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The Uncertain Summer of 1945

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The summer of 1945 was the stage for events that remain controversial fifty years after the fact. The Allies' single aim that summer was to end the war in the Pacific. The Manhattan Project had yielded two workable atomic bombs, yet there was no guarantee that atomic bombs would force Japan to surrender. Communications intelligence based on Japanese diplomatic traffic (MAGIC) and Japanese military radio messages (ULTRA) provided valuable insight into the enemy camp, but it was by no means the sole basis for strategic or geopolitical decisions.

A host of uncertainties hung over that final summer of the war. Japan's leadership was divided between those who wanted a peaceful conclusion to a lost cause and those who would have sacrificed everything in a fight to the death. Allied insistence on unconditional surrender became an insurmountable obstacle to the former. The prospect of enormous casualties from an invasion of Japan proper argued against obliging the latter. Further complicating the picture was the Soviet Union. With the fighting in Europe over, the Red Army began shifting tens of thousands of troops across the Siberian steppe, ready to sweep down through Manchuria, China and Korea at precisely the right moment and stake a claim for Soviet postwar expansion in Asia.

The war ended in the summer of 1945 not because of a single, decisive weapon. It ended because a rapidly escalating, unrelenting series of diplomatic and military blows left Tokyo no alternative to capitulation.

INTRODUCTION

The summer of 1945 bore the seeds of momentous events that would affect international relations as far into the future as anyone could see. Even now, viewed through the rearview mirror of history, many of those events of a half-century ago remain strategically complex, intellectually challenging and politically controversial. They are as defiant of simple explanations today as they were when armies were colliding on Pacific-island battlefields, when world leaders were grappling with decisions of unprecedented import, and when the awesome consequences of nuclear war were still unknown. The summer of 1945 was a time of epochal decisions that determined the course of nations and the fate of millions. Given the enormity of that summer's events, intelligence practitioners and others would be well served by revisiting the circumstances that set the world on a path from which there could be no turning back.

Most of the material dealing with the events of the summer of 1945 have long been available to researchers and historians. The exception is communications intelligence. The results of American communications intelligence activities have been available to the public for only a relatively few years. Several decrypted diplomatic messages that appear in this paper have only recently been declassified. The intercept of foreign communications during World War II often gave Allied leaders unique insight into the thinking on the other side. But the picture one sees from communications intelligence is necessarily incomplete and frequently contradictory. Seldom, if ever, does an intelligence service intercept and decrypt every message that passes over a diplomatic link or a military network. Messages that are missed can be as important as those that are collected. Moreover, the content of messages normally reflects the subjective view of the senders. Decrypted messages are, therefore, only one part of a large intelligence mosaic.

Another pitfall awaiting the unwary researcher of the period is a tendency to view the atomic bomb through post-Hiroshima eyes. Before 6 August 1945, no one was sure the bomb would work in a military setting. Military planners in the summer of 1945 saw the atomic bomb as a wholly untried weapon of unknown force and undetermined reliability.

None of that is meant to impugn the value of communications intelligence or the effect of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Rather, it is introduced to establish a reasonable perspective from which to view the events of the uncertain summer of 1945.

If one had to choose a pivotal moment from that summer, the detonation of the first atomic weapon at Alamogordo, New Mexico, on 16 July would be a leading candidate. For in one blinding flash the world was forever changed.

Vaporized in that violent explosion in the New Mexico desert were some earlier absolutes. Soviet intervention in the Far East, long seen as a military requirement, might no longer be an absolute necessity. An invasion of Japan proper, with expected high Allied casualties, might no longer be an absolute necessity. But the availability of one or two atomic bombs did not remove the uncertainties of that summer. It only made some things less certain. No one could be sure that atomic bombs would force the militarists who held power in Japan to abandon a lost and hopeless cause without bloody land battles on the Japanese home islands. No one in Japan could be sure what the Allied demand for "unconditional surrender" meant for the future of the emperor. And no one outside the Kremlin could do more than guess at Moscow's agenda for extending Soviet influence across postwar Asia. These were the threads of uncertainty that ran through the fabric of that final summer of the Second World War.

JAPAN'S INTERNAL STRUGGLE IN THE FACE OF INEVITABLE DEFEAT

Throughout the spring of 1945, U.S. military forces advanced steadily westward, rapidly compressing Japan's Pacific empire. By May, any rational assessment would have concluded that Japan was defeated. The Allies had sunk her navy and cut the sea lanes

she needed for the flow of oil and raw materials. The home islands were one step away from total blockade, and American aircraft were pounding Japanese cities at will.

By the beginning of the summer, the Allies were in a position to threaten the Japanese home islands. The toll in lives had been enormous on both sides. The Iwo Jima campaign of February and March had been among the costliest of the war. U.S. Marines had lost 4,554 men killed, the U.S. Navy 363. Of the 21,000 Japanese defenders on Iwo Jima, hardly more than 3,000 survived. In the minds of Allied military planners, the ferocity of the Iwo Jima defense foreshadowed devastating casualties for the invasion of the Japanese home islands.

The Allied assault on Okinawa commenced on Easter Sunday, with thousands of soldiers and marines storming ashore on the island's western beaches. The invasion force met little initial opposition; then suddenly the U.S. Tenth Army ran into a fierce defense. The Japanese 32d Army fought back tenaciously from positions they had dug into caves. Kamikazes by the hundreds rained death from the skies. The cost of the Okinawa campaign totaled more than 50,000 U.S. battle casualties, over 12,000 of whom were listed as killed or missing. An estimated 110,000 Japanese defenders died. The new Truman administration saw these figures as harbingers of the cost of invading Japan proper.

The realization that Japan could never prevail against the Allies had come sooner to some Japanese leaders than to others. As early as February 1942, Marquis Koichi Kido, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal and Emperor Hirohito's closest advisor, realized that Japan could not win, and he urged the emperor "to grasp any opportunity to terminate the war."[1] By early 1944, more and more of Japan's leaders knew that defeat was inevitable. With Germany headed for disaster, Japan, too, might soon face total collapse. Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Togo, in a discussion with Privy Seal Kido, frankly declared "unconditional surrender, in essence, will be unavoidable." Kido kept silent on the issue, and in the silence lurked a danger.[2] Postponing the need to face the future would only make that future more difficult.

As reality set in, a schism developed between those who wanted to extricate Japan from a conflict she could never win and those diehard militarists who resisted every effort to end the war peacefully.

Ever since the beginning of the conflict, the power concentrated in the hands of Japan's intransigent militarists had been a formidable obstacle to peace. This concentration of power was most apparent in the Army, which effectively blocked any attempt by the cabinet to intrude into military matters. The Army viewed any criticism as an act of treason. Yet the Army freely interfered in the general affairs of state on the grounds that virtually all governmental actions pertained to national defense. The Navy held the same power as the Army, but was less inclined to abuse the privilege.

This division in the Japanese leadership was common knowledge within the diplomatic community in Japan. Relevant information was available to Allied

policymakers through intercept of diplomats' reports cabled to their home capitals, like this item from the Spanish military attaché in Tokyo:

> A moral battle is now in progress between those desiring to continue the war at any cost and the realists who recommend seeking peace to save the Empire. The aged Admiral Suzuki was charged with the formation of a government to introduce a change of policy. Such a change will be possible, however, only if America allows Japan to save her honor; otherwise the war will continue and serious events will be unavoidable.[3]

Despite Japan's rapidly weakening position in the spring of 1945, her military leaders continued to preach that the day of national redemption would come when they met the enemy on the shores of the home islands. The Imperial General Staff's final operational plan, drawn up nearly a year earlier in July 1944, was a blueprint for national destruction. The plan never anticipated final victory. Its aim was to inflict heavy losses on Allied forces, so American and British leaders would have to accept a negotiated peace. Should that strategy fail, the plan's authors explained, it would at least buy time to organize the homeland defenses. Surprisingly, the Imperial General Headquarters strategy contained a decision not to return large overseas forces in Manchuria, China and Korea to the homeland. Instead, the military planned to conduct its last-ditch defense with existing homeland divisions, garrison troops, and newly raised forces, bolstered with some veterans from the Kwantung Army in Manchuria.[4]

At the end of June 1945, the Soviet Union announced its intention to end the Neutrality Pact between Tokyo and Moscow. The Japanese Army and Navy high commands reacted by pressing the Foreign Office to negotiate a new arrangement with the Kremlin. According to their reasoning, a new and better arrangement would increase Japan's choices of continuing the war.[5] Little did they comprehend the Asian agenda of the USSR.

American policymakers were aware of the internal debate between those who sought a peaceful end to the war and those who advocated a policy of national suicide. MAGIC intercept of Japan's diplomatic messages kept Washington abreast of the thinking in Japan's foreign-policy circles.

Japan's ambassador in Switzerland, Toshikazu Kase, expressed the view that the causes of Germany's defeat also applied to Japan. Kase pointed out that Japan was actually in danger of extinction if she elected to fight it out. He suggested "that England and America may not be averse to ending the war in the Far East before Russia gets into it." Kase might have been right, but the sharp divisions in Tokyo stood in the way of any effective demarche in that direction. Kase further conceded it would be necessary to make an offer that Moscow would find attractive in order to obtain her "good offices."[6] Even that assessment was probably overly optimistic. Moscow's appetite in Asia was much greater than Ambassador Kase seemed to appreciate.

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER: AN UNCERTAIN FORMULA FOR PEACE

The term "unconditional surrender" was nearly as great an obstacle to peace in the Pacific war as the fight-to-the-death mentality of Japan's militarists. Unconditional surrender became the subject of unending disagreement and misunderstanding in both camps until the very end of the war. In Japan, the Allied demand for unconditional surrender raised grave questions about the future of Japan's imperial system of government and the fate of the emperor himself. Not even the most ardent peace advocates in Tokyo were prepared to abandon the emperor or the imperial institution. The Allies understood these Japanese concerns, yet they never came right out and said that the emperor could stay – in part because the Allies couldn't agree among themselves that the emperor should remain once the fighting ended.

Unconditional surrender became part of the World War II vocabulary at the end of the Casablanca Conference in late January 1943, when President Roosevelt first used the term publicly – without defining it. After the conference, he told reporters that the United Nations would insist on the "unconditional surrender" of their enemies. Moreover, he asked the press to refer to the Casablanca meeting as the "Unconditional Surrender Conference."[7]

The idea of unconditional surrender received scant attention in Japan until it was used in the joint declaration at Cairo in early December 1943. Then the impact of the term became apparent in Tokyo.

> Japan shall be stripped of all the islands in the Pacific which she has seized or occupied since the beginning of the first World War in 1914, and . . . all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, shall be restored to the Republic of China. Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed. . . .[8]

In Japanese eyes, the Cairo declaration would compel Tokyo to relinquish all the territories she had acquired as far back as 1895 on the grounds that they were the spoils of aggressive war.[9] It was a position the militarists would not accept.

Two members of the Supreme Council for the Conduct of the War,[10] Foreign Minister Togo and Navy Minister Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai, secretly and independently began thinking about the "dangerous" idea of peace in late September 1944. Yonai had Rear Admiral Sokichi Takagi attached to the Naval General Staff to study the thorny problem of easing Japan out of the conflict. Takagi reviewed all the Allied demands. Foremost among them was unconditional surrender.[11]

In the final analysis, the core issues surrounding unconditional surrender were the emperor and the future of the nation. No one on the Allied side would clarify those issues to Japan's satisfaction. Among Japanese leaders was a consensus that it would be better to fight to the bitter end than to submit the emperor to insult and the national pride to humiliation.[12]

Japan's apprehension over unconditional surrender was no secret. The Allies were well aware of it. In the fall of 1944 Bunshiro Suzuki, managing director of the Asahi Shimbun, told Swedish minister Widar Bagge that the Allied demand for unconditional surrender was "one of the greatest obstacles to peace."[13]

Further evidence of the problems posed by the Allied insistence on unconditional surrender was available to Washington from an intercepted diplomatic report of an April 1945 conversation between France's ambassador Catroux and Swedish minister Bagge in the Soviet capital:

> One fact seems certain, namely, that while Japan would consent to a compromise peace she would not accept unconditional surrender, even if the archipelago were invaded. Japanese honor, which is intense, forbids it. Furthermore, it is thought in Tokyo that, even if Japan were occupied, the fight would be continued by the strong armies in Manchuria. They have supplies for a long period of time, and the Japanese spare no sacrifices to maintain them.[14]

Among the Allies, unconditional surrender meant different things to different people. Secretary of State Cordell Hull wrote in his memoirs that the phrase took Churchill by surprise, yet Elliott Roosevelt insisted that the British prime minister thought it was "perfect." Navy Secretary James Forrestal believed that a policy aimed at the destruction of Germany and Japan would lead to an imbalance of power and unwisely increase the international stature of the Soviet Union. Unconditional surrender remained an undefined policy.

President Truman, in announcing the end of the war in Europe in May of 1945, offered his explanation of the formula:

> . . . termination of the influence of the military leaders who have brought Japan to the present brink of disaster. It means provision for the return of soldiers and sailors to their farms, their jobs. It means not prolonging the present agony and suffering of the Japanese in the vain hope of victory. Unconditional surrender does not mean the extermination or enslavement of the Japanese people.[15]

Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew, for ten years the U.S. ambassador in Tokyo, understood the intimidating effect that the unconditional surrender demand had on Japan, and he favored softening the policy. He spoke to Truman in late May about issuing a proclamation that would urge the Japanese to surrender while assuring them that the emperor could remain as head of state. Without that assurance, Grew argued, the Japanese were unlikely to ever surrender. Truman replied that he had already given the matter considerable thought and that it sounded like a good idea. On the president's instructions, Grew tried the proposal out on the cabinet and the Joint Chiefs.

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, Forrestal, and Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall accepted Grew's idea in principle. Stimson believed any public statement should await the outcome of the upcoming test of the atomic bomb in New Mexico. The JCS viewed any modification of the unconditional surrender formula as a

political policy issue and therefore hesitated to become involved. Nevertheless, the Joint Chiefs feared that a public proclamation at that time would be premature.

Retention of the emperor was not a universally popular idea in U.S. circles. Several influential men around the president, including Harry Hopkins, Archibald MacLeish and Dean Acheson, urged abolition of the Japanese imperial system.[16]

While the JCS accepted unconditional surrender as the political goal in the war against Japan, some military officers questioned whether that goal was attainable. The concept of unconditional surrender was completely foreign to the Japanese, they said. Up to the end of April 1945, no organized Japanese military units had surrendered on the battlefield. In the minds of the JCS planning officers, sustained bombardment and a blockade of the Japanese home islands might produce, at best, only the possibility of a negotiated peace. If the bombing and blockade failed to bring about an unconditional surrender, the U.S. would have no choice but to invade the home islands.[17]

The 2.6 million Japanese troops in Manchuria, China and Korea represented yet another uncertainty. Even if an Allied invasion forced Japan's leaders to surrender unconditionally, no one could guarantee that Japan's overseas armies would accept capitulation by the government in Tokyo.[18]

As conditions inside Japan continued to deteriorate, the Tokyo government inched toward its own solution. On 12 May 1945, the Supreme Council for the Conduct of the War privately and candidly addressed the forbidden subject of peace. They discussed possible mediation by Switzerland, Sweden, China or the Vatican and concluded that those channels would lead straight back to the Allied demand for unconditional surrender.[19] The stumbling block continued to be the future status of the emperor. Lacking clarification of that single issue from Washington, Japanese leaders found unconditional surrender unacceptable.

Switzerland became something of a beehive of Japanese peace-feeler activity between late April and the Potsdam Conference in July. The peace feelers began with Dr. Fritz Hack, a German national with a somewhat mysterious and checkered past who believed Japan had been "stupid" to start the war in the first place. Hack recruited the Japanese naval attaché in Berne, Commander Yoshiro Fujimura, the European representative of the Osaka Shipping Line, Shigeyoshi Tsuyama, and the European correspondent for the Asahi Shimbun, Shintaro Ryu. The four men held a number of clandestine meetings with OSS representatives in Berne. On 3 May the State Department authorized the OSS to begin direct peace negotiations with the group. Commander Fujimura, using naval attaché communications, tried for weeks to get Tokyo to respond positively to their initiative in Berne. Weeks dragged on. In the end, a series of vague, hesitant messages from Navy Minister Yonai and Foreign Minister Togo in Tokyo caused the effort to wither on the vine.[20]

Meanwhile, Japan's military attaché in Switzerland, Lieutenant General Seigo Okamoto, was conducting efforts similar to those of Commander Fujimura. General Okamoto teamed up with two Japanese officials of the Bank for International Settlements

in Basel named Yoshimura and Kitamura. Kitamura brought the Japanese ambassador, Toshikazu Kase, into the picture. Working through Per Jacobsson, the Bank of International Settlements' economic advisor, they contacted Allen Dulles's OSS station. Once again, discussions revolved around the real meaning of the unconditional surrender formula.

Dulles told Jacobsson that, although the U.S. itself wasn't opposed to Japan's retaining the emperor, Washington would have to consider the past objections of America's allies. Therefore, at the moment, the U.S. could make no commitment on that issue. As far as Japan's constitution was concerned, Dulles said, it would have to be changed. Messages passed between the Japanese legation in Berne and the Foreign Ministry without drawing any positive reaction from Tokyo. By the time the Allied leaders convened at Potsdam, negotiations in Switzerland had ground to a halt.[21]

Tokyo was aware that the Allies were split on the question of unconditional surrender. Ambassador Kase in Switzerland, in particular, knew the Allies were far from unified. Nevertheless, he urged his government to pursue the issue of peace without delay.

> If we make a peace proposal, the enemy will surely demand unconditional surrender and it cannot be denied that a failure may have most serious results both at home and abroad. But success or failure will depend upon the terms the Empire can make up its mind to offer (even among the enemy there are differences of opinion about unconditional surrender). As the situation now stands, if we merely let things take their course, there is no prospect of finding it any easier to control the situation in the future. In my opinion the great necessity is to do something at once.[22]

The United States attempted to present the unconditional surrender formula to Japan in a series of psychological warfare broadcasts run by the Navy's OP-16-W. The first of these broadcasts to mention unconditional surrender was released on 9 June 1945 and repeated the statements President Truman made in announcing the surrender of Germany a month earlier:

> Many of you today are asking the fateful question: 'Where is there hope for Japan?' The answer has been given you by President Truman. In a special proclamation the President set forth unconditional surrender as the only way out for Japan and defined, once and for all, the meaning of that term. I will now repeat the President's words:
>
> 'Unconditional surrender means the end of the war.
>
> 'It means the termination of the influence of the military leaders who have brought Japan to the present brink of disaster.
>
> 'It means provision for the return of soldiers and sailors to their families, their farms, their jobs.
>
> 'It means not prolonging the present agony and suffering of the Japanese in the vain hope of victory.
>
> 'Unconditional surrender does not mean the extermination or enslavement of the Japanese people.'[23]

Prime Minister Kantaro Suzuki, perhaps in reaction to the American broadcast, publicly alluded to the unconditional surrender issue in a speech before the Diet in late June.

> . . . I hear that the enemy is boasting of his demand of unconditional surrender by Japan. Unconditional surrender will only mean that our national structure and our people will be destroyed. Against such boastful talk there is only one measure we must take – that is to fight to the last.[24]

The OP-16-W response to the Suzuki speech appeared as a letter, signed anonymously "The Observer," in the *Washington Post* of 18 July 1945. A parallel message was broadcast by radio:

> (1) Unconditional surrender is the manner in which the war is terminated. It means exactly what General Grant had in mind when he stated his terms to General Lee, namely, the acceptance of terms without qualifying counter-arguments.
>
> (2) The conditions which will obtain after surrender have been explicitly stated in the Atlantic Charter, the Cairo Declaration, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's declaration of New Year's Day, 1944, President Truman's declaration of 8 May 1945, and Justice Jackson's statement on war criminals. These documents contain the conditions of which Japan can avail herself by surrendering unconditionally and thereby fulfilling the prerequisite of peace, namely, the cessation of hostilities.
>
> (3) The Atlantic Charter and the Cairo Declaration clearly state that we seek no territorial aggrandizement. The Atlantic Charter, moreover, assures certain definite benefits to victors and vanquished alike.
>
> (4) American military law, based upon historical precedents as well as a decision of the United States Supreme Court, clearly specifies that conquest or occupation does not affect the sovereignty of a defeated nation, even though that nation may be under complete military control. . . .
>
> If the Japanese desire to clarify whether or not unconditional surrender goes beyond the conditions contained in the five documents cited above, they have at their disposal the regular diplomatic channels, the secrecy of which precludes any public admission of weakness. They are aware that we know that Japan has lost the war. Such an inquiry could not possibly be misinterpreted, or display any weakness beyond that which now actually exists in Japan. It is presumed that this was the meaning and purpose of Mr. Grew's statement and in this sense it deserves the fullest endorsement of the American people.
>
> If, as Admiral Suzuki revealed in the Diet, their chief concern is over Japan's future national structure (Kokutai), including the Emperor's status after surrender, the way to find out is to ask. Contrary to a widespread belief, such a question can be answered quickly and satisfactorily to all those who are concerned over the future peace of the Orient and the world.[25]

These psywar efforts were little more than a byplay, however. The main event was the upcoming Potsdam Conference and the proclamation that would spell out the joint Allied position on unconditional surrender.

On 18 June Acting Secretary of State Grew reported to the president that the cabinet and the Joint Chiefs of Staff had approved a proposal that would allow Japan to keep the emperor. Truman could have issued a statement that might have clarified the point for the Japanese leadership. Instead, he chose to wait and raise the issue at Potsdam, in the interest of demonstrating Allied unity. Truman had other reasons for waiting. He hoped to learn more about the Soviet Union's plans for entering the Pacific War in face-to-face talks with Stalin. Equally important, by the time the Allies met at Potsdam in July, Truman expected to know the results of the atomic bomb test at Alamogordo, New Mexico. If the bomb worked, Truman wanted to give Japan an opportunity to surrender before the U.S. used the new and deadly weapon. On the other hand, if the test failed, he wanted to offer Tokyo a chance to end the war before the Allies launched their invasion of the Japanese home islands.[26]

At Potsdam, the Joint Chiefs argued that for military reasons alone the emperor's position should be protected. If unconditional surrender meant the elimination of the imperial institution, they warned, the Japanese would fight to the bitter end. Marshall, who believed that retention of the emperor was a military necessity, asked that the JCS draft a memorandum to the president recommending that the Allies "do nothing to indicate that the emperor might be removed from office upon unconditional surrender." The emperor could be necessary, Marshall said, to ensure the surrender of millions of Japanese troops deployed in Asia and the Pacific.[27]

Stimson continued to press for an explicit guarantee of the emperor's status in the Potsdam Proclamation. According to Stimson's memoirs, such a guarantee appeared in the first draft, but Truman and Byrnes took it out, electing to deal with the issue of the emperor in follow-on negotiations.

Had the Allies clarified the emperor's situation in the Potsdam Proclamation, the proclamation might have been the carrot the peace advocates in Japan needed to bring an earlier end to the war. Instead, the ultimatum became a stick that the Japanese publicly rebuffed. The failure to clarify the future status of the emperor may well have represented a missed opportunity to end the war sooner. At the very least, it was an avenue that Washington never adequately explored.

PEACE FEELERS IN THE VATICAN

As the likelihood of defeat moved inexorably from probability to certainty, Japan looked for opportunities for a negotiated settlement in a number of neutral European capitals. Some of these exploratory efforts were carried out by diplomats, some by military attachés, and still others by private emissaries. Generally speaking, those peace feelers lacked cabinet-level support in Tokyo. The peace feelers were, by and large, conducted by

individuals at their own initiative. In two capitals, however, the search for a negotiated peace involved Japanese representatives of ambassadorial rank: the Vatican and Moscow.

One of the first neutral states to draw Tokyo's attention was the Vatican. The Japanese government had long viewed the Vatican as a potential mediator for peace. When Japan's leaders weighed the risks of going to war in 1941, they also considered how they might eventually end the fighting. At a meeting of the cabinet ministers and the Privy Council in November of 1941, the Vatican was seen as one channel through which they might negotiate an end to the war.

Japan may have attempted to exercise its Vatican option as early as the summer of 1944, soon after the loss of Saipan, an island fortress well within Japan's defense perimeter. The Associated Press reported on 17 July 1944 that Ken Harada, Japan's ambassador to the Holy See, had told the pope that Tokyo was ready for peace under certain conditions. "Japanese leaders," the AP story said, "had no desire to carry on a long and inconclusive war, but were ready for any peace which would recognize Japan's right to national life and economy."[28] The wording seemed clearly aimed at the familiar issue of the Allied unconditional surrender formula. Tokyo denied the AP story, and any further peace overtures through the Vatican remained out of public view.

Almost a year later, the Vatican did become the channel for an "unofficial peace contact," allegedly initiated by an American. Ambassador Harada reported in June of 1945 that an Italian bishop had approached him with a proposal for an unofficial discussion of peace terms. According to Harada, the bishop was an intermediary for an unnamed American at the Vatican. The bishop, whom Harada did not identify, declined to reveal the identity of his American contact, stating merely that "his father occupies a rather influential place in society."[29]

The first proposal from the Italian bishop urged unconditional surrender, to which Harada responded, "At the present time (early June) Japan does not seek to hasten the coming of peace."[30]

Ambassador Harada talked to the Italian go-between a little over a week later and reported, "The American replied to our final statement by saying that he had merely planned to bring about a conference which would be absolutely secret and informal in nature." The American left the door open, according to Harada, by saying, "If Japan should, at any time in the future, wish to pass on any communication to the United States government, he [the unidentified American] would be only too willing to establish contacts with that government."

Once again, the interpretation of unconditional surrender became a stumbling block. Harada ended his report of his second meeting with the Italian bishop with this statement:

> I understood that . . . while it would be extremely difficult to induce the United States to change its demand for unconditional surrender at this time, the term 'unconditional surrender' was open to various interpretations.[31]

Japan would soon begin to explore a new and dangerous path to peace.

JAPAN LOOKS TO MOSCOW AS AN INTERMEDIARY

In one of the ironies of history, the spring of 1945 saw Japan return to a strategy she had employed four decades before. In 1905, following a major military setback at the Battle of the Sha River during the Russo-Japanese War, the Japanese government had asked President Theodore Roosevelt to act as an intermediary in Tokyo's search for peace with Russia. Now, forty years later, Tokyo employed the same strategy – this time with the players in opposite roles.

A confidential study by Cabinet Secretary Sakomizu in the early summer of 1945 convinced Japan's ruling circle that the time had come to seek peace in earnest. The war had exhausted the nation's resources. The lack of basic raw materials was affecting every aspect of national life. Steel production was less than a third of the official projection. Aluminum and bauxite shortages had cut aircraft production to a third of its quota. The lack of coal had forced a 50 percent reduction in munitions production. Fuel and manpower shortages had crippled the country's transportation system. In a matter of weeks intercity rail service would stop altogether. The chemical industry was on the verge of collapse. The construction of steel ships would soon end. The rice harvest was terrible, raising the specter of mass starvation.[32]

In the face of these disastrous predictions, Admiral Yonai offered a suggestion to the Supreme Council that could have caused his expulsion from that body only a week earlier: He proposed asking the Soviet Union to mediate a settlement of the war.

Yonai's proposal faced opposition from several quarters. Foreign Minister Togo didn't believe Moscow would really help Japan. Others observed that an approach to the Soviets contained major risks. Japan's former ambassador to the Vichy French government, Takanobu Mitani, had fled to Switzerland from Bavaria shortly before the surrender of Germany. He urged Tokyo to sue for peace "on the most favorable terms possible." He held out little hope of success by going through Moscow:

> There are three courses of action open to Japan:
>
> (1) to fight to the end in order to reach a decision by force of arms,
>
> (2) to surrender unconditionally,
>
> (3) to negotiate for peace on the most favorable terms possible.
>
> The first plan should be followed only if Japan is certain of victory and 'we who are abroad are unable to judge' on that point. The second plan is 'out of the question, so long as we have any power of resistance left,' since according to the Cairo Declaration surrender would mean the loss of all Japan's overseas possessions including Korea and Formosa. While a peace with England and the United States will not be easy to achieve, it may be possible for Japan to make use of the growing friction between Russia and the Anglo-Americans.

> It would do no permanent good to try to improve relations with Russia, because Japan would always have to expect an attack by Russia to obtain her ends in the Far East. On the other hand, 'history reveals that the Anglo-Americans would consider it advantageous, or even necessary, to use the power of Japan to resist Russia's plans in China.' The danger is that Russia, realizing that fact, will use her present allied relationship with the Anglo-Americans to push herself immediately into the war against Japan. Accordingly, Japan should act quickly and present England and the United States with the peace terms she would be willing to accept, 'devising some way by which we can gain the full confidence of our adversaries.' The task will be difficult, both as to timing and method, but 'if we think of the great mission of our country in East Asia and try to plan for the distant future, we will have to bend all our efforts to this end.'[33]

However, with the situation inside Japan bordering on desperate, Prime Minister Suzuki saw no reason not to sound Moscow out. On 14 May, Foreign Minister Togo prepared a memorandum furnishing Ambassador Naotake Sato in Moscow with guidelines to use in negotiations with Soviet foreign minister V.M. Molotov:

> It should be clearly made known to Russia that she owes her victory over Germany to Japan, since we remained neutral, and that it would be to the advantage of the Soviets to help Japan maintain her international position, since they may have the United States as an enemy in the future.[34]

The memorandum also warned Sato that the USSR might demand a price "much beyond our imagination," and Japan should be prepared to give up Port Arthur, Dairen, the railways in South Manchuria and the northern portions of the Kuriles. Togo expected opposition from the military at the prospect of giving up so much territory, but the Supreme Council for the Conduct of the War had unanimously instructed him to initiate negotiations.

Ambassador Sato tried for weeks without success to get some kind of commitment from the Soviet Foreign Ministry. Togo continued to press him to arrange an interview with Molotov.[35] On July 13, Sato urged Togo to accept the fact that Japan was facing defeat.

> There is no chance whatever of winning the Soviet Union to our side and of obtaining her support. . . . Japan is defeated. . . . We must face that fact and act accordingly.

But Togo rejected Sato's advice and again insisted that he seek Soviet help in ending the war.

> In spite of your views, you are to carry out your instructions. . . . Endeavor to obtain the good offices of the Soviet Union in ending the war short of unconditional surrender.[36]

MAGIC made the cables between Sato and Togo available to U.S. leaders, providing them with further confirmation that Japan was looking for an exit. Yet the Allies failed to exploit that knowledge. The very fact that the Japanese had approached the Soviets with a request to mediate peace arrangements should have led to all-out Allied efforts to end the war. Yet there is no evidence that Washington acted aggressively, either through the

OSS station in Switzerland or through diplomatic channels in Berne, Stockholm or other neutral capitals, to overcome the unconditional surrender hurdle and stop the fighting.

Molotov continued to stall the Japanese ambassador. Molotov left Moscow on 14 July for the Potsdam Conference in Germany, and Sato was left to deal with Vice Commissar Lozovsky, whom Sato found maddeningly noncommittal.[37] The Japanese tried for three more weeks to get the Soviets to help them negotiate a settlement, but the Kremlin had its own agenda.

While Foreign Minister Togo might have continued to delude himself about the likelihood of help from Moscow, others were keeping an eye on Soviet activities in the Far East. Early in May 1945, a Kwantung Army intelligence officer warned Japanese diplomats of the danger the Soviets posed to Manchuria:

> It is hard to say whether the present eastward movement of troops is being carried out (a) for the purpose of bring pressure against Japan, (b) in order to launch a military offensive against Japan and Manchukuo or (c) because Russia's gaze extends from Outer Mongolia and western China toward India, Tibet, Iran, and the Middle East. Assuming, however, that the Russians do intend to attack Manchukuo, they will probably try to gain a quick victory by using an overwhelming force – at least double the strength of ours. . . . We must be on guard as soon as we notice any marked movement of trucks toward eastern Siberia. . . . In any event, they will need at least three months to transport the necessary troops and armaments to eastern Siberia.[38]

Time was fast running out for Japan.

THE ALLIED REQUIREMENT FOR SOVIET INTERVENTION IN THE FAR EAST

The Allies had agreed since the beginning of the war that Soviet intervention against Japan was desirable.[39] As early as 1943, JCS strategic planning assumed an eventual Soviet combat presence in the Far East. However, except for periodic assurances from Soviet premier Josef Stalin that the USSR would come into the Pacific war once Germany was defeated, Moscow showed little inclination to join the Western powers in planning for the eventual Soviet entry into the conflict against Japan. The absence of any concrete military commitment from Moscow ultimately forced JCS planners to reassess the need for Soviet involvement. The Joint War Plans Committee study of 23 November 1944 (JCS 1176), accepted the premise that the USSR could provide substantive military forces to speed the defeat of Japan. But the study also expressed a conviction that Japan could be beaten without Soviet help.

JCS efforts to engage the Soviets in the planning process became a tale of never-ending frustration – over whether they would enter the war against Japan and what their contribution would be if they eventually did come in. In an attempt to engender some semblance of cooperation, the Joint Chiefs sent General John Deane to Moscow in October 1943 to head the U.S. Military Mission. General Deane tried unsuccessfully for months to

arrange discussions with Soviet military authorities about their expected contribution in the Far East. JCS frustration eventually turned to mistrust toward the USSR. Lieutenant General Stanley Embick of the Joint Strategic Survey Committee believed the Soviets might wait to see if the U.S. would invade Japan alone. If that happened, the U.S would bear the brunt of the casualties in Japan, leaving the Soviets to march into Manchuria at little cost.[40]

The U.S. military leaders continued to insist that Soviet intervention was essential to contain the Kwantung Army and limit U.S. casualties. Shortly before President Roosevelt left Washington for Yalta, the Joint Chiefs of Staff told him that the Soviet Union's entry into the war against Japan was vital to American interests. If Japan were free to pull Kwantung Army units out of Manchuria for a last-ditch defense of the home islands, the cost in American lives could be astronomical.

From the day President Truman took office on 12 April 1945 until the atomic bomb was successfully tested in July, he was firmly convinced of the need for Soviet intervention in the Far East. When Truman left Washington for Potsdam, he was still convinced of the need to have the Soviets in the Pacific war. But the evidence suggests that his conviction was not based entirely on the need to contain the Kwantung Army.

While the military need for Soviet intervention had diminished by the middle of May, Washington made no move to dissuade Moscow from entering the Pacific war. Japan's Ambassador Kase in Berne, however, reported otherwise. Kase told Tokyo that the Allies were frankly reluctant to have the Soviet Union enter the Pacific war. Kase perceived a breach between Moscow and the Western Allies, which he characterized as an improvement in Japan's chances for a negotiated peace:

> The Anglo-Americans have finally come to realize that the only result of their victory in Europe has been to give Russia a free hand on that continent and their only remaining hope is that Russia will not extend her influence in the Far East. Accordingly they no longer want Russia to enter the war against Japan but on the contrary are doing everything possible to prevent such a development. Although it may not be a matter of common knowledge, the Anglo-Americans have recently been fishing for a peace with Japan and there is no reason to believe that the Russians do not see through their designs.[41]

Kase appears either to have been misinformed or to have misread his sources. While the United States experienced unending difficulties with the Soviets in planning for their participation in the Pacific war, Washington was still counting on the Soviets coming in.

By the first of July, the Allied naval blockade and aerial mining campaign had effectively isolated Japan from the continent of Asia, greatly reducing the risk that the Kwantung Army in Manchuria would return home to oppose an Allied invasion of Japan. Allied leaders were optimistic about the availability of an atomic bomb in the very near future. Both Admiral King, Chief of Naval Operations, and Secretary of State Byrnes had concluded that Soviet entry into the Pacific war was no longer a military necessity.[42]

THE COMBAT STRENGTH OF THE KWANTUNG ARMY

The million-man Kwantung Army, Japan's principal military force in Manchuria since 1905, was of major concern to both the Western Allies and the Soviet Union. When the Soviets entered the Pacific war, they would face the Kwantung Army as Japan's first line of defense in northern Asia. If an Allied invasion of the Japanese home islands became necessary, U.S. and British forces had to know what role the Kwantung Army was likely to play in the defense of the homeland. Accurate information on the Kwantung Army's combat readiness was an intelligence priority.

Allied military planners had long seen the Kwantung Army as a formidable force, its strength and combat readiness unquestioned. Military planning had proceeded on the assumption that intelligence on the Kwantung Army was complete and accurate. Yet things were not as they seemed in Manchuria. Since at least February 1944, Tokyo had been stripping units from the Kwantung Army and deploying them elsewhere.

The earliest information about the transfer of units out of the Kwantung Army came from communications intelligence: Japanese Army high-frequency radio traffic intercepted at Two Rock Ranch Station in California. Decrypted messages revealed the redeployment of the Japanese 29th Division in February 1944 from the Kwantung Army to the Eighth Army in the Marianas. The following month saw the 14th Division transferred from the Kwantung Army's Third Area Army to the Palaus.

During the remainder of 1944, the Kwantung Army lost other units. The elite 1st Division left Manchuria by rail for Shanghai and ended up in Manila in November. The 8th, 9th, 10th, 23d, 24th and 28th divisions also left the Kwantung Army during 1944. The 8th Division went to Batangas, in southern Luzon. The 9th Division went to Taiwan. The 10th was transferred to Luzon. The 23d went to Manila. The 24th and 28th divisions were sent to defend Okinawa. Somewhere around mid-February 1945, the 25th and 57th divisions in Manchuria received orders to head for Kyushu. The 11th, 12th and 71st divisions were also pulled out of Manchuria in early 1945 for deployment to Luzon and elsewhere.

To cover the loss of seasoned forces, the Japanese organized six new divisions around cadres left by departing units. The new divisions were the 107th, 108th, 111th, 112th, 119th and 120th. In April, May and June, three of the newly formed divisions were redeployed. The 111th and 112th went to Saishu, and the 120th went to Keizan in southeastern Korea.[43]

U.S. intelligence reports declined to describe the changes in the Kwantung Army as reductions in fighting capability. On the contrary, under the heading "Expansion Rate of the Japanese Army," the Pacific Order of Battle Conference concluded that by April 1945 "the original level of fourteen infantry divisions was restored [within the Kwantung

Army]." On paper, the Kwantung Army appeared to be close to its original strength. In reality, it was a far less effective fighting force.

Communications intelligence wasn't the only source of information on the true combat strength of the Kwantung Army. Deputy Director of Naval Intelligence, Captain Ellis Zacharias, and a few other naval intelligence experts had seen evidence of crack Japanese Army combat units from Manchuria turning up in Leyte and other Pacific battlefields. They concluded that the Kwantung Army had become primarily a paper command.[44]

Another source of intelligence on the Kwantung Army was denied to the United States because the Chinese Nationalist government in Chunking refused to allow the OSS to collect information in Communist-held territory. Had OSS officers been permitted to infiltrate into the Manchurian regions, they undoubtedly would have confirmed that the Japanese had been steadily depleting the combat strength of the Kwantung Army to meet military commitments elsewhere in the Pacific.[45]

The Japanese were under no illusions about the lack of combat readiness of their forces in Manchuria. A candid assessment in the spring of 1945 found that "Japanese troops in China and Manchuria would together equal only about eight American divisions and that their ammunition stocks would be sufficient for only one battle."[46] By August the Kwantung Army had been stripped of all its armor and all its antitank guns. A third of its remaining 600,000 men were new, untested draftees. The average efficiency was less than 30 percent of a prewar front-line unit.[47]

The United States had ample information on which to base an accurate evaluation of the threat represented by the Kwantung Army. If American planners overstated the strength of the Kwantung Army, the fault lay with the interpretation of the available information, not with the absence of intelligence. If Washington overestimated the danger posed by the Kwantung Army, Moscow did not. Soviet units positioned along the Manchurian border took careful measure of redeployments on the other side of the line.

THE SOVIET AGENDA

Moscow's strategy for entering the Pacific war included the expectation that the USSR would expand its influence in postwar Asia. The Kremlin's strategy was based on rapid-fire diplomatic and military actions delivered on a timetable that would minimize the risk of heavy casualties.

In April of 1945, Moscow attached General Kuzma Derevyanko to Major General Charles Willoughby's G-2 staff in Manila in April of 1945.[48] Ostensibly, General Derevyanko's assignment was to coordinate the pending Soviet operations in Manchuria with American plans for an invasion of Japan. His presence in the midst of America's Pacific theater planners gave Moscow an excellent window through which it could monitor the U.S. invasion timetable. That timetable was important to Moscow's planning.

With the surrender of Germany, the Soviets moved massive combat forces across Siberia, positioning them along the Manchurian border. On the diplomatic front, Moscow was ready to extricate itself from its 1941 Neutrality Pact with Japan, hand Tokyo a declaration of war, and then unleash its Far Eastern divisions against a weak, largely untrained Kwantung Army in Manchuria. When the Western Allies mounted their invasion of the Japanese home islands, the Red Army would drive down through Manchuria, China and Korea to share in the victory, retrieve lands lost to Japan in the early years of the century and expand the Soviet sphere of influence in postwar Asia.

It was a strategy that might have succeeded. But the uncertain summer of 1945 held no guarantees – not even for the Kremlin's carefully laid plans.

The American and British Combined Chiefs met with the Soviet Chiefs of Staff only once, on 24 July 1945, to coordinate strategy in the Far East. The Soviets confided to the JCS that they had thirty divisions in Siberia. They would have to double that number, they said, before attacking the Japanese forces in Manchuria. General Antonov, the Red Army chief of staff, said they would be ready to start operations against the Japanese in the latter half of August. The exact date, he said, had not been determined.[49]

Antonov defined the Russian objective in the Far East to be the destruction of the Japanese in Manchuria and the occupation of the Liaotung Peninsula. After the defeat of Japan, he said, Moscow intended to withdraw all Soviet troops from Manchuria.[50]

The U.S. gave the Soviets order-of-battle intelligence on Japanese troop strength and a broad picture of the Allied position in the Pacific. Admiral King and General Arnold discussed the effect of sea and air operations against the Japanese forces. General Antonov asked particularly about the likelihood of any U.S. operations against the Kuriles or Korea. General Marshall said the U.S. had no plans for amphibious operations against Korea.[51]

Moscow's and Washington's plans for the timing of the Soviet intervention were not quite the same. The JCS wanted Moscow to come in at least three months before the Allied invasion of the home islands. That would ensure that Soviet forces kept the Kwantung Army occupied in Manchuria when U.S. troops began landing on Kyushu. Realistically, however, the JCS expected the Soviets would wait until after the U.S. invasion had begun. In any event, the timing of the Soviet Union's entry would be based on two factors. First, they would wait until they had sufficient forces in Siberia to be confident of victory over the Kwantung Army. Second, they would delay until they believed the defeat of Japan was imminent.

Meanwhile, Moscow was preparing the diplomatic landscape by backing away from the April 1941 Neutrality Pact with Japan. In a brief statement from Moscow on 5 April 1945, Soviet foreign minister Molotov announced that the Soviet Union would not renew that Neutrality Pact. The situation had "basically altered," Molotov said, since the two countries signed the pact. Since then, Germany had invaded the Soviet Union, and Japan

had attacked the United States and Britain. In Moscow's view, the changed circumstances had now made a prolongation of the pact "impossible."[52]

When Japan's Ambassador Sato asked Molotov about the ominous declaration, Molotov assured him that in spite of the 5 April announcement, the Soviet government would continue to honor the terms of the pact, which was supposed to remain in effect until at least April 1946.[53]

Sato was realistic about the Soviet Union's probable motives. Shortly after receiving Molotov's assurances, he passed a warning to Foreign Minister Togo:

> Although one of the reasons given by Russia for abrogating the Neutrality Pact – i.e. that Japan has been aiding Germany – has now become meaningless in view of Germany's unconditional surrender. Japan is still at war with Russia's allies, America and England. Russia, therefore, may use this as a justification to enter the war against Japan at any time she desires; moreover world opinion would welcome such a development since it would bring the war to an earlier end. Indeed we must recognize that Russia, who generally has been checkmated in her relations with Japan since the time of the Revolution, has never been blessed with such an opportunity to settle her accounts with us. . . .[54]

If Tokyo was under any illusions about the Soviet Union's motives in the Far East, subsequent reporting from Sato should have made Moscow's intentions clear. In one eight-day trip across Siberia, Japanese couriers counted 381 eastbound Soviet military trains.

> . . . among the weapons loaded on these military trains were 9800 automobiles, 60 tanks, 200 self-propelled cannon, 220 airplanes (180 assault aircraft, 40 bombers), 450 anti-tank guns, 89 rocket guns, 300 barges for crossing streams, 83 pontoon bridges, plus 170,000 troops and 2900 horses. On the Manchouli branch line there was very brisk shipment of munitions, and 45 eastbound munitions trains were seen. The impression [is] that they were re-inforcing troops on the Outer Mongolian frontier. It appears that present eastbound munitions shipments have reached the maximum capacity of the Siberian Railway. Everywhere they observed construction of sidings and expansion of old facilities.[55]

PREPARING FOR OLYMPIC

The Pentagon had been planning the invasion of the Japanese home islands since mid-1944. Nine American divisions organized into three corps would constitute the invasion force for OLYMPIC, the assault on Kyushu. The three corps would land simultaneously on three separate beaches, drive inland, secure the airfields and encircle Kagoshima Bay. A fourth corps, composed of two divisions, would form a floating reserve. The ground forces for OLYMPIC would come from units already in the Pacific.[56]

Arrayed against the Allied invasion force was a host of Japanese units, including eight seasoned combat divisions.[57] ULTRA gave the Allies a steady flow of intelligence on the Japanese buildup on Kyushu. On 7 April civilians were evacuated from coastal areas. Military officials ordered the mining of several Kyushu bays. Between 30,000 and 60,000

Japanese troops left the Asian mainland from ports in Korea and sailed for Kyushu during the second week of April. By the end of April, two new general armies, the First and Second, had been organized.

As spring turned to summer, ULTRA reported the movement of other units to Kyushu: the 25th and 57th divisions from Manchuria, the 3d Amphibious Brigade from the northern Kuriles to Kagoshima Bay, the 77th Division from northern Japan. More units began appearing in communications emanating from Kyushu: the 18th Armored Regiment, and the 6th and 56th Depot divisions. ULTRA unveiled the locations of suicide motorboats, fuel allocations for midget suicide submarines and human torpedoes – all aimed at a stubborn, last-ditch defense.[58]

The Army installed heavy artillery in caves to cover the landing areas along the beaches. Soldiers, conscripted civilians, children, old men and women built bunkers, field fortifications and connecting tunnels along the shoreline. Behind these, they erected more bunkers and tunnels to shelter the forces that would counterattack the invaders. Kyushu's heavily forested mountains lent themselves perfectly to a defensive strategy.

Allied planners gained some insight into the thinking of senior Japanese officers from cables filed by diplomats from neutral countries who were posted to Tokyo and reporting to their home capitals:

> Public attention is completely centered on the Okinawa struggle which, according to the admiral in command of the Japanese Navy, should decide the war in the Pacific. Imperial headquarters continues to state that 400 (American) ships have been sunk or damaged; and propagandists are using this to draw the conclusion that the (American) fleet has been so weakened that it is unable to invade Japan. Nevertheless, the fortification of coasts and mountains continues, giving the impression that this country, like Germany, is disposed to prosecute the war to its very end without the least probability of victory. Numerous changes are being made in the Army High Command, and a National Guard is being organized to fight as guerrillas against the invaders.[59]

Between the early part of the year and the uncertain summer of 1945, the number of ground troops in Kyushu increased from 150,000 to 545,000. The heaviest concentrations were in the southern part of the island, where Allied forces would land.[60] The Japanese had calculated – accurately – that the attack on the home islands would come first at southern Kyushu. They also guessed correctly that the American objective on southern Kyushu was to gain naval and air bases for an assault on the Tokyo-Yokohama area.[61]

On 25 May, the Joint Chiefs set 1 November as the date they would launch OLYMPIC. No one doubted that casualties would be high. Given the fanatic resistance the Japanese had mounted on Iwo Jima and Okinawa, an assault on the larger land mass of the home islands could produce a bloodbath of unparalleled scale. Iwo Jima had proved the deadly effectiveness of suicidal cave and bunker defenses. Okinawa had shown that last-ditch ground defenses coupled with kamikazes could be devastating.

Documented casualty predictions for the assault on the Japanese homeland vary wildly, from preinvasion estimates as low as 31,000 for the first month's fighting[62] to

postwar figures in excess of one million American and 500,000 British soldiers killed.[63] Although the highest casualty forecasts appeared only after the war ended – largely to justify the use of the atomic bomb – the numbers tell only part of the story.

An overview of events unfolding in that uncertain summer of 1945 points to a maximum effort by American political leaders to end the war with the smallest possible cost in human lives.

ALAMOGORDO

President Truman first learned of the existence of the Manhattan Project on his second day in office, from Secretary of War Stimson. The new president instructed Stimson to convene a blue-ribbon committee to advise him on the ramifications of the bomb and to make recommendations for its future use. Chaired by Stimson, the panel – known innocuously as the Interim Committee – was composed of Assistant Secretary of War George Harrison as alternate chairman; Assistant Secretary of State William L. Clayton; Undersecretary of the Navy Ralph Bard; the Manhattan Project's three administrative scientists, Vannevar Bush, James B. Conant and Karl T. Compton; and James F. Byrnes, former head of the Office of War Mobilization, who would serve as Truman's personal representative.[64]

The committee, which met several times between mid-May and mid-June, never seriously debated the intent to use the bomb. Their only question was how to use it and against what kind of target. At no time did the committee discuss the invasion of Japan or the bomb's possible role in preventing that invasion.[65]

On the afternoon of 16 July 1945, on the eve of the Potsdam Conference, President Truman had just finished a tour of Berlin and returned to his headquarters at Babelsberg. Secretary of War Stimson handed him the following cable, relayed through the War Department from Alamogordo, New Mexico:

TOP SECRET

URGENT

WAR 32887

FROM HARRISON FOR MR STIMSON

PATIENT OPERATED ON THIS MORNING. DIAGNOSIS NOT YET COMPLETE BUT RESULTS SEEM SATISFACTORY AND ALREADY EXCEED EXPECTATIONS. LOCAL PRESS RELEASE NECESSARY AS INTEREST EXTENDS GREAT DISTANCE. DR. GROVES PLEASED. HE RETURNS TOMORROW. I WILL KEEP YOU POSTED.

The moment Truman read the message he knew that the atomic bomb had been successfully detonated. At that juncture, no one knew how powerful an operational atomic bomb would actually be. Estimates ranged from the equivalent of 700 to 15,000 one-ton bombs.[66]

The successful test at Alamogordo did cause a hardening of the American position toward Japan. From that day on, American leaders would no longer accept a negotiated settlement. Unconditional surrender became an absolute requirement for peace.[67]

POTSDAM

The events at Potsdam offered no clue that atomic bombs might be available for use against Japan in August. Truman and Churchill continued to treat the bomb as a closely guarded secret. If Stalin was aware of how far development of the bomb had progressed, he gave no hint of it at Potsdam. On 24 July Truman casually mentioned to the Soviet leader that the U.S. had a new weapon of unusual destructive force. Stalin showed no outward interest. He said only that he was glad to hear it and hoped the U.S. would make "good use of it against the Japanese."[68] The Potsdam Proclamation was a stern warning and an ultimatum to Japan. The term unconditional surrender appeared only once and then only in reference to the "unconditional surrender of all the Japanese armed forces."

> (1) WE – the President of the United States, the President of the National Government of the Republic of China, and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, representing the hundreds of millions of our countrymen, have conferred and agree that Japan shall be given an opportunity to end this war.
>
> (2) The prodigious land, sea and air forces of the United States, the British Empire and of China, many times reinforced by their armies and air fleets from the west, are poised to strike the final blows upon Japan. This military power is sustained and inspired by the determination of all the Allied Nations to prosecute the war against Japan until she ceases to resist.
>
> (3) The result of the futile and senseless German resistance to the might of the aroused free peoples of the world stands forth in awful clarity as an example to the people of Japan. The might that now converges on Japan is immeasurably greater than that which, when applied to the resisting Nazis, necessarily laid waste to the lands, the industry, and the method of life of the whole German people. The full application of our military power, backed by our resolve, will mean the inevitable and complete destruction of the Japanese armed forces and just as inevitably the utter devastation of the Japanese homeland.
>
> (4) The time has come for Japan to decide whether she will continue to be controlled by those self-willed militaristic advisers whose unintelligent calculations have brought the Empire of Japan to the threshold of annihilation, or whether she will follow the path of reason.
>
> (5) Following are our terms. We will not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay.

(6) There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world.

(7) Until such a new order is established and until there is convincing proof that Japan's war-making power is destroyed, points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall be occupied to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth.

(8) The terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine.

(9) The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives.

(10) We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established.

(11) Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy and permit the exaction of just reparations in kind, but not those which would enable her to re-arm for war. To this end, access to, as distinguished from control of, raw materials shall be permitted. Eventual Japanese participation in world trade relations shall be permitted.

(12) The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government.

(13) We call upon the government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.[69]

President Truman knew Japan was in desperate straits. He also knew the United States would have one or more atomic bombs available in less than a month. Yet, he remained firm in his determination to get the Soviets into the Pacific war.[70]

By the time the Potsdam Conference ended in late July, the Allies had no real requirement for Soviet military help. Given the intelligence available to Truman, it seems almost inconceivable that he believed that Soviet forces were needed to prevent the Kwantung Army from hindering the invasion of Kyushu.

Moreover, Truman clearly distrusted Stalin. From MAGIC intercepts of Japanese diplomatic cables, Truman knew Stalin had misrepresented Tokyo's peace overtures to Moscow. Truman knew the Soviets would enter the war against Japan in less than a month. He could do nothing to prevent that. But he resolved to keep the Soviets out of any role in postwar Japan. He made up his mind at Potsdam that General MacArthur would be in total control after the Allied victory over Japan.[71]

If Truman couldn't stop the Soviets from coming into the Pacific war, then his only option was to attempt to use their entry to advantage. In the weeks following the Potsdam conference, the Soviet Union's entry into the war against Japan became one delicately balanced component in a larger American strategy to end the fighting short of invading Japan proper. The architect of that strategy was Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson.

THE STRATEGY OF SHOCKS

In the final months of the war, President Truman relied heavily on two key advisors: Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall and Secretary of War Henry Stimson. Both men had served throughout the conflict, and both had intimate knowledge of the Manhattan Project, the invasion plans, and the problems surrounding the entry of the Soviets into the war against Japan. Stimson had guided the Manhattan Project from its inception through the successful detonation at Alamogordo. The summer of 1945 found the seventy-seven-year-old secretary of war so frail and ailing that he had to husband every ounce of energy. Yet Stimson, perhaps more than any other individual, shaped the strategy that would bring the war in the Pacific to a successful conclusion.

The blueprint for ending the Pacific war evolved in stages, with each iteration ending in a costly Allied invasion of the Japanese home islands. The most troubling aspect of the invasion strategy for Truman was the number of casualties. At a White House meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 18 June, the president voiced grave concern over the toll of the Okinawa campaign. He wanted the assurance of the JCS that an invasion of Kyushu would not repeat the savagery of Okinawa. The military chiefs could not give the president that assurance.

General Marshall, extrapolating from American losses on Luzon, estimated U.S. forces on Kyushu might take 31,000 casualties in the first thirty days. Fleet Admiral William Leahy, pointing to the 35 percent casualty rate on Okinawa, thought Marshall's estimate was low. A 35 percent casualty rate on Kyushu would translate into a quarter-million men killed or wounded.[72]

Through all of this, Stimson remained convinced that the Allies should avoid an invasion of the home islands if at all possible. He had been to Japan before the war. He had toured Kyushu. He knew the terrain was well suited for "a last-ditch defense such as has been made on Iwo Jima and Okinawa."[73]

Stimson was persuaded that the Allies could end the war quickly if they were to assure Tokyo that the emperor's position would be protected. Along with Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew, Stimson had been actively seeking a modification of the unconditional surrender formula. Exaggerating the potential cost of the invasion would have served Stimson's interests, and he may have been the source of some of the higher casualty estimates.

Arguments over whether the casualty estimates were high or low miss an important point. The United States was in its fourth year of war. Victory was in sight, and families were anxious to have their fighting men return home. OLYMPIC would have taken an enormous toll on both sides. Moreover, an Allied invasion of the home islands ran the risk of driving the Japanese people deeper into the arms of the militarists. Stopping the war short of invasion not only would save American lives, but it would save the Japanese people from a hopeless and bloody defense of the homeland.

Henry Stimson had developed a political-military strategy designed to force Japan's surrender without the need to invade the home islands. The strategy was based on Stimson's belief that Japan could be forced to capitulate if the Allies were to deliver a series of dramatic shocks – shocks so potent that even the diehard militarists would lay down their arms. The shocks would come in rapid succession and with escalating severity.[74] The invasion remained part of the overall plan, but if the series-of-shocks strategy worked, Tokyo would surrender before the Allies launched OLYMPIC on 1 November. In large measure, the success of the strategy depended on timing.

It is instructive to revisit these events of the summer of 1945 to see the effects of the string of escalating blows delivered to the tottering Japanese war machine. For at the time, the success of the series-of-shocks strategy was by no means assured.

The destruction wrought by B-29 Superfortresses in the spring was a precursor of shocks to come. Once Guam, Saipan and Tinian came under U.S. control, strategic bombing of Japanese cities became a regular occurrence. From 10 March on, B-29s conducted low-level incendiary raids on Tokyo, burning out much of the city and killing tens of thousands of people. The air attacks intensified through the spring and into the summer. On the afternoon of 23 May for example, 562 B-29s laid waste to residential and industrial areas along the west side of Tokyo harbor. That night more air raids destroyed another five square miles of the city. On 25 May 502 Superfortresses struck the heart of Tokyo with 3,262 tons of incendiary bombs, incinerating nearly seventeen square miles of the capital's financial, commercial and government districts. Four nights later, over 500 B-29s hit Yokohama, Japan's fifth largest city, setting 85 percent of the metropolitan area aflame. Devastating raids on Osaka and Kobe followed.[75] By the middle of June, major portions of Japan's six largest cities had been reduced to embers.

MAGIC intercept provided the Allies with an inside view of the effect of the bombing, like the one expressed by Ambassador Sato from Moscow:

> [M]y deepest concern is the aerial bombardment of Japan. Although we may feel that our stubborn fighting in the Okinawa area has made the enemy realize that he is not prepared for

> landings in Japan, it is still impossible to devise a complete defense against enemy air raids from the Marianas. The continuation of these air attacks will necessarily weaken our military strength and, once the enemy's European air forces are transferred to the Pacific, our damages will exceed anything we can imagine, so that we may be facing the same situation that led to the downfall of Hitler Germany.[76]

Japan's Ambassador Kase in Switzerland offered similar views:

> [The Americans] are bombing our important cities and factory zones almost daily. . . . Reflecting on the situation in which we find ourselves, I feel very keenly that we must renounce all the consolations of self-intoxication and keep foremost in our minds the necessity of seeing the truth as it actually is.[77]

In addition to the bombing, the aerial mining of Japan's home waters increased through the spring. By May the Japanese were losing more ships to mines than to Allied submarines.

By late July, two more key elements of the series-of-shocks strategy were in place. The test at Alamogordo had virtually assured the availability of an atomic bomb by August. Stalin had agreed to enter the Pacific war.

The shock that would have the most lasting and devastating impact – the atomic bomb – was an unknown quantity that summer. Only a small circle of top advisors were aware of it: Secretary of State Byrnes, Secretary of War Stimson, Chairman of the JCS Admiral Leahy, Army Chief of Staff General Marshall, Chief of the Army Air Corps General Arnold and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral King. Ever since the test at Alamogordo in May, Stimson clearly thought of the bomb as perhaps the most important of the shocks aimed at getting Japan to surrender. Admiral Leahy, on the other hand, was convinced that the bomb would never work. Neither Stimson, nor Truman nor the Joint Chiefs saw the atomic bomb as the ultimate weapon that would single-handedly end the war. Even with the availability of an atomic bomb virtually assured and with Japan all but isolated by the naval blockade and aerial mining campaign, uncertainties lingered. The military leaders, unsure of what effect the bomb would have, either physically or psychologically, advised the president to go ahead with the invasion plan.[78]

If the effect of an atomic bomb on the outcome of the war was uncertain, so too was the role of the Soviet Union. Stimson and Marshall saw Moscow's entry as a potentially decisive shock that could force Japan to surrender.[79] The importance that Truman's top advisors attached to the Soviet Union was shared, albeit unknowingly, by Japan's Ambassador Kase in Switzerland:

> (1) The Anglo-American and Russian interests in the Far East will from now on tend to clash. . . . (2) While the British and the Americans think they are sure of victory in the Pacific, they do not want to make great sacrifices of life. (3) The end of the war in Europe has produced a certain dejection (about continuing to fight) among the people, which may affect the governments as well, thus, in all probability, the Anglo-Americans would be happy to end the Pacific war victoriously, before the Soviet comes in against Japan. Making a direct peace offer would be the

> most decisive procedure.... However, if we took such a step without bringing the Russians into the matter and if the terms of our offer were not approximately satisfactory to the Anglo-Americans, there is a strong possibility that we would be offering a temptation to the Russians to enter the war in order to insure a voice in the disposition of East Asia.... If Russia were to attack us, the situation facing the Empire would get completely out of hand....[80]

Leaders in both Washington and Tokyo understood that Moscow would enter the Pacific war for reasons of its own and on the Kremlin's timetable. The limits of that timetable were somewhat predictable, and they fit rather well into Stimson's series-of-shocks strategy.

The Potsdam Proclamation of 26 July 1945 clearly warned Tokyo that overwhelming destructive power was bearing down on Japan. Tokyo responded to the proclamation with the now-famous Suzuki statement to reporters: "The Potsdam Proclamation, in my opinion, is just a rehash of the Cairo Declaration, and the government therefore does not consider it of great importance. We must mokusatsu it." Mokusatsu was translated literally as "kill with silence," although Suzuki later said he intended it to mean "no comment," an expression for which there is no Japanese equivalent. Americans interpreted mokusatsu as "ignore" or "treat with silent contempt," giving rise to the *New York Times* headline of 30 July 1945: "Japan Officially Turns Down Allied Surrender Ultimatum."[81]

On 3 August, Ambassador Sato in Moscow urged the Foreign Office to end the war before the Allied invasion of the homeland began.[82] Sato had no way of knowing that the launch date for OLYMPIC was still three months away. But that was of little consequence at the moment. The shocks were coming faster now. The next one was already in the queue.

President Truman had already ordered the Tinian-based 509th Composite Group of the 20th Air Force to deliver the first atomic bomb over Japan "as soon as weather will permit visual bombing after about 3 August 1945. . . ."[83] Although the first atomic bomb wouldn't fall on Hiroshima until 6 August, the 509th Composite Group had presidential authority to drop the bomb barely a week after the Potsdam Proclamation.

Tokyo's negative response to the Potsdam Proclamation guaranteed the devastation that occurred on 6 August 1945. Hiroshima was Japan's eighth largest city, headquarters of the 2d General Army, a metropolis virtually undamaged by the war. At 0815:17, a B-29 Superfortress nicknamed "Enola Gay" released the first atomic bomb ever used in warfare. At 0815:40, Hiroshima was obliterated in a blinding flash and a ball of purple fire. The initial blast killed 100,000 people. At least 200,000 would ultimately die as a result of the bomb.[84]

The day after the first atomic bomb destroyed the city of Hiroshima, Foreign Minister Togo continued his wholly unrealistic pursuit of Soviet aid with a "very urgent" cable to Ambassador Sato in Moscow:

> The situation is becoming more and more pressing, and we would like to know at once the explicit attitude of the Russians. So will you put forth still greater efforts to get a reply from them in haste?[85]

The rapid-fire shocks delivered by the United States were also having an effect in Moscow. There was no doubt inside the Kremlin that Japan's collapse was imminent. Massed along the Manchurian border, awaiting orders from Moscow, were 1.5 million Red Army troops. It was time to pull the trigger.

Ambassador Sato was at long last granted an audience with Soviet foreign minister Molotov. At 1700 hours on 8 August, Sato arrived at the Foreign Ministry, and Molotov read him the Soviet declaration of war. Sato tried to send an encrypted cable from Moscow to warn Tokyo about this surprising turn of events. His message never reached Japan. Two hours later the Soviet 5th, 15th, 35th, 36th and 39th armies roared across the Manchurian border.[86]

THE EMPEROR'S DECISION TO SURRENDER

The Japanese government was still reeling from the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima when news of the next shock arrived. Before sunrise on 9 August, the radio room in the Foreign Office and the monitoring facilities of the Domei News Agency picked up a radio broadcast from Moscow announcing the Soviet invasion of Manchuria.[87] These dual shocks gave the peace advocates in Tokyo a real opportunity to shake the government loose from the iron grip of the militarists.

As the morning wore on, the emperor asked the Privy Seal to contact Premier Suzuki and urge him to take action. At 1100 hours Suzuki told the members of the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War that the latest events made continuation of the war impossible. Their only course was to accept the Potsdam Proclamation. The chiefs of staff and the war minister were still unwilling to accept outright surrender. Discussions grew heated. The debate lasted for two hours, during which they received news that the Allies had dropped another atomic bomb, this one on Nagasaki. With the discussion deadlocked, they abandoned the meeting and took the Potsdam Proclamation to the cabinet. The rapidity and severity of this latest series of shocks had stunned and confused the Japanese leadership. Reports reaching the capital – from Hiroshima, Manchuria and now Nagasaki – failed to convey the reality of these grave events. Everything was happening too fast for the leaders to absorb. The cabinet met until 1730, then recessed without reaching a decision.

That evening, while the cabinet was in recess, Premier Suzuki and Foreign Minister Togo went to the imperial palace. Suzuki proposed an immediate imperial conference, and the emperor agreed. Emperor Hirohito listened to the arguments of the civilian and military leaders. Suzuki recommended that they accept the Potsdam ultimatum "with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler." At ten minutes before midnight,

the emperor rendered his decision: "I . . . give my sanction to the proposal to accept the Allied proclamation on the basis outlined by the Foreign Minister."[88]

By the time the rest of Japan awakened on Friday morning, 10 August, cables containing the nation's conditional acceptance of the Potsdam ultimatum were on their way to Berne and Stockholm, there to be forwarded to Moscow, London, Washington, and Chungking.[89]

Togo, as the Greater East Asia minister, informed Japan's representatives in Manchuria, China, Indochina, Thailand, and Burma that because of "various foreign and domestic circumstances," a surrender offer had been made to the Allies. The next day, he added that the "circumstances" referred to "of course include the problem of the atomic bomb." He instructed his representatives to pass on the news to the governments to which they were accredited.[90]

Some confusion arose over the method of transmission and the translations of the surrender offer. In the meantime the Domei News Agency broadcast a version that reached President Truman at 0733 on 10 August. Truman summoned Leahy, Byrnes, Stimson, and Forrestal and read them the proposal. Leahy, Byrnes, and Forrestal were opposed to keeping the emperor. To the ailing Stimson, retention of the emperor was a practical matter. The Allies, Stimson argued, would need Hirohito's help to effect the surrender of the Japanese armies scattered throughout Asia. Leahy ultimately supported Stimson "to save us from a score of bloody Iwo Jimas and Okinawas all over China and the New Netherlands." Byrnes was against retreating "from our demand for unconditional surrender."

Truman decided to wait until the official surrender came through diplomatic channels before releasing a reply, but he ordered Byrnes to start drafting an answer at once.

Shortly before noon President Truman was informed that the Swiss embassy had just received the official Japanese surrender offer. As soon as it arrived, Truman called an emergency cabinet meeting and, at 1400 hours, began reading Byrnes' reply. It said that from the moment of surrender, the authority of the emperor and the Japanese government to rule the state would be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers and that the ultimate form of government in Japan would be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people. Everyone agreed that this should reassure the Japanese about the future position of their emperor without compromising the basic principle of unconditional surrender. Secretary of State Byrnes sent the Allied response through the Swiss to Tokyo.

Meanwhile, trouble was brewing in Japan.

REVOLT OF THE MILITARISTS

The surrender offer notwithstanding, Japan's military leaders were still vowing to continue the war. A Southern Army staff order issued by Field Marshal Terauchi stated:

> The plans of the Southern Army have changed in no way whatever. Each Army under our command . . . will establish a unified and firmly united military discipline, and will go ahead to strengthen its war preparations more and more.[91]

The conditions Suzuki had set for the emperor's continued sovereignty did not satisfy the militarists. Even as late as 9 August senior military officers were still demanding major concessions. At a thirteen-hour meeting of the Supreme War Council, the Army and Navy allegedly held out for the following: No change in the national structure. The Imperial Family shall not be made to bear responsibility for the war, and the Imperial system shall be maintained. Enemy troops shall not occupy Japan proper.[92]

Even with the emperor's surrender offer on its way to the Allies through neutral capitals in Europe, the chief of the General Staff issued this statement:

> In order to preserve the national policy and to defend our Imperial soil, the Imperial Army and Navy shall by no means return the sword to the scabbard, even though this should mean the total annihilation of the armed forces of the entire nation. . . . All units, with the above-mentioned determination of the Empire in mind, will insure that the fighting morale is maintained at all costs. . . .[93]

On 12 August, the day after the Allies accepted the emperor's offer to surrender, the vice chief of the General Staff released another fight-on-to-the-end message:

> The Imperial Army and Navy are resolutely determined to continue their efforts to preserve the national structure . . . even if it means their destruction. . . . You are well aware of the fact that as a final move toward the preservation of the national structure, diplomatic negotiations have been opened. The Army, however, . . . is striving to carry on the national policy. Unless the fore-mentioned condition is fulfilled, we will continue the war to the bitter end.[94]

The simmering cauldron of Army fanaticism bubbled over on the morning of 13 August, when an American B-29 dropped a trail of leaflets over the center of Tokyo announcing the surrender. The text had been hastily written by the Office of War Information, translated into Japanese and sent by wirephoto to Saipan:

> To the Japanese people:
>
> These American planes are not dropping bombs on you today. They are dropping leaflets instead because the Japanese Government has offered to surrender, and every Japanese has a right to know the terms of that offer and the reply made by it to the United States Government on behalf of itself, the British, the Chinese, and the Russians. Your government now has a chance to end the war immediately.[95]

The leaflets were airdropped after the surrender announcement had been released in Washington – but before the Tokyo government informed the Japanese people of the

emperor's decision to capitulate. Privy Seal Kido picked up one of the leaflets on the palace grounds and immediately recognized the danger it posed. He took the leaflet to the emperor. If the leaflets fell into the hands of the troops – who knew nothing of the peace negotiations – they could cause an uprising. In an attempt to head off a revolt by the armed forces, the emperor agreed to call an imperial conference and inform the councilors of his determination to end the war.[96]

Word of the surrender decision was already spreading through the armed forces high command. General Anami, the minister of war, told the commanding general of the Imperial Palace gendarmerie about the emperor's decision. The gendarmerie commander then informed his own subordinates. Several of the younger officers were highly incensed. An Army Air Corps captain seized a plane, took off and dropped leaflets over Tokyo urging the people to resist the surrender decision. Two lieutenants tried to assassinate key members of the emperor's household department, including Marquis Kido and the premier, Admiral Suzuki.[97]

At the hastily called imperial conference, the military leaders tried to persuade the emperor to keep on fighting. Army Chief of Staff General Umezu pressed for a continuation of the war. If surrender meant the end of the national essence, he argued, then the entire nation should be sacrificed in a final battle. His words were echoed by Navy chief of staff Admiral Toyoda. War Minister Anami wanted to fight on unless the Allies promised to guarantee the emperor's safety. There was still a chance to win, and if not, at least they could end the war on better terms. But the emperor overruled the military, saying, "I want you all to agree with my conclusions. I have listened carefully to all of the arguments opposing Japan's acceptance of the Allied reply as it stands, but my own view has not changed. . . ."[98]

When the imperial conference ended, Anami addressed the military chiefs in a successful effort to keep high-ranking officers out of any coup attempt. "The Emperor has decided to end the war," he said. "It is therefore proper that we abide by the imperial wish. . . ."[99]

Just below the top echelons of command, however, military officers were determined to keep on fighting. The Navy vice minister and the vice chief of the Naval General Staff issued a joint order expressing the Navy's attitude as a "firm determination to prosecute our holy war to the last man . . . although it is expected that the enemy's war of stratagems will create many complications (in regard to the 10 August note), we will not be taken in by them and wish everyone to carry out his duties to the very end in a thorough manner."[100]

Rebellious officers, led by Army major Kenji Hatanaka, continued to pressure the war minister to join the military conspiracy. They descended on Anami at Army Headquarters and demanded his immediate assistance. Anami equivocated, leaving the conspirators in his office with the excuse that he had to sound out the chief of staff. A short time later the conspirators confronted Anami as he was returning. Unable to dodge the issue any longer, he told the conspirators, "After discussing the matter with the Chief of Staff, I've decided

not to support your action." He refused to discuss the matter further and left for a cabinet meeting in the prime minister's underground conference room.[101]

Having failed to enlist senior officers in the coup, Major Hatanaka resorted to lies in a desperate search for support. He swore to Colonel Toyojiro Haga, commander of the Second Regiment of the Konoye Division that Generals Anami, Umezu, Tanaka, and Mori had joined the conspiracy. Colonel Haga accepted Hatanaka's lie and reluctantly agreed to go along. When General Mori, commander of the Konoye Division, refused to join the coup, Hatanaka shot and killed him. Mori's death eliminated serious opposition to the coup within the Konoye Division. Hatanaka then used the dead General Mori's seal to authenticate an order to the Konoye Division's regimental commanders to move on the palace. Konoye Division units totaling more than a thousand men quickly cordoned off the palace grounds.[102]

On the evening of 14 August, the palace was virtually under siege. With a coup d'etat actively under way in the capital, the emperor secretly recorded two copies of the speech he would deliver to the nation the following day. Rebel forces tried without success to find and destroy the recordings. Chaos reigned throughout the night. Major Hatanaka bicycled around the city trying to muster support, but in the end the coup attempt failed.

Shortly after dawn, Major Hatanaka and Lieutenant Colonel Jiro Shiizaki, who had remained steadfastly with Hatanaka from the beginning of the conspiracy, headed for the plaza in front of the Imperial Palace. After passing out leaflets calling on the people to prevent the surrender, Hatanaka drew the sidearm he had used to kill General Mori and shot himself in the forehead. Colonel Shiizaki thrust a sword into his middle, then put a pistol to his head and pulled the trigger. Organized opposition to the surrender was finally over.[103]

The day was still young when Radio Tokyo stunned its domestic listeners with the announcement that the emperor would broadcast a message to the nation at noon. Those who owned radios invited friends, relatives and neighbors to join them in listening to the historic event. Around the country, schools, factories and offices installed loudspeakers. At noon the Japanese public heard their emperor's voice for the first time as he read the Imperial Rescript:

> To Our good and loyal subjects:
>
> After pondering deeply the general trends of the world and the actual conditions obtaining in Our Empire today, We have decided to effect a settlement of the present situation by resorting to an extraordinary measure. We have ordered Our Government to communicate to the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, China, and the Soviet Union that Our Empire accepts the provisions of their Joint Declaration.

Allied instructions that would end the fighting were radioed to Tokyo through Switzerland:

> You are to . . . Direct prompt cessation of hostilities by Japanese forces, informing the Supreme Commander for the Allied Power of the effective date and hour of such cessation. . . . Send

> emissaries at once to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Power with information on the disposition of the Japanese forces and commanders and fully empowered to make any arrangements directed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Power....

Those on the Allied side who had pressed for retention of the emperor as a necessary element in the surrender process were vindicated as Japan's armed forces throughout Asia signaled their compliance with the emperor's command. ULTRA provided the evidence of the response to the Imperial Rescript as radio messages poured into Tokyo. Combat units from China in the north to Java in the south radioed that "the only road to follow now is united obedience to the Emperor."[104]

THE END OF THE UNCERTAIN SUMMER

The series of shocks delivered against Japan had forced her surrender. No single shock by itself would likely have achieved that aim. The atomic bomb had worked. By itself it had not – and probably could not have – ended the war. But the bomb had clearly been a key component in the Allied strategy. The Soviet Union entered the Pacific war as expected, once Moscow saw that Japan's capitulation was imminent. The Kwantung Army in Manchuria performed as one might have anticipated from the available intelligence. Stripped of armor, artillery and seasoned combat units, the once-vaunted force of a million men, now shrunk to barely 600,000 troops, was crushed by overwhelming Soviet military power in fourteen days. The emperor's command to surrender was obeyed by Japan's far-flung armed forces, although compliance remained uncertain until the end. Had the Allies not employed the awesome series of shocks, with the implied threat of more to come, the coup d'etat by dissident army officers might have gained enough support to undermine imperial authority.

Communications intelligence painted a unique picture of Japan in World War II, even if that picture was sometimes incomplete and less than razor-sharp. Nor was communications intelligence the only brush on the canvas. Allied decision makers acted on other information as well – on the recommendations of presidential advisors, on the political assessments of the president, and on the experienced judgment of senior military officers and seasoned battlefield commanders.

As those last months of the Second World War were unfolding, no one could be sure how the final chapter would play out. History held her uncertainties of the summer of 1945 in doubt until the very end.

THE INSTRUMENT OF SURRENDER

September 2, 1945 (Tokyo Time)

We, acting by command of and in behalf of the Emperor of Japan, the Japanese Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters, hereby accept the provisions set forth in the declaration issued by the heads of the Governments of the United States, China and Great Britain on 26 July 1945, at Potsdam, and subsequently adhered to by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which four powers are hereafter referred to as the Allied Powers.

We hereby proclaim the unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers of the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters and of all Japanese armed forces and all armed forces under Japanese control wherever situated.

We hereby command all Japanese forces wherever situated and the Japanese people to cease hostilities forthwith, to preserve and save from damage all ships, aircraft, and military and civil property and to comply with all requirements which may be imposed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers or by agencies of the Japanese Government at his direction.

We hereby command the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters to issue at once orders to the Commanders of all Japanese forces and all forces under Japanese control wherever situated to surrender unconditionally themselves and all forces under their control.

We hereby command all civil, military and naval officials to obey and enforce all proclamations, orders and directives deemed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers to be proper to effectuate this surrender and issued by him or under his authority and we direct all such officials to remain at their posts and to continue to perform their non-combatant duties unless specifically relieved by him or under his authority.

We hereby undertake for the Emperor, the Japanese Government and their successors to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration in good faith, and to issue whatever orders and take whatever action may be required by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers or by any other designated representative of the Allied Powers for the purpose of giving effect to that Declaration.

We hereby command the Japanese Imperial Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters at once to liberate all allied prisoners of war and civilian internees now under Japanese control and to provide for their protection, care, maintenance and immediate transportation to places as directed.

The authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate those terms of surrender.

Signed at Tokyo Bay, Japan at 09041 on the second day of September, 1945.

Notes

1. Robert J.C. Butow, *Japan's Decision to Surrender* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1954), 13, and Keith Wheeler., *The Fall of Japan*, (Chicago: Time-Life Books, 1983), 154.

2. Butow, 24.

3. Excerpt from an 11 April 1945, report by the Spanish military attaché in Tokyo.

4. John Ray Skates, *The Invasion of Japan: Alternative to the Bomb*, (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina, 1994), 101.

5. Butow, 77.

6. Japanese Relations With the Remaining Listening Posts in Europe, May – July 1945. SRH-096.

7. Butow, 136.

8. The Cairo Declaration, 1 December 1943.

9. Butow, 39.

10. The Supreme Council for the Conduct of the War, commonly referred to as the Big Six, was composed of the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the four military chiefs.

11. Butow, 38-9.

12. Ibid., 40-1.

13. Ibid.

14. Excerpt from a 19 May 1945 cable from France's Ambassador Catroux in Moscow.

15. Butow, 137-8

16. John Toland, *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire*, 1936-1945 (New York: Random House, 1970), 817.

17. Grace Person Hayes, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II: The War Against Japan* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 702.

18. Skates, 240.

19. Toland, 746-7.

20. Butow, 103, and Toland, 742.

21. Butow, 109-110, and Toland, 755-6.

22. Japanese Relations with the Remaining Listening Posts in Europe, May – July 1945. SRH-096.

23. Ellis M. Zacharias, *Secret Missions: The Story of an Intelligence Officer* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), 409-410. Excerpt from the sixth in a series of fourteen psychological warfare messages broadcast by U.S. Navy Captain Ellis Zacharias, OP-16-W.

24. Ibid., 370.

25. Zacharias, 371. See also Toland, 770. The author of the *Post* letter was Ladislas Farago, a subordinate officer in OP-16-W, who spontaneously and on his own decided to mitigate the unconditional surrender formula.

26. Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman, Volume One, Year of Decisions* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1955), 417.

27. Skates, 239.

28. Katsuo Okazaki, acting spokesman for Japan's Board of Information, categorically denied the Associated Press story. If the AP story was false, the source may have been Virgilio Scattolini, an OSS source with a vivid imagination who made up stories about papal audiences while collecting a monthly stipend of $500 for "information." Scattolini's case officer, according to a *Washington Post* story of 3 August 1980, was an OSS first lieutenant named James Jesus Angleton. Scattolini had duped the OSS on more than one occasion.

29. The United States did not have formal diplomatic representation at the Vatican in 1945. President Roosevelt had named retired U.S. Steel chairman Myron Taylor to be his "personal representative" to the Holy See, thereby avoiding a confirmation battle in the Senate. Taylor served at the Vatican throughout the war years, except during the German occupation of Rome. Taylor's assistant was Harold Tittmann Jr., a career diplomat. A second assistant, Franklin C. Gowen, joined the U.S. staff after the liberation of Rome in the spring of 1944. There is no indication one way or the other whether any of these men was the unidentified American in Harada's cables.

30. Ambassador Harada's cable to Tokyo, 3 June 1945, #53.

31. Ambassador Harada's cable to Tokyo, 12 June 1945, #59.

32. Toland, 746-7.

33. Excerpt from Ambassador Kase's 8 May 1945 cable to Tokyo citing the view of Japan's former ambassador to Vichy France, Takanobu Mitani.

34. Toland, 747.

35. SRH-090, 1

36. Butow, 130.

37. SRH-090, 1

38. Excerpt of talk given to Japanese diplomats in Manchuria by Lieutenant Colonel Hamada, a staff intelligence officer with the Kwantung Army and probably formerly with the military attaché's office in Moscow. This information was cabled to Ambassador Sato in Moscow by Foreign Minister Togo in May 1945.

39. Hayes, 627. JCS 924, "Operations against Japan Subsequent to Formosa," developed at the end of June 1944, did not require Soviet participation, although the Joint Chiefs hoped that the Red Army could contain and defeat the Kwantung Army in Manchuria and permit U.S. planes to use Siberian air bases.

40. Hayes, 669.

41. Excerpt of Ambassador Kase's 19 May cable to the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo.

42. Skates, 239.

43. This summary of Kwantung Army redeployments is based on an analysis of reports in numerous sources.

44. Toland, 633. Also, Zacharias, 368.

45. William Donovan, "Intelligence: Key to Defense," *Life*, 30 September 1946, 108.

46. Butow, 116.

47. Toland, 797. Report submitted by Chief of the Army General Staff, General Yoshijiro Umezu, to the Emperor.

48. Butow, 59.

49. Hayes, 671.

50. Truman, *Memoirs*, 382.

51. Ibid., 383.

52. Butow, 58.

53. Ibid., 59.

54. Excerpt of Ambassador Sato's 9 May 1945 cable to Foreign Minister Togo.

55. SRH-088, 15.

56. Skates, 151.

57. Drea, Edward J. *MacArthur's ULTRA: Codebreaking and the War against Japan 1942–1945*, (Lawerence: University of Kansas Press, 1992), 210.

58. Drea, 140.

59. Excerpt from a 6 May 1945 cable from Portuguese minister Fernandes in Tokyo.

60. Drea, 142.

61. Skates, 102.

62. Drea, 210.

63. Skates, 77.

64. Wheeler, *The Fall of Japan*, 59.

65. Skates, 242.

66. Skates, 234.

67. Toland, 770.

68. Truman, *Memoirs*, 416.

69. The Potsdam Proclamation, 26 July 1945.

70. Butow, 135-6.

71. Butow, 129-30, and Truman, *Memoirs*, 412.

72. Skates, 210, also 76-7. After the war, in justifying the use of the atomic bombs, President Truman used large numbers in citing the cost of invading the Japanese home islands. The numbers varied from 250,000 to as high as one million.

73. Ibid., 327.

74. Skates, 238.

75. Toland, 744.

76. Excerpt from Ambassador Sato's 9 May 1945, cable from Moscow to Tokyo.

77. Excerpt from Ambassador Kase's 14 May 1945, cable from Berne to Tokyo.

78. Skates, 235.

79. Skates, 239.

80. Excerpt from a lengthy 19 May 1945, cable from Ambassador Kase in Berne to Foreign Minister Togo.

81. Toland, 774.

82. SRH-088, 9.

83. Order to General Carl Spaatz, Commanding General, United States Army Strategic Air Forces, dated 24 July 1945.

84. Toland, 790.

85. SRH-090, 1.

86. Butow, 153, also David M. Glantz, *August Storm: Soviet Tactical and Operational Combat in Manchuria, 1945*. Volume 1 (Leavenworth Paper No. 7) (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army command and General Staff College, June 1983), xviii.

87. Butow, 164.

88. Ibid., 169.

89. Ibid., 178.

90. SRH-090, 8-9.

91. SRH-090, 20.

92. Ibid., 22.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid., 21.

95. Toland, 829.

96. Ibid.

97. Zacharias, 386.

98. Toland, 830.

99. Toland, 834.

100. SRH-090, 21.

101. Toland, 830.

102. Ibid., 834.

103. Toland, 850.

104. Drea, 225. This impressive display of authority surely made an indelible impression not only on MacArthur but also on leaders in Washington. One may speculate that it was instrumental in the later American decision to retain the emperor and imperial institution as symbols of the Japanese state despite vociferous calls from other Allies for his indictment as a war criminal.

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