities, bomb and blockade the islands, wait for Soviet entry into the war on August 15, or mediate a compromised peace. Operation Olympia, a full scale landing of United States armed forces, was already planned for Kyushu on November 1, 1945 and a bomb and blockade plan had already been instituted over the Japanese mainland for several months.



The Japanese resolve to fight had been seriously hampered in the preceding months. Their losses at Iwo Jima and Okinawa had been staggering. Their navy had ceased to exist as an effective fighting force and the air corps had been decimated. American B-29's made bombing runs over military targets on the Japanese mainland an integral part of their air campaign. Japan's lack of air power hindered their ability to fight. The imprecision of bombing and the use of devastating city bombing in Europe eventually swayed United States Pacific theater military leaders to authorize bombing of Japanese mainland cities. Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Kobe all were decimated by incendiary and other bombs. In all, hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed in these air strikes meant to deter the resolve of the Japanese people. Yet, Japanese resolve stayed strong and the idea of a bloody "house to house" invasion of the Japanese mainland would produce thousands more American and Allied casualties. The Allies in late July 1945 declared at Potsdam that the Japanese must unconditionally surrender.

After Japanese leaders flatly rejected the Potsdam Declaration, President Truman authorized use of the atomic bomb anytime after August 3, 1945. On the clear morning of August 6, the first atomic bomb, nicknamed Little Boy, was dropped on the city of Hiroshima. Leveling over 60 percent of the city, 70,000 residents died instantaneously in a searing flash of heat. Three days later, on August 9, a second bomb, Fat Man, was dropped on Nagasaki. Over 20,000 people died instantly. In the successive weeks, thousands more Japanese died from the after effects of the radiation exposure of the blast.

DEVELOPING CRITERIA

TASK ONE: Explore the following *key terms*:

dishonorable:

principled:

criteria:

TASK TWO: In groups of three, develop what you feel are the criteria for distinguishing between a ‘**principled actions**’ and ‘**dishonorable conduct**’. Try to come up with at least three criteria.

WHAT MAKES SOMEONE’S ACTIONS ‘*PRINCIPLED*?’

WHAT MAKES SOMEONE’S ACTIONS ‘*DISHONORABLE*?’

Write a 250 word ***personal response*** by attempting to answer the following question:

To what extent should we defend our ideology (principles, values and beliefs)?