CHAPTER V

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Japan's surrender to the Allies in the long-drawn out struggle came about with a piquant queasiness. The decision "to endure the unendurable, and suffer the insufferable"1 was taken in cautious, tenacious and calculated steps, slowly, hesitatingly and even grudgingly. No amount of aerial beatings, no degree of economic blockade, not even the ruthlessness of atomic weapon's unprecedented savagery, not even the Russian declaration of war against Japan, could make the Japanese easily wilt, without first having made doubly sure that their counter-condition for the acceptance of the Potsdamm terms was conceded by the Allies. Japan's one and only one condition was preservation of the Imperial regime implying the safeguarding of Imperial dynasty and national structure.2 Japan's surrender on 15

August 1945 was, indeed, an unparalleled event in the history of the Second World War.

Well before the German surrender of 8 May 1945 the Japanese had realized that the war was not at all progressing favourably for themselves. Japan had been drawing heavily upon its limited economy crowded into few industrial cities as against the overwhelming advantages of resources and technology of the Allies who also had the advantage of pronounced fire power. Technology and productivity had enabled the Americans to establish and maintain a colonial-era casualty ratio. The pattern was set in the hinge battle of Guadalcanal, of November 1942, when the Japanese lost 25,000 against only 1592 American fatalities. When the Central Pacific offensive began at Tarawa Atoll in 1943, the Americans had to kill all but 17 of the 5,000 garrison and lost 1,000 men themselves. As a result, they increased the fire power and lengthened the leap-frogging. At the next island, Kwajalein, the air-sea-bombardment was so cataclysmic that an eye witness said, the entire island looked as if it had been picked up by 20,000

feet and dropped. Virtually all the 8,500 defenders had to be killed, and fire power kept the American deaths down to 373. These ratios were maintained on Leyte also where the Japanese lost all but 5000 of their 70,000 men: the Americans only 3,500. At Iwo Jima, the Americans sustained their worst casualty ratio: 4,917 dead over 18,000 Japanese: and in taking Okinawa they had their highest casualty bill: 12,520 dead or missing, against Japanese losses of 1,85,000 killed. But, in general, American losses were small.4

According to Paul Johnson so great a use of fire power, technology, and the third dimension was made by the Americans that most of the Japanese were killed by sea or air bombardment, or cut off and starved. They "never set eyes on an American foot soldier or got within bayonet range of him".5

Prime Minister Hideki Tojo's experiment of concentrating all power in his own hands, in being at the same time the Prime Minister, War minister and the Chief of Army Staff was, indeed, directed at coordinating the war

5. Ibid.
effort more assiduously, but it was interpreted by others as a dangerous step towards military dictatorship. The Jushin (the former premiers), in fact, considered Tojo's leadership responsible for Japan's plight as he was relentlessly trying to achieve elusive victory for Japan while investing all the available resources. So, "they all wanted Tojo removed as Prime Minister, and two of their number, Prince (Fumimaro) Konoye and Admiral (Keisuke) Okada, went further—his replacement must be a man who would make immediate peace overtures to the Allies". 6 Prince Konoye tried to seek the support of Marquis Kido— the Privy Seal— who was close to the Emperor. There were many in the Japanese Navy as well as the Army who had also concluded that the war could not be won. They considered Tojo as the main stumbling block in Japan's march from war to peace. Thus, the only solution that appeared to them was the dismissal of Prime Minister Tojo. They could, perhaps, then take an uninhibited initiative in the direction of peace. On 12 February 1942, almost two months before Colonel Doolittle's famous aerial raid on the Japanese mainland for carrying out the maiden

strategic bombardment, Emperor Hirohito had summoned Tojo and instructed him "not to miss any opportunity to terminate the war". As desired by the Emperor Tojo did make certain efforts to end the war but had not got the right response from the Allies. For Tojo the point still remained unresolved as to how to end the war on a favourable footing and without compromising the Japanese honour.

In any case in the face of a growing opposition and at the instance of the Privy Seal, Tojo had to resign on 18 July 1944 under the pretext that he had not been able to protect Saipan. But, in fact, he resigned when he came to know that certain elements had biased the Emperor's mind and he had lost the faith of the Emperor. He is reported to have remarked that "the responsibility for Japan's defeat would have to be borne by the Jushin and others who had forced him out of office."8

General Kuniaki Koiso succeeded Tojo as the Prime Minister but the period between July 1944 to January 1945 was lost in bitter military campaigns. Tojo's forced exist

7. Ibid., p.476.
8. Ibid., p.527.
in the interest of buying immediate peace proved futile. Americans appeared to be bent upon ridding the Japanese of their peripheral possessions and aiming for their very citadel - the home islands. It was not be a cake-walk but an agonizingly bitter and costly struggle for the Americans.

We know that making use of their B-29 Superfortress bombers' capability the Americans had already commenced the strategic bombing of Japanese mainland from Chengtu in China with effect from 15 June 1944. By the time of taking over of Luzon the B-29s were already taking off from Saipan and were hammering the Japanese holdings as well as the mainland. And, the peace seekers of Japan were not getting the proper media through which they could communicate.

A conference at Yalta - a sea side resort in Cremea - had opened on 4 February 1945 where the Big three - President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States of America, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, of Great Britain and Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union had got together to determine the future course of war against Germany as well as Japan. While deliberating upon the war against Japan, the Americans had obvious apprehensions about the 700,000 strong Kwantung Army in Manchuria and wanted the Soviet help to
engage it so that they could take on Japan without getting tied on two fronts. Whereas, Russia wanted southern half of the Sakhalin Island and the Kurile Islands as a price of entering war against Japan. On 8 February 1945 Stalin secretly agreed to enter the war against Japan three months after the fall of Germany.

The battle for Iwo Jima, beginning in February 1945, was the most bitter one. Despite the American superiority of air power and fire power they still encountered staunch resistance from the Japanese. However, in the final aftermath of bitter fighting, the Americans could take over the island only by March 1945 and Japanese fears of rain of American bombs and sounds of Yankee boots on the soil of their motherland were as if about to be transformed into a sordid reality. Now, only Okinawa remained between Allied troops and the Japanese home-islands. American bombing raids had increased substantially after General Curtis E. LeMay was assigned the responsibility of the strategic air offensive against Japan in January 1945. LeMay was dissatisfied with the bombing results as Japan was not clamouring for peace. So, he hit upon a radical scheme. He equipped the B-29s, exclusively with incendiary bombs - the napalm filled M-47
bombs and ordered a massive raid over Tokyo - Japan's hub of power. On the midnight of 9 March 1945, incendiary bombs were dropped by a force of 334 B-29 bombers, burning down sixteen square miles of Tokyo, and killing 130,000 persons. Such raids, with horrendous results for the Japanese, were deliberately carried out over Nagoya, Osaka and Kobe killing mercilessly multitude of defenceless civilians.

The fires and blasts further angered the Japanese and accentuated their resolve to continue the struggle. Most of the Japanese had thought that their Empire's last hope lay in the defence of Okinawa - a small island 350 miles south of home-islands. They had believed that the enemy could be beaten there with "an all-out effort, and this victory would give Japan six months to negotiate a peace which would guarantee the continuing rule of the Emperor". 9

It is worth mentioning here that after the fall of Leyte and Iwo Jima the military in Japan had tended to look at Prime Minister Koiso with increased suspicion. The Emperor also was seized of the deteriorating situation and did not seem certain if his Prime Minister could bring peace

to his country. Accordingly, he had Privy Seal Marquis Kido convene the Jushin to consult the former premiers concerning the appropriate course of action. Marquis Kido knew that the military could become suspicious so he brought in the former premiers one by one to the Emperor, in order to tender their suggestions. The most noteworthy opinions were expressed by Prince Fumimaro Konoye in an eight-page Memorial to the Throne. He stressed, in no uncertain terms, that Japan had already lost the war and that the greatest danger to Japan's imperial system stemmed from a communist revolution. He was afraid that army radicals and left-wing civilian extremists were secretly intending to bring about a communist revolution. He went on to say that some army leaders were so infused with communism that they had developed pro-Soviet sentiments and were urging an alliance with Russia at any cost; while others of the same hue were calling for cooperation with Mao Tse-tung of China. Except Prince Konoye, all the other former premiers had made emotional appeals to the Emperor to continue the fight with determination. The Emperor did understand the gravity of the situation as brought out candidly by Konoye's Memorial. Even, pragmatic Kido had already reached the "inescapable
logic: peace could only be negotiated if the militarists were circumvented."\textsuperscript{10}

In order to appease the Emperor, Prime Minister Koiso also made some efforts. He tried to seek the help of the Chungking government for honourable negotiations with America and Great Britain. But when he was unable to produce tangible results, Koiso finally submitted his resignation to the Emperor on 5 April 1945.

Marquis Kido then consulted the Jushin, the War minister and the military leaders separately. Their opinions indicated that there could be simply no hope of a victory against the Allies. A meeting of the Jushin was convened to select the new Prime Minister. After much debate and discussions the choice fell finally upon the former Grand Chamberlain Admiral Kantaro Suzuki. Emperor Hirohito exhibited full faith in Suzuki's ability and hoped that he would make tangible efforts to end the ongoing conflict. Suzuki's disposition was such that he could put at ease the moderates, the radicals as well as the militarists who on no account wanted a peace which would be less than an

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p.680.
'honourable one'. Initially, Suzuki dexterously dissembled to everyone that he would strongly support the war effort to the very finish but internally earnestly commenced the efforts to find cogent means to secure peace for Japan. As a first step, he chose Shigenori Togo as his foreign minister. Togo had worked earlier also as the foreign minister of Japan but it was in Tojo's cabinet at the time of 'Pearl Harbour'. He had reportedly resigned in protest against the high handed and dictatorial policies of Tojo. Now, Suzuki assured Togo that he would have a free hand in all his diplomatic binges to end the war. When Germany finally surrendered on 8 May 1945, Okinawa the last important peripheral island was slipping out of the Japanese hands, despite their army's bitter and tough resistance.

In Japan, a meeting of the newly inaugurated inner cabinet, officially titled as the Supreme Council for the Conduct of the War but commonly called the Big Six, since it was comprised of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the War Minister and the three military chiefs, was convened on 12 May 1945 to discuss possible mediation by Switzerland, Sweden, China or even the Vatican. It was concluded that all these channels would undoubtedly end in
the Allies demand for an unconditional surrender which was indeed undesirable. General Yoshijiro Umezu, the Chief of Army Staff had suggested that The Soviet Union, with its power and prestige was the best possible mediator between Japan and the Allies. Even the War Minister General Korechika Anami had expressed the view that the Soviets would prefer a strong Japan to emerge from the war as a buffer between their Asian possessions and the United States. Foreign Minister Togo, however, was not optimistic about the role of the Soviets and wanted them to know that Japan must have already been discussed at the Yalta Conference and that henceforth if Russia was to be won over, Japan should be prepared to give up Port Arthur, Dairen, the Railways in South Manchuria, and the northern portion of the Kuriles. Togo had expected opposition from the military at the prospect of giving up so much territory, but the Big Six approved the draft unanimously. Togo then asked a former premier and foreign minister Koki Hirota, who had many ties with diplomats of the Soviet Union, to sound the Soviet ambassador in Japan Yakov Malik about the request for the Russian mediation and the Japanese desire to resuscitate the
"neutrality pact, and ask for help in ending the war". The Japanese leadership somehow hoped that by the good offices of the Soviets they would be able to avoid the ignominous 'unconditional surrender' and wanted to negotiate peace. Prime Minister Suzuki "endeavoured to construct some workable alternative to absolute defeat".

So, when at the end of May 1945 Mr. Harry Hopkins had gone to Moscow, as a personal envoy of the American President, to discuss and work out the future plans as Germany had already been defeated, Stalin guardedly brought up the question of Japan in pursuance to his promise at the Yalta Conference in February 1945. He had undertaken to join the war against Japan on the condition of getting the Kurile Islands, the whole of Sakhalin, and a controlling position in Manchuria. Stalin now informed Hopkins that his reinforced armies in the Far East would be deployed by 8 August 1945 for attack on the Japanese front in Manchuria.

11. Toland, n.6, pp.747-8. [On 5 April 1945 the Soviet government had announced that it could not renew its Neutrality-Pact with the Japanese because the situation had basically altered since it was signed].

According to Liddell Hart, he went on to say that if the Allies insisted on unconditional surrender, the Japanese would fight to the bitter end, whereas modification of it would encourage them to yield - and the Allies could then impose their will and obtain substantially the same results. He also emphasized that Russia expected to be given a share in the actual occupation of Japan. It was in the course of this discussion that Stalin revealed that peace-feelers were being put up by certain elements in Japan but did not make it clear that they were official approaches through the ambassadors. 13

According to Vincent J. Esposito, "fear of Soviet entry into the war and hope of playing Soviet Union against the Western world had prompted Japanese peace efforts through Moscow. In Tokyo, Japanese leaders were willing to concede the Soviet territorial demands of Yalta and more". 14

The Emperor had rightly assessed that the capitulation of Germany in Europe would freely permit the redeployment of Allied troops and materials to the Pacific which would be to


the peril of Japan. And the loss of Okinawa would be Allies' significant gain. It could be used by them to launch incessant air offensive against the Japanese. William R. Keylor writes:

The Emperor formally urged the Supreme Council in June 1945 to approach the Allied governments for Peace terms. The military and naval leaders in power refused to face the inevitability of the collapse of their grandiose dreams. They vainly attempted to arrange for Soviet mediation in favour of a conditional surrender that would enable them to preserve their positions of prestige and authority. In the meantime peace faction within Japan cautiously advocated ending the war on the sole condition that titular authority of the Emperor be preserved.15

But perhaps due to a nagging fear of the army radicals, and due to the feeling that the top political leadership's peace overtures might demoralize soldiers in the field, it was thought best to keep up the fighting posture. Suzuki authorised the raising of a Volunteer Army of men from fifteen to fifty-five and of women from seventeen to forty-five for countering the expected invasion of the Allies on the Japanese home islands. At a meeting of the Supreme Council, held on 6 June 1945, a resolution to fight to the bitter end was sought to be passed. The document entitled

The Fundamental Policy to be Followed Henceforth in the Conduct of War was read in the meeting to the consternation of the Foreign Minister. The document demanded an official reaffirmation of carrying the war to its ultimate conclusion. It emphasized:

With a faith born of eternal loyalty as our inspiration, we shall—thanks to the advantages of our terrain and the unity of our nation—prosecute the war to the bitter end in order to uphold our Kokutai [national essence], protect the imperial land and achieve our goals of conquest.16

On 8 June 1945 an imperial conference was convened to present the resolution of the Big Six to the Emperor. The Foreign Minister did express his reservations about the plan but by and large everybody subscribed to it. Marquis Kido— the Privy Seal—was greatly upset by such a move. After this meeting he wrote a paper entitled "Tentative Plan to Cope with the Situation" and presented it to the Emperor the next day, urging him to end the war by his personal intervention. The first five paragraphs of the paper brought out that in view of the dwindling resources it may not be possible to wage the war even by the end of 1945. It also

16. Toland, n.6, p.749.
referred to the utmost devastations caused by the aerial bombings which contributed to further aggravate the situation, caused by the growing food shortages. This might result according to this paper, in a serious unrest throughout the nation. Marquis Kido in the subsequent paragraphs of the paper pleaded that -

(6) It is almost certain, in the light of various announcements, speeches and articles made public by the enemy in their peace offensive, that the enemy's main object is to overthrow the so called gumbatsu, that is, military clique.

(7) Although it is customary to start negotiation with a proposal of peace from the military, followed by negotiations on the part of the government, this would be almost impossible at the present stage in Japan's current condition. Moreover, if we wait for a more favorable opportunity, it may be too late. Then Japan would share Germany's fate and her minimum demands, the security of the royal family and the retention of our national essence - might not even be met.

(8) Exceptional and unprecedented measures have to be taken - and we do so with awe and trepidation - but I believe the only possible course is to ask His Majesty to intervene for the sake of the people and initiate termination of hostilities in the following manner:

(9) Start negotiations with an intermediary power with His Majesty's personal massage....

(10) The message should cite the Imperial Rescript on the Declaration of War [December 8, 1941] and emphasize His Majesty's constant desire for peace and his decision to end the war - bearing the
unbearable in view of the heavy damages we have sustained in the war - on reasonable terms. The minimum peace terms are:
Honorable peace (this may, inevitably, be the minimum term).

If the guarantee is obtained that the Pacific be truly pacific... Japan will renounce her right of occupation and claim of leadership for all occupied areas, provided that the nations and peoples therein attain their independence. The Japanese armed forces in these occupied areas will be withdrawn by Japan on her own accord....

(11) As for armament limitation, Japan must be prepared to meet demands for a pretty heavy reduction. We must be contented with minimum armament for national defence.

This is my personal opinion, candidly expressed. It contains only the essential points. 17

Marquis Kido sought permission from the Emperor to discuss the points brought out in his paper with the Prime Minister and other leaders. He wanted to first ensure the support of the key Japanese leaders before openly involving the Emperor. Accordingly, Kido apprised Prime Minister Suzuki, Navy Minister Admiral Yonai and Foreign Minister Togo. He asked for their help in the implementation of the peace plan. They all appeared rather keen on it. War Minister

17. Ibid., pp.750-51
General Korechika Anami was also not totally averse to it but wanted Japan to sue for peace only after the United States had incurred heavy losses in the 'Mainland Beach Operations'. Thus, having manipulated tacitly the support of four members out of the Big Six, Marquis Kido requested the Emperor to summon the meeting of the Big Six on 22 June 1945. At this meeting the Emperor insisted "on the importance of finding ways to end the war as soon as possible." The Emperor ordained Foreign Minister Togo in no uncertain terms to commence with vigour diplomatic efforts for seeking a positive mediation of the Soviet Union. He expressed the desire that an envoy be sent to Moscow as early as possible.

On the other hand the Allies were eagerly trying to persuade the Soviet Union to enter the war against Japan. It has been rightly observed:

The western Allies were involved until the end of June 1945 in long, drawn out battles on Okinawa and other Pacific islands and in South-Eastern Asia. American military strategists calculated in their operational plans that real conditions for a general attack on Japan itself could come about some time in the Spring of 1946. Under these circumstances, the USA and Great Britain showed great interest in having Soviet Union

enter the war against Japan as soon as possible and take over the role of crushing the core of the Japanese armed forces stationed in northern China, Manchuria and Korea. 19

The Japanese militarists, despite the Imperial efforts at negotiating peace through the Soviet Union, had completed their final plans for suicidal defence of their homeland. 'Operation Decision' (Ketsu-Go) provided for more than 10,000 suicide planes (mostly converted trainers), fifty-three infantry divisions and twenty-five brigades: 2,350,000 trained troops would fight on beaches, backed by four million Army and Navy civilian employees, special garrison force of 250,000 and 28 million civilian militia. 20

According to Vincent J. Esposito civilian leaders in Tokyo vainly attempted to seek a settlement that would leave the Emperor on his throne. 21

The Allies' terms were, indeed, starkly uncompromising. Surrender was to be unconditional as laid down at Casablanca


in 1943. This was the main stumbling block to peace. If the position of the Emperor was to be at stake the Japanese were prepared to sacrifice their all and could not accept surrender or concede defeat. The Americans also knew the importance of the position of the Emperor "that is why they had sedulously avoided bombing the Imperial Palace." They knew that the Japanese armed forces were fighting the war only on behalf of and for the safety of their Emperor. The common people in Japan were bearing with the cruel aerial onslaughts, reduced rations and many other unbearable difficulties, only for the sake of the Emperor's dignity and honour. The Emperor in the Japanese eyes was not only divine but represented the Japanese imperial State as well. But, to the Allies the Japanese insistence on the condition of the retention of the institution of the Emperor and an assurance that he would be beyond the periphery of any judgment or trial for war crimes amounted to the negation of an unconditional surrender.

According to Gabriel Kolko, the Japanese decision to seek Russian mediation was arrived at with great difficulty,

22. Toland, n.6, p.755.
ignoring the Army's objection. At this time, despite a vast Soviet troop build up to 1.6 million men in the Far East, Japanese chose to put faith on them but the Russians refused to cooperate, and this clumsy manoeuvre cost the Japanese much time.23

The irony of separately stalemated situation is vividly clear from the fact that the Americans in their own way did not appreciate the value of public diplomacy in offering to the Japanese surrender terms less than unconditional, permitting them to retain the institution of Monarchy; they believed that such a stance would lower the fighting edge of American soldiers by building false hopes.24 On the other hand, for the Japanese leadership "acceptance of the Allies demand for unconditional surrender would appear like betrayal of the forces in the field, so willing to fight to death; these forces, who still held the lives of thousands of near-starved Allied civilian and military prisoners in paw - might refuse to obey a 'ceasefire' order if the terms


24. Ibid.
were abjectly humiliating - above all, if there was any demand for the removal of the Emperor."\(^{25}\)

The Emperor summoned Prime Minister Suzuki on 7 July 1945 once again and asked him to despatch Prince Konoye as His Majesty's personal Envoy to Moscow to ascertain the real intentions of the Soviets. It is reported that Prince Konoye, who met the Emperor on 12 July 1945 was himself opposed to relying on Russia as a go-between. Now coupled with Allied aerial onslaughts was the fear of a Russian attack as Stalin had already started making "speeches denouncing Japan as an aggressor."\(^{26}\)

The problem that now loomed large for the Emperor was as to how to save his millions of innocent subjects from the progressively enhancing miseries. The Japanese civilian and military leadership was trying to devise effective means in order to safeguard 'the national structure' and preserve Japan's territorial integrity. Ambassador Naotake Sato in Moscow had been sounded by the Japanese Foreign Office to help the imperial envoy Prince Konoye in achieving a positive Russian mediation to end the war. The Japanese were

\(^{25}\) Liddell Hart, n.1, p.694.

\(^{26}\) Guillain, n.2, p.225.
certainly keen to negotiate for a speedy restoration of peace and were also prepared "to fight to the bitter end"\(^{27}\) with all their might if forced by an insistence on 'unconditional surrender' by the Allies. Sato, who had known the Russians very well because of his long association with them, was not at all hopeful of anything positive coming out of Prince Konoye's visit. He informed Tokyo that the Soviet Union was not likely to support a Japanese initiative for a negotiated peace.

The month of July in 1945 was ominous in many ways for the Japanese. Okinawa had been finally lost to the Allies on 2 July 1945. Soviet reaction to the proposed visit of Prince Konoye was lukewarm. Truman, Churchill and Stalin were to meet at Potsdam. Truman wanted to remind Stalin of his promise made at Yalta regarding Soviet entry into war against the Japanese as soon as possible. And, unknown to the Japanese, the atomic bomb was also scheduled to be tested during July 1945 at New Mexico.

Truman had carried along with him a draft declaration calling upon the Japanese to surrender. It had been

\(^{27}\) Toland, n.6, p.758.
suggested by Joseph Grew. Appalled by the reports of the fire bombings in Tokyo, he had urged Truman to make an offer of honourable surrender terms. He wanted the declaration to make it clear to the Japanese that surrender would not really imply the end of their imperial system. Without such assurance, Grew had averred, "it was doubtful that the Japanese would ever surrender. He was supported in his contention by 'Far Eastern experts' in the State Department Eugene Dooman, Joseph Ballantine and Professor George Blakeslee." 28 The Japanese, they all agreed, could possibly surrender if an assurance would be given by the Allies pertaining to the status of the Emperor.

It was only on 13 July 1945 that the Japanese Foreign Office officially informed Moscow about the Emperor's desire for an honourable peace. Stalin was then setting off for the Potsdam conference. Stalin informed Churchill at Potsdam about the Japanese peace feelers and also added "his own tentative suggestion that it might be wise to modify the rigid demand for unconditional surrender." 29 But before

28. Ibid., p.761.
29. Liddell Hart n.1, p.694.
Churchill could personally convince Truman, the news of the successful test of world's first atomic bomb at New Mexico had arrived. The diplomatic tug of war between the United States and its Russian ally concerning the political reorganization of the post-war world had already begun. Upon learning of the successful atomic test during the Potsdam Conference Truman was eager to wield the atomic weapon against Japan in order to frighten the Soviet Union into granting political concessions in Europe as well as terminate the war in the Far East before Russians could lay a claim in the post-war military occupation of Japan.\(^{30}\) He, however, soon concluded after receiving the advice from Secretary of State James F. Byrnes and Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson that Russians could not be kept out of the war and were still needed, and the existence of the bomb would not succeed in pressurizing them.\(^{31}\) Armed with the thoughts of the tremendous power of the bomb, shorn of the sagacious advice of Churchill who had to beat a hasty retreat to London because of his party's defeat in the general elections, having perhaps deliberately forgotten

\(^{30}\) Keylor, n.15, p.258.

\(^{31}\) Kolko, n.23, pp.560-61.
about Joseph C. Grew's draft, and also in order to browbeat Stalin, Truman reaffirmed the Allied demand for the unconditional surrender of Japan. Such a demand had been formulated as already mentioned at the conferences in Casablanca and Cairo in 1943. According to Keylor:

The formal definition of the unconditional surrender was issued on 26 July 1945, in the so-called Potsdam Declaration. According to the spirit of the declaration Japan was to be stripped of its Empire and occupied militarily until it had been transformed into a peaceful nation. The future status of the Emperor, that symbolic issue of such emotional importance to the Japanese people, was left ambiguous, but the consequences of a Japanese refusal were not - "prompt and utter destruction." 32

The Potsdam Declaration, a kind of ultimatum, was broadcast on the radio and was released to the Press without any prior consultation with the Russians, sitting at the conference along with the Americans. This broadcast was monitored by the Japanese on the morning of 27 July 1945. It threatened the utter destruction of the Japanese homeland unless Japan surrendered unconditionally, but made no mention of the atomic bomb; nor did it contain any clause about retaining the Japanese Emperor on his throne. "It

limited Japanese sovereignty to four main islands, but did promise that the Japanese would not be "enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation" and would be allowed "to maintain such industries as will sustain" her economy and permitted access to raw materials. Moreover the occupying forces, would be withdrawn as soon as a new order was established and there was convincing proof that Japan's war-making capabilities were destroyed."

The first reaction of the Japanese Foreign Minister Shigenori Togo was that the proclamation did not really amount to a demand for unconditional surrender. He reported about it at once to the Emperor, praying that it be treated with "utmost circumspection, both domestically and internationally". According to Togo it was desirable to enter into negotiations with the Allies for clarifications and revision of disadvantageous points in the declaration.

The Russians had been, indeed, keen to stall the immediate cessation of war. Even on 28 July 1945 Stalin once again, considered it worthwhile to inform the Conference, in

33. Toland, n.6, p.773.
34. Ibid., p.774.
the presence of the new Prime Minister of Great Britain, Clement Attlee, that the Japanese were still making: "further approaches"\textsuperscript{35} to Russia to mediate on their behalf. According to Liddell Hart, in reality, Truman and most of his chief advisors "were now as intent on using the atomic bomb to accelerate Japan's collapse as Stalin was on entering the war against Japan before it ended, in order to gain an advantageous position in the Far East".\textsuperscript{36} Truman, according to Gabriel Kolko, now firmly stood with the American military leaders and resented the Soviet mediation manoeuvres as well as the continued exploitation of the assumption that they could alone be a key to victory. The Russians had also perhaps realised by the text of the Potsdam declaration, issued without their prior knowledge, that the Americans were attempting to end the war before Soviet declaration of war.

In Japan, the diehard militarists, who had earlier hesitatingly agreed to the Japanese pacifist section's proposal to approach Russia to mediate on Japan's behalf, were now angered and shocked and wanted an outright

\textsuperscript{35} Liddell Hart, n.1, pp.694-5.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
rejection of the Potsdam ultimatum. Firstly, according to them the Russians had not yet responded to the Japanese request. Secondly, it appeared absurd and incongruent to them to accept an unconditional surrender when they were not at all decisively defeated and were unbeaten in their home islands where largescale preparations were already made to deal a grievous blow to the Allies if they dared to invade Japan. Thirdly, there was no mention about the institution of the Emperor in the Declaration - a prime condition without the consideration of which there could be no thought of any surrender. According to Keylor "the military and naval policy-makers who wielded decisive authority in Japan were determined to wage a pitiless struggle to the finish in defence of the home islands, while the position of the moderate peace faction had been undermined by the uncompromising language of the Potsdam Declaration."

37 Prime Minister Suzuki had no option in the face of the mounting opposition from the militarists (despite having a tacit support of the Foreign Minister and all other pacifists) but to make a public announcement in response to the Potsdam

37. Keylor, n.15, p.255.
ultimatum. After discussions, it was agreed that the Prime Minister would read a statement belittling the Allied terms without rejecting them. Suzuki told the press reporters that "the Potsdam Declaration, in my opinion, is just a rehash of the Cairo Declaration, and the government therefore does not consider it of great importance. We must mokusatu it."\(^{38}\) May be the Japanese word mokusatu was deliberately chosen by Suzuki in order to convey a desired meaning to the militarists at home and a required meaning to the Allies. Suzuki's aim might have been to keep at bay the militarists at home and the unrelenting Allies abroad with one word. According to Toland, though in the Japanese language Mokusatsu had meant 'to kill with silence', yet Suzuki intended to use it to mean 'No Comments'.

But the Americans understood thereby that the Japanese had chosen to ignore or to treat the Potsdam Declaration with silent contempt. The New York Times dated 30 July 1945 declared in its headline that Japan had 'Officially Turned Down the Allied Surrender Ultimatum'. Even on the day Suzuki was reading out his carefully prepared statement, six

\(^{38}\) Toland, n.6, p.774.
Japanese cities were being bombed and leaflets were being dropped warning the Japanese that they were in danger of intensive aerial bombardment.\textsuperscript{39}

The use of the atomic bomb was now inevitable, but for the Americans a question still remained: would the Russians declare war before the bomb brought about a quick Japanese surrender? General Alexei E. Antonov, Chief of Staff of the Red Army, had announced that Soviet troops would be ready to commence operations against Japan in the last half of August 1945. Now after the issue of the Proclamation by the Allies Russian Foreign Commissar Vyacheslav Molotov was pressing "for a letter (from the Americans) formally inviting Russian participation in the war".\textsuperscript{40} By the end of the Potsdam Conference Americans had become suspicious of the Russian motives and had resolved not to allow them any part in the control of Japan or to reveal anything about the bomb.

The Americans waited for a few days after Prime Minister Suzuki's public announcement, containing the world


\textsuperscript{40} Toland, n.6, p.774.
mokusatu, in order to see if there were second thoughts in Tokyo. But there were none. On 1st August, 820 American planes unloaded 6,600 tons of explosives on five towns in North Kyushu. And on 2nd August Truman gave orders to go ahead with atomic bombs. Both bombs then available were to be dropped a few days apart on a schedule determined by weather conditions and with the intent of fooling the Japanese into thinking that the United States had an indefinite supply which could be unloaded on their home islands. The reality was quite different. "There was only one more near to being ready, and others would follow quite slowly but the hope was that the shock of seeing done with one bomb what up to that time had required hundreds of planes dropping thousands of bombs, might tilt the balance within the Japanese government to the advocates of surrender."

Japan had been gradually losing in the war and its cities were turning into ruins. Industrial production was grinding to a halt because of acute shortage of raw


materials from abroad, and due to insufficient labour force to operate it. Though the country was facing almost starvation and the bulk of its forces were abroad, cut off from the home islands because of lack of transportation, public morale was sufficiently high and fighting spirit was aflame. According to Edwin O. Reischauer there was no serious breakdown in civilian morale. The people stoically faced starvation and mounting war disasters. They appeared resigned to fighting to the end. Moreover, it seemed doubtful both to the Japanese and their enemies that the Japanese army and navy would ever surrender. 43

Although already planned but obviously triggered by the Japanese' uncompromising reaction to the Potsdam ultimatum, the United States "proceeded to unleash upon Japan a devastating weapon of destruction that had been developed in total secrecy by American and emigre scientists in the course of the war". 44 The Americans dropped on 6 August 1945 an untested uranium bomb on Hiroshima-Japan's eighth largest

44. Keylor, n.15, pp.255-6.
city, headquarters of 2nd General Army and an important embarkation port.

Robert Guillain has written that the Americans had chosen the date (6 August 1945) as if to steal a march on the Russians and thereby avoid having to share their victory. The Atom Bomb, he says, was not merely anti-Japanese but was anti-Soviets as well. To the peace party in Japan the bomb provided an opening. As though the Hiroshima bomb were not a calamity enough, a second disaster shook the Japanese: the Soviet Union's declaration of war on 8 August 1945 against Japan. 45 Though the Japanese Emperor appeared now more resolute to fight for peace, in view of his subjects' mounting sufferings, yet amongst his military Generals there was so much determination and such an indomitable spirit that they talked in the Supreme War Council's meeting of 9 August 1945 of accepting Stalin's challenge by declaring war on the Soviets. 46 Three days after the first atomic bomb and just a day after Red Army's rampaging march through Japanese occupied Manchuria, the

46. Ibid., p.252.
Americans decided to drop a Plutonium Atom Bomb on Nagasaki—

According to a Russian writer, Dmitry Efimov, the United States dropped the second and the last bomb it had two days earlier than planned and then not on the main but on an alternative target. Amongst the few valid reasons for the use of the second bomb two are worth mentioning first, to send out signals to the Russians that the Americans would not really credit Red Army's achievement against the collapsing Japanese defences, and the second, we are told, was that the American experts wanted to compare the effects of the plutonium bomb with that of the uranium bomb.

Unawed by the atomic bombs' devastation over their home islands, and un-deterred by the Red Army's offensive against Japanese forces in Manchuria, and even pressed by the peace faction, the Japanese military top-brass was not in favour of accepting unconditional surrender. Their conditions for surrender were, firstly, that their country would not be occupied, secondly, that the Japanese themselves and not the Americans would supervise the disarming of 'own forces', and


thirdly, that the war criminals be tried in Japanese courts. Their main condition, however, remained the preservation of Imperial System. At the meeting of the Supreme War Council, even on 10 August 1945, it was reaffirmed that there could be no compromise on the issue of maintenance of the institution of the Emperor and his safety or what had been earlier termed at the 8 June 1945 Imperial Conference - "Safeguarding the National Structure".49

Prime Minister Suzuki now came out openly in favour of a peace settlement. Even Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai, the Navy Minister, was willing to discuss surrender. According to John Toland, in reality, "the Russian invasion of Manchuria had shaken them more than the bombing of Hiroshima".50 Gabriel Kolko writes that the abruptness of the Soviet declaration of war came as a rude shock to the Japanese military men. Suddenly they realized their growing vulnerability, because many Japanese officers were of the opinion that the Soviet Union's overseas forces and Air

49. Ibid., p.254.
50. Toland, n.6, p.807.
Forces were far superior to those of the United States. But even under these circumstances, War Minister General Korechika Anami wanted Japan to fight on; at least one more great battle. He was supported by General Yoshiziro Umezu, Chief of Army Staff, and Admiral Soemu Toyoda, Naval Chief of Staff. They pointed out that it would be possible for them to inflict extremely heavy and grievous losses on the enemy forces in the process of their landing on Japanese soil. The Foreign Minister was, of course, trying to bring home the point to them that there was nothing left for Japan but to sue for a peace with the a minimum of counter-demands. Despite three hours of discussion at the meeting on 9 August 1945, the issue remained unresolved.

Prime Minister Suzuki, keen to end the deadlock, consulted Marquis Kido, the Privy Seal, and informed him that the only hope for ending the war now lay in the Emperor making his own decision known to 'the Big Six'. Thus, with a sleight of diplomacy and certain pretense, Suzuki and Kido were able to get all the members of the Supreme War Council for an emergent Imperial Conference in the early hours of

9-10 August 1945. According to John Toland the Imperial Conference was to be held only if the Big six had already arrived at a unanimous decision. The Emperor's role did not encompass initiation of policy but, as the Privy Seal had also realized, only an extraordinary act of the Throne could save Japan.52

The Imperial Conference opened with the reading aloud of the Potsdam Proclamation by Hisatsune Sakomizu, one of the Secretaries. After reviewing the recent debates in the Supreme Council and the Cabinet, Suzuki called upon each member of the Big Six to make his personal statement. Foreign Minister Togo suggested that the Potsdam Proclamation be accepted at once so long as kokutai, the national essence, could be maintained. Navy Minister Admiral Yonai expressed candidly that he agreed with the Foreign Minister's viewpoint. But War Minister General Anami, Chief of the Army Staff General Umezu and Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Toyoda emphasized that they were certainly not in favour of an unconditional surrender, after so many brave men had died for the Emperor. They reiterated that they

52. Toland, n. 6, pp. 810-11.
could still inflict great casualties on the enemy and even if they "failed in this attempt our hundred million people are ready to die for honour, glorifying the deeds of the Japanese race in recorded history". 53 When the debate had continued for more than two hours Prime Minister Suzuki commented that they all had been discussing the issue without reaching any conclusion. Acknowledging the situation to be serious and warranting unprecedented measures Suzuki, overwhelmed with reverence, apologetically requested the Emperor to express his wishes. He requested the Emperor to decide whether Japan should accept the Potsdam Proclamation or demand the conditions the Army wanted. The Emperor got up and spoke:

I have given serious thought to the situation prevailing at home and abroad and have concluded that continuing the war means destruction for the nation and a prolongation of bloodshed and cruelty in the world. I cannot bear to see my innocent people suffer any longer. Ending the war is the only way to restore world peace and to relieve the nation from the terrible distress with which it is burdened. It pains me to think of those who served me so faithfully, the soldiers and sailors who have lost all their worldly goods - and often their lives as well - in the air raids at home. It goes without saying that it is unbearable for me to see the brave and loyal fighting men of Japan disarmed. It is equally unbearable that

53. Ibid.
others who have rendered me devoted service should now be punished as instigators of the war. Nevertheless the time has come when we must bear the unbearable. When I recall the feelings of my Imperial Grandsire, the Emperor Meiji, at the time of the Triple Intervention [by Russia, Germany and France in 1895], I swallow my own fears and give my sanction to the proposal to accept the Allied proclamation on the basis outlined by the Foreign Minister.54

After the Emperor had spoken these words Prime Minister Suzuki and everybody else got up. Thereafter, the Emperor left the room. Suzuki knew that the Emperor's wish tantamounted to a command. So the minutes of the meeting were hurriedly recorded and everyone of the Big Six was asked to affix his signatures, ratifying the Potsdam Proclamation with the condition that the Allies recognize 'the lawful status' of the Emperor. Emotionally touched by the Emperor's anguish, everybody signed the minutes. As was the formality, Suzuki's entire cabinet later on, in the early morning of 10 August 1945, approved the decision and the ministers drafted identical notes to each of the Allies accepting the Potsdam proclamation with the understanding that the said declaration did not compromise any demand which prejudiced the prerogatives of His Majesty as a

54. Ibid., p.812, See also Guillain, n.2, p.254.
Sovereign Ruler.55 Thereafter, on 10 August 1945 at 2000 hours the Japanese proposal of conditional surrender in English duly 'morsecoded' in order to evade its chance monitoring and comprehension by the Japanese army was transmitted for the benefit of the United States and other Allies. General Anami, however, was trying throughout that day to let the local military know that the Emperor had wished to accept the terms of the declaration and that there was nothing that could be done. And an unrest was seething which later did have its minor but emotionally significant ramifications.

In the United States, it was 0733 hours in the morning of 10 August 1945 when the message sent by the Japanese was picked up by the American monitors. President Truman summoned Admiral William O. Leahy, Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson; and Secretary, of the Navy James Forrestal to his office and asked them if it could be considered as an acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration. Byrnes informed the President that 'it was far from our demand for unconditional surrender'. According to

55. Toland, ibid., p.814.
him that demand was presented to Japan before the use of the bomb and before the Soviet Union had become a belligerent. He was of the opinion that if any conditions were to be accepted, the United States and not Japan was to state the conditions. Stimson and Leahy said that the retention of the Emperor was a practical matter and wanted the United States to make use of the Emperor to save the Americans from "a score of bloody Iwo Jimas and Okinawas".\textsuperscript{56} Forrestal suggested that the Japanese could be reassured by an affirmative statement, the language of which accorded fully with American Government's intent and view.

The official message, routed through diplomatic channels, as regards the Japanese proposal for surrender was also received by the US through the Swiss Embassy. In an emergency meeting of the US Cabinet the Japanese proposal was discussed and a draft reply prepared by Byrnes, at Truman's instance, was also read out. A deliberate effort appears to have been made, while preparing the draft reply; to reassure the Japanese about the future position of their Emperor. To Stimson, it appeared conciliatory and a pretty

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p.817.
wise and careful statement which stood a better chance of being accepted by the Japanese than a more outspoken one. The reply stated that from the moment of surrender, the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese government would be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers and that the ultimate form of government of Japan would be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.

The Americans knew that the people of Japan were solidly behind their Emperor. In this situation they had no option but to accede to the condition as put forward by the Japanese for accepting the terms of the Potsdam Proclamation. The Japanese government had proposed a conditional surrender and the Americans did not want to reject this offer. It had come after they had already expended their two atom bombs on which they had pinned great hopes; and belatedly even after Russian entry into the war. When the text of the reply along with Japanese proposal was cabled to the Allies for approval the Soviets were skeptical about it. Neither the reply appeared to conform to the principle of unconditional surrender nor was the Japanese offer without conditions. American ambassador Averell
Harriman pressed for a quick answer from Moltov and the Russians grudgingly ratified the text of the Allied reply.

On 11 August 1945 just after midnight the American response to the Japanese offer was monitored by the Japanese radio. The official reply was being processed through the diplomatic channels of Switzerland. The full text of the message in English read as follows:

With regard to the Japanese Government's message accepting the terms of the Potsdam proclamation but containing the statement, "with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign ruler" our position is as follows.

From the moment of surrender, the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied powers, who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms.

The Emperor will be required to authorize and ensure the signature by the Government of Japan and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters of the surrender terms necessary to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration, and shall issue his commands to all the Japanese military, naval and air authorities and to all the forces under their control wherever located to cease active operations and to surrender their arms, and to issue such orders as the Supreme Commander may require to give effect to surrender terms.

Immediately upon the surrender the Japanese Government shall transport prisoners of war and civilian internees to places of safety, as directed, where they can quickly be placed aboard Allied transport.
The ultimate form of the Government of Japan, shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.

The armed forces of the Allied Powers will remain in Japan until the purposes set forth in the Potsdam Declaration are achieved.57

It was clear from this text that the Allies did not reject the Japanese demand to retain the Emperor. But the War Minister Anami and the Chiefs of Staff were feeling that they all had been manoeuvered into approving the proposal of surrender. Now they were making all possible efforts in the cabinet meetings to put across that the Japanese honour was being sacrificed and that they could still give a bitter fight to the enemies. Even Prime Minister Suzuki was so much taken in by their arguments that he expressed, "If disarmament is forced upon us, we have no alternative but to continue the war."58 The young officers were getting restive. But Foreign Minister Togo and the Privy Seal were fully in favour of ending the war as desired by the Emperor, even after having been informed about the reply of the Allies. General Anami's worry now hinged upon the Allied terms which would destroy the soul of Japan. Even to

57. Ibid., pp.820-21.
58. Ibid., p.822.
continue the war they needed His Majesty's permission and how could any one go against the Emperor's wishes?

The Big six had been debating the Japanese predicament in the light of the reply of the Allies. The Emperor had already summoned the Chiefs of Staff Umezu and Toyoda and had ordained that there should not be any bloodshed. He had been informed about the restiveness of the army and their possible unrest. The meeting of the Big six in its several sittings since 11 August 1945 was unable to arrive at a unanimous decision. In the meantime the American B-29s were continuing conventional bombing attacks. On the morning of 14 August 1945 the Americans dropped pamphlets over Tokyo which were primarily aimed at informing the populace that the Japanese Government had already offered to surrender. The pamphlets had quoted Japan's conditional acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration and the reply of the Allies. Marquis Kido took one of the pamphlets which had landed on the Imperial Palace grounds to the Emperor and informed him that if they fell into the hands of the troops, who knew nothing about the negotiations, there could possibly be an uprising. He suggested that there was now need for convening an immediate Imperial Conference so that His Majesty could inform about his determined desire to end the war. The
Emperor agreed to take an unprecedented step and called the meeting at 1030 hours. He informed Kido that if there would be a deadlock he would command them to accept the terms as laid down in the reply of the Allies.

The emergency session of the Imperial Conference was convened at 1030 hours on 14 August 1945. Prime Minister, Suzuki submitted to the Emperor that his cabinet had not been able to approve of the acceptance of the reply of the Allies to the Japanese proposal. The War Minister and the two chiefs of staff Toyoda and Umezu called for the continuation of the war unless the Allies promised to guarantee the Emperor's safety. According to them there was still a chance to win and if Japan could not achieve victory at least the war could be ended on better terms. According to Liddell Hart there was a noticeable division of opinion at Gozenkaigi on 14 August 1945. When everybody had spoken and got relapsed into an uneasy silence the Emperor resolved the issue saying decisively:

If nobody else has any opinion to express, We would express our own. We demand that you will agree to it. We see only one way left for Japan to save herself. That is the reason we have made this determination to endure the unendurable and suffer the insufferable. 59

The Emperor informed the conferees that he had studied the Allied reply and had concluded that it virtually acknowledged the position of the Japanese condition for surrender as proposed to the Allies. He had found it quite acceptable. He exclaimed that in any case he wished to save the lives of his subjects from the miseries of a continuing war even at the risk of his own life. He commanded everyone to bow to his wishes and accept the Allied reply. Personally, he was willing to do anything, he said, for the good of his people. He offered to make a radio broadcast and go anywhere to persuade the officers and men of the Army and Navy to lay down their arms. Bowing to the Emperor's will, each of the fifteen Ministers of Suzuki's cabinet signed the minutes accepting the Potsdam Proclamation with a belief that Emperor's position would remain invulnerable and that their national essence would be maintained.

According to Michael Wright "on August 14, the Americans sent a message saying that the Imperial Constitution would not be abolished, and pointed out (probably further clarifying the wording of their reply that the authority of the Emperor would be subject to Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces) that in previous centuries Emperors had frequently been 'subject to' the Shogun
military rulers".60 The Americans were informed of the Japanese' acceptance of the Allied reply in the light of America's subsequent message; but before the Emperor's tape-recorded speech was transmitted one last bloody drama was played out in Tokyo. On the night of 14-15 August 1945, a group of fanatical officers under the leadership of Major Kenji Hatanaka unsuccessfully attempted to search and seize the Emperor's recording scheduled to be broadcast on the following day. They could not succeed in isolating the Emperor from his peace-seeking advisers because of lack of support from senior military officers. Their attempt at taking over a radio station to announce the army's rebellion also did not succeed. The ring leader shot himself in the Palace grounds and others committed harakiri. For one day in August 1945, while the world waited Japan stumbled on the brink of an abyss, struggling to bring herself to face surrender - or annihilation.61

The Emperor's broadcast went out as planned. He admitted that the war situation had developed not


necessarily to Japan's advantage and that in order to avoid the total extinction of human civilization, as the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, Japan would have to endure the unendurable and suffer what was insufferable. The Emperor's voice reached his troops thousands of miles from the home islands as far as Harbin and Manchuria.

The dissenters chose to take it on themselves holding themselves responsible for their Emperor's lack of faith in Japan's final victory. General Korechika Anami, the War Minister, committed harakiri on the night of 14 August 1945 begging forgiveness through the act of death for his supreme crime. He breathed his last believing in Japan's sacred indestructibility.62

But it must be reiterated that only "upon receiving American assurances on the future of monarchy did the Japanese government accept the terms of surrender."63 Vincent J Esposito observes that "the Allied powers quickly agreed (to the Japanese condition), and on August 14, Japan accepted the terms".64 And they formally capitulated to

62. Ibid.
64. Esposito, n.14, p.363.
General Douglas MacArthur on 2 September aboard the American battleship Missouri in the Tokyo Bay. The surrender document was signed by the then Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu with General Umezu (Prime Minister Suzuki's Cabinet had resigned once the surrender terms were accepted).

Some scholars are of the view that Atomic bombings of Japan became a decisive factor in bringing about Japan's surrender. American and British leaders had admitted that militarily there had been no need for these strikes to bring about surrender. William O. Leahy, President Truman's Chief Military Adviser wrote: "It is my opinion that the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan". Even Winston S. Churchill noted in his Memoirs, "It would be a mistake to suppose that the fate of Japan was settled by atomic bombs".


It must be reemphasized here that the Japanese surrender was not an unconditional one as the western scholars are prone to project. It was a conditional surrender which is borne out mainly from the fact that the Japanese government first sent out a proposal to the Allies indicating that they would accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration on the express condition that it in no way would "prejudice (the preservation of) the Emperor's position".68

As regards the factors that impelled the Japanese surrender, there are different viewpoints. Most of western scholars feel that it was because of incessant aerial bombings-explosive as well as incendiary-coupled with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that the Japanese were forced to sue for peace, whereas, Russian authors chose to stress that it was because of their country's conspicuous role. They maintained that it was the collapse of the Kwantung Army at the hands of the Red Army that hastened the capitulation.69

68. Wright, n.60, p.443.