Chapter II

THE PACIFIC WAR - JAPAN ASKS FOR SOVIET MEDIATION
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USA AND THE PACIFIC WAR

Background

Before World War II, the American policy in the Far East had aimed at maintaining a balance of power in that region, so that her own security and possessions in the Pacific were not endangered. This basic policy first became evident in the timely intervention of President Theodore Roosevelt in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5 and the Portsmouth Settlement, so that Russia did not collapse completely. The subsequent covert blessing given by USA to Japan having a free hand in Korea and Manchuria was also prompted by the futility of a hostile policy towards Japan, as this might invite a Japanese invasion of the Philippines. When the balance of power collapsed in the Far East after World War I, USA restrained Japan through diplomatic means. This indirectly helped the Soviet Union in achieving a quicker withdrawal of Japan from Siberia and North Sakhalin.

American trade interests in the Far East increased in the present century. While in 1910-14, in her trade with Japan, imports accounted for 5 per cent of her total imports and exports 2.1 per cent of her total exports, by 1931-35
they had increased to 8.6 per cent and 8.4 per cent respectively. Financially as well as commercially, Japan exceeded China in relative importance to the United States. Even in 1931-35, China's share of US imports and exports had risen only from 2.7 per cent to 3.2 per cent and from 2.3 per cent to 3.2 per cent respectively. As for U.S. investments in China, they were roughly only 30 per cent of her investments in Japan even in 1935. But the US policy of striving for equal commercial opportunities in China and her belief that this could be achieved through preserving China's territorial integrity, only obstructed the profitable trend of America's commerce with Japan. The American policy towards China also encouraged the Chinese patriots to hope for some kind of American support, which was not forthcoming.

USA's commercial and financial stakes in the Far East were always well below that of American interests in Europe and Latin America. Even in 1931 to 1935, an annual average of only 19 per cent of the total foreign trade of United States (24 per cent of her imports, 15 per cent of her exports) was with the Far East. (1) It was probably due to this factor that the American authorities felt they could not mobilise public opinion behind a vigorous far

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eastern policy, based on the use of force. After much reflection, President Theodore Roosevelt had concluded that the Open Door and the territorial integrity of China were ideals for which American people would not fight. His conclusion was substantiated by the experience of his successors. Even in 1937, Henry L. Stimson regarded "any suggestion of sending armies to Asiatic ports or any other war-like action as not only politically impossible but as a futile and wrong method of procedure ...." (2) However, when the American policy of preserving the territorial integrity of China jeopardised the security of America's own territorial integrity, this policy was radically changed. After Pearl Harbour, it has become the established policy of the USA to ensure the peace of a region generally through the presence of her own troops in that region.

When the new tide of Hitlerism swept over Europe, and the Soviet Union also became one of the nations resisting this menace, President Franklin D. Roosevelt promptly issued promises of aid and USA became a virtual ally of the Soviet Union. The machinery for the supply of aid to the Soviet Union started moving immediately after the German attack, the first shipments of planes being made in September 1941. On 7 November 1941, the President officially declared the defence of the Soviet Union vital to the defence of the

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United States to make shipments possible under the Lend
Lease Act. (3) It should be made clear that the President's
decision to aid the Soviet Union was not unopposed within
his own country. While the Catholics, for obvious reasons,
failed to give their support and the isolationists hoped
that "Hitler and Stalin would slit their throats in Russian
wastelands and democratic world would then emerge strong
and triumphant", there was a faction in the State Department
itself which repeatedly warned Roosevelt of the consequences
of Russian perfidy. This faction believed that Russia would
sue for a separate peace with Germany. They quoted the
Brest-Litovsk Treaty of 1917 as a precedent, which supported
their argument. The Ribbontrop Molotov Non-Aggression
Treaty of 1939 was also fresh in their minds. (4) A section
of the military circles underestimating the unity of Soviet
people and the strength of the Red Army, held the aid
programme to be futile as the war in Russia would be over
by 1 August 1941. (5)

While accepting the promise of arms and equipment,
the Soviet Union felt that a "warning" from the USA to
Japan would act as a deterrent to her encroachments in the

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3 E.R. Stettinius Jr., Lend Lease, Weapon for Victory

4 Robert E. Sherwood, The White House Papers of Harry L.
Hopkins: An intimate history (London, 1948), vol. I,
p. 401.

5 Stettinius, n. 3, p. 110.
north. This proposal, which was also independently suggested by Britain, was not fully implemented, as the note of 17 August 1941 to Nomura could hardly be called a "mailed fist threat" to Japan. (6) President Roosevelt seemed to prefer to "baby Japan along". However, the sudden attack on Pearl Harbour put an end to the isolationist sentiments in America expressed by the slogan "America First".

**US request for Soviet participation**

The Japanese conquest in the months following Pearl Harbour was swift and deep, the area of conquest being "an opened fan with its handle in Tokyo, its radii ... spreading eastward to the mid-Pacific, southward to the coast of Australia and westward to the coast of India." (7) The problem before USA was not only to prevent the Japanese from advancing further but also to drive them out from areas possessing rich resources and strategic bases. The USA felt that Japanese pressure in the south could be reduced, if the Soviet Union engaged her in the north. However, by mid-December 1941, the USA had to be resigned to the fact that "the Soviet Union would be an ally in

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6 Sherwood, n. 4, pp. 332-4; 350-7.

Europe but a neutral in Asia•. (8) Thereafter, repeated attempts made by President Roosevelt to obtain Soviet co-operation in the Far East ended in a failure and after 30 December 1942, there were no more proposals by the President in this regard. (9) Still, the hope of eventually obtaining Soviet participation in the Pacific War was not given up. (10)

The Soviet Union on her part wanted to avoid getting embroiled in the Far East and chose to abide by the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact. Since the immediate military

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9 Messages of 17 June 1942 and 23 June 1942 from Roosevelt to Stalin suggested supply of air power to Soviet Union to withstand possible Japanese attack against Soviet Maritime Provinces and asked for suitable landing fields in Siberia. Stalin seems to have judiciously avoided commenting on this specific point. USSR, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Correspondence between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the President of USA and the Prime Minister of Great Britain during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 (hereafter Correspondence) (Moscow, 1957), vol. 2, pp. 25-27. Roosevelt's message of 30 December 1942 offering three heavy bomber groups, in case the Soviet Union was attacked by Japan, and requesting preparation of airfields, etc. for them, received a curt rebuff from Stalin on 5 January 1943 that bombers would be welcome on the Soviet-German side. Ibid., pp. 47-48.

10 General John R. Deane, Head of the Military Mission to Moscow, believed when he left Washington in 1943 that "his primary long range objective was to obtain Soviet participation in the war against Japan". John R. Deane, The Strange Alliance (New York, 1947), p. 47.
Objective of the Allies was to defeat Germany, the USA did not press the Soviet Union to participate in the war against Japan. (11)

Surprisingly, the subject of Japan was brought up again by Stalin himself at a dinner in Kremlin on 30 October 1943 during the Moscow Conference. Without any hint from Cordell Hull, Stalin volunteered to co-operate with the Allies in defeating Japan three months after the defeat of Germany. (12) This was confirmed by Stalin in person during the Teheran Conference; he also mentioned that the Soviet forces in Siberia would have to be increased threefold to launch an effective offensive operation against Japan and these reinforcements could come from the western front only

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11 Section IV of the Report "Joint Board Estimate of United States over all production requirements" dated 11 September 1941, signed by the Chiefs of Staff, General Marshall and Admiral Stark outlines this strategy. Sherwood, n. 4, vol. 1, p. 418. Also see Roosevelt's letter of 5 October 1942 to Stalin. He says "... Best strategy for the United Nations to pursue is for them first to join in making possible the defeat of Hitler and that this is the best and surest way of insuring the defeat of Japan..." Correspondence, n. 9, pp. 34-35.

See Churchill's telegram of 12 December 1941 to Eden in Moscow stressing that Russian declaration of war on Japan would be of advantage only provided that it would not "impair the western front". Winston S. Churchill, Second World War, vol. 3, Grand Alliance (London 1950), pp. 557-8.

after the defeat of Germany. (13) Stalin made no reference to Soviet territorial claims in the Far East, but President Roosevelt hinted in a meeting of the Pacific War Council on 12 January 1944 that Stalin might specifically ask for the Kuriles and Sakhalin. (14) The Soviet Union's territorial designs became clear when Stalin outlined his expectations in the Pacific to Ambassador Averell Harriman in his conversation of 14 December 1944 without asking for a specific American commitment to his demands. These included

(1) Return of Kuriles and South Sakhalin to the Soviet Union.

(2) Grant on lease to Soviet Union the southern part of Liaotung peninsula including Dairen and Port Arthur. (This could be discussed)

(3) Chinese Eastern Railway from Dairen to Harbin thence northwest to Manchuli and east to Vladivostok.

Stalin assured the maintenance of the Republic of Mongolia as an independent entity. While discussing the military plans for the Soviet participation in the Pacific War with

13 *Cairo and Teheran Papers*, p. 489.

14 At a dinner meeting on 29 November 1943 during the Teheran Conference, when asked about his territorial interests, Stalin stated "there is no need to speak at the present time, but when the times comes, we will speak".

Ibid., p. 554.

Minutes of the meeting of the Pacific War Council on 12 January 1944 in Ibid., p. 869.
Harriman and General John R. Deane, he was emphatic about the Allies terminating the Pacific War quickly. He stressed the need for secrecy because of the fear of rousing Japan's suspicions prematurely. (15)

The Soviet Union had been dreading an invasion by Japan in the first months of the War right up to Pearl Harbour and also during the disastrous summer and autumn of 1942. According to the estimates of the Japanese General Staff Headquarters, by the end of 1939, Soviet Union had about thirty rifle divisions involving 570,000 troops, 2,200 tanks and 2,500 war planes on her Far Eastern borders. Since the transport capacity of the Siberian railways had been improved, the Headquarters estimated that in case war broke out between the two countries, Soviet Union could deploy forty divisions. (16) The Soviet official History also states that forty divisions had to be kept tied up in the Far East to face any possible Japanese offensive. (17) However, since the authentic reports of Richard Sorge from 1934 till his arrest in October 1941 kept the Soviet Union fully informed about Japan's war plans, she made bold to draw from her Far Eastern forces during extreme emergencies,

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15 Ibid., pp. 378-9, 369-71.
16 Misuzu Shobo, Gandai Shiryo Shi (10), Nichu Senso (3) (Tokyo, 1966), pp. xvi-xx.
as in the case of the Battle of Moscow and for the defence of Stalingrad. (18)

The successful operation in Stalingrad gave a decisive turn to the European War. But there was no change in the Soviet policy of keeping her far eastern frontiers quiet till Germany was completely routed. All the same, she had to maintain sufficient armed forces in her far eastern frontiers to cope with any possible attack by Japan. The Japanese military circles estimated in March 1942 that the Soviet Union had twenty divisions, 1000 tanks and 1000 planes in her eastern front and that there was no possibility of these forces being reduced irrespective of the course of the German War. (19)

In 1939, Japan had eleven rifle divisions and 500 planes on her northern frontiers. This was increased to sixteen rifle divisions involving 700,000 troops by 1941. (20) It is true that the Kwantung Army had the "Otsu" operational plan ready, which envisaged an initial Japanese

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blow against the Soviet maritime Province and Vladivostok and then a western drive towards Lake Baikal. It is also possible that they might have tipped the balance against the Soviet Union, if they had launched an attack in spring 1942, when the Soviet Union found herself in a very difficult situation with Germany. (21) Yet, by August 1941, the Japanese Government had abandoned the idea of a campaign against the Soviet Union. This decision was reiterated in the later Liaison Conferences. At the same time, it was also proposed to separate the Soviet Union from the Allied Powers and draw her into the Axis Bloc. In March 1942, Japan realised that her gains in the south by themselves had helped to maintain peace on her northern frontiers, and that they had also restrained any Soviet moves of assisting USA. Yet in Japanese reckoning, though the Soviet Union would pay the closest attention to her war with Germany, the possibility of the USSR launching a sudden attack on her eastern frontiers, in case the Pacific War turned to Japan's disadvantage, could not be ruled out. She felt that the Soviet Union had enough capability to wage a war on both the fronts. Therefore, Japan did not find any occasion to change her decision about being on the defensive. In fact, in July 1942, the Japanese Government sent clear instructions

to Ambassador Oshima Hiroshi in Germany that the Japanese war aims were the consolidation of their gains in the South and the establishment of Japanese position in China. Accordingly, in reply to a German request to attack the Soviet Union, Japan offered her good offices for bringing about a reconciliation between the two Powers. (22) It was in Japan's interest to preserve the peace on the northern frontiers. But the fear of a sudden Soviet attack led to continued efforts to improve the military bases and means of communications in Korea and Manchuria. (23) Thus, till 1943, both the Soviet Union and Japan spared no efforts to keep the eastern frontier quiet, each dreading a sudden attack by the other.

The situation changed in 1944. The Pacific War definitely turned to the disadvantage of Japan and she had to draw her best divisions from the Kwantung Army for service on the battle fronts and for the defence of the home land. Though these divisions were replaced by reserve divisions, they were of indifferent quality and poorly equipped. In case of an attack, the operational plan of the Kwantung army envisaged a retreat from northern and central Manchuria and a last stand in the southeast and

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22 Shusen Shiroku, n. 19, pp. 1-21, 71-72 (Summary of the resolutions adopted in the Liaison Conferences held in 1941, 1942 and 1943).

23 Young, n. 20, p. 102.
along the Korean border. (24) In these circumstances, Japan was anxious to have assurances from the Soviet Union about her continued goodwill. In September 1944, she suggested that a special envoy should be sent to the Soviet Union to place their mutual relations on a firmer basis. This offer was turned down by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union held that since there were no outstanding problems in Soviet-Japanese relations, at that stage, such a mission would give rise to unnecessary doubts both within the country and outside. (25) But there were already some curious straws in the wind as early as the middle of 1944, and which were a matter of concern for Japan.

Since the outbreak of the War, the Soviet Press while avoiding any gesture which might be interpreted as technically not neutral in its reports on Japan, at the same time did not hide its sympathies for China and also published the news reports from the Allied sources regarding the Pacific War theatre, as well as Tokyo despatches, when they brought out Japan's defects and difficulties. (26)

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24 *Survey*, n. 21, pp. 134-5, footnotes 1 and 2.


After the inclusion of China in the Four Power Declaration, the Soviet Press paid more attention to events in the Far East and clearly revealed a thinly disguised satisfaction that Japan was doomed to defeat. (27) However, the first official indication of the change in the Soviet attitude was noticed when Stalin in his address of 6 November 1944, on the occasion of the 27th anniversary of the Great October Revolution, called Japan an "aggressor nation". (28) Though the Press was still very careful in its treatment of Japan, the new line given by Stalin was taken up by it and the worsening situation of Japan was stressed. (29)


28 Stalin said "... one cannot treat as an accident such unpleasant facts as the "incident" at Pearl Harbour, the loss of the Philippines and the other islands in the Pacific, the loss of Hongkong and Singapore, when Japan, as an aggressor nation, proved to be better prepared for war than Great Britain and the United States of America, who had maintained a peaceable policy ....." USSR, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Soviet Foreign Policy during the Patriotic War: Documents and Materials January 1, 1944 - December 31, 1944 (London, 1945), vol. 2, p. 32.

29 Stepanov's novel, Port Arthur, presenting Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 as a national war and as a humiliating national defeat calling for revenge, which had been withheld publication, was released in 1944 and was also favourably reviewed. Werth, n. 17, pp. 1028-9. Also see Harriman's report of 10 January 1945, US Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: Conference at Malta and Yalta 1945 (hereafter Yalta papers) (Washington, 1963), p. 454.
Stalin's address made Japan uneasy. Yet she did not take concrete steps for drawing the Soviet Union into her fold and when she actually did so, it was too late. Stalin had already entered into an agreement to join the Allies in the war against Japan.

Yalta Conference

Stalin obtained an opportunity for discussing this question in person with President Roosevelt during the Yalta Conference held from 4-11 February 1945. This Conference was one of a series of war time summit conferences to consider a variety of pressing problems. (30) In the Far East, the USA had yet to obtain a firm commitment for Soviet participation in the war, in order to bring about at the earliest possible date the unconditional surrender of Japan. The military planners had already worked out the details of the Pacific operations assuming that the Soviet Union would engage the Japanese forces in Manchuria and they wished to obtain Soviet agreement to their plans during the Yalta Conference. (31) The question at Yalta, consequently, was not whether the Soviet Union's aid should be sought in the Pacific War, but rather the ways and

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30 For details of the problems which the President had in mind, see Sherwood, n. 4, vol. 2, pp. 855-7.

31 Yalta Papers, n. 29, pp. 388-400.
means of obtaining effective Soviet participation. In fact the Combined Chiefs of Staff had agreed that war in Europe was not likely to end before 1 July 1945 and that even with Russian aid, the War in the Pacific might last eighteen months after the defeat of Germany. (32) Soviet aid in the Pacific seemed to promise the "hope of getting home alive and quickly" and this was "one of the political realities which shaped the Yalta Agreement". (33)

The Conference was also held at a crucial time, just six weeks after a serious German counter-attack on the western front had been launched. Though the Allied Forces were making progress, it was not known how long the Germans would offer resistance. In the Far East, the "immensely costly operations at Iwojima and Okinawa" were about to be launched. (34) The perfection of the atom bomb still seemed to be a remote possibility. Hence, while President Roosevelt had the Pacific war theatre very much in his mind and had been prepared to agree to the legitimacy of most of the Soviet claims, it was Stalin who broached the subject in the Yalta Conference. (35) Stalin bolstered his

32 Ibid., pp. 827-33.
claim by saying that these political conditions were essential to make the Russian people understand the national interest involved in going to war against Japan. There was very little discussion on the subject. Roosevelt promptly agreed to the demand for the southern half of Sakhalin and the Kuriles. While admitting the Russian claim for the use of a warm water port at the end of the South Manchurian railroad, possibly Dairen, the President stated that he would prefer Dairen being made a free port under an international Commission rather than leased outright to the Soviet Union. As regards the use of the Manchurian Railways, here again, the President indicated his preference for the railways being placed under a Commission composed of one Chinese and one Russian. However, Roosevelt indicated that the concessions in Manchuria could be settled finally only with the agreement of Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek. (36)

It is unfortunate for Japan that the memoranda prepared by the Divisional Committee of the State Department on the territorial questions in the Far East were not included in the Briefing Book taken along to Yalta. No evidence has also been found to indicate that these memoranda were brought to the attention of President Roosevelt.

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36 *Yalta Papers*, n. 29, pp. 768-70, 894-7.
Text of the Agreement in p. 984.
The memorandum prepared by George H. Blakeslee on Kuriles had specifically stated that "Japan has a strong claim to the southern group of the Kuriles on the basis of nationality, self-determination, geographic propinquity, economic need and historic possession". It was anticipated that the Soviet Union might claim the northern Kuriles for strategic purposes. But, since the possession of the northern and central islands would give the Soviet Union control of passage into the Okhotsk Sea (which was practically ice-free throughout the year), it was possible that the central islands would also be claimed by the Soviet Union. Japan's interests in the northern and central islands were only for fishing purposes, and thus retention of her fishing interests in these waters should be given consideration. But as far as the Southern Kuriles were concerned, Blakeslee pointed out that there were few factors which would justify a Soviet claim to the southern islands; this transfer to the Soviet Union would create a situation which a future Japan would find difficult to accept as a permanent solution. It would deprive Japan of islands which are historically and ethnically Japanese and of waters which are valuable for fishing. If the southern islands should be fortified, they would be a continuing menace to Japan.

Accordingly, he recommended that the northern and central Kuriles be placed under international trusteeship, with the Soviet Union as administering authority, but that the Southern Kuriles should be retained by Japan, subject to
the principles of disarmament to be applied to the whole of Japan.

Regarding South Sakhalin, Hugh Borton admitted that the Soviet claim might "make a strong appeal"; but outright annexation of Soviet Union would be resented by Japan, as it would deprive her of a region whose products would be of real value to her peacetime economy, and would also present her with a problem of repatriating half a million Japanese living in South Sakhalin. In keeping with this, he suggested that an effort be made to get the Soviet Union to agree to designate this as a trust area, but if then the Soviet Union was not satisfied with it, the American position should depend on circumstances existing at that time. (37)

Roosevelt regarded the concessions demanded by Stalin as reasonable as they constituted little more than the restoration of Russia's pre-1905 rights in the area. (38) It may be explained that Roosevelt probably had no qualms in firmly committing himself to the cession of South Sakhalin, as under the Cairo Declaration it could be termed a territory, which Japan had taken by "violence and greed" and "from which, therefore, (she) should be

37 Ibid., pp. 379-88.

38 Ibid., pp. 768-71. William Leahy, I was there (London 1950), p. 373.
expelled". (39) However, this could not be applied to Kuriles. Again, it appears difficult to justify the restoration to the Soviet Union the Manchurian railroad, Port Arthur and Dairen. While it is true that the latter changed hands from Russia to Japan, they were basically Chinese domain on which China had lost control temporarily. But, may be, the recognition of Soviet economic stakes in Manchuria, even while getting an undertaking about retention of China's sovereignty, was a better solution than to abandon the "cradle of conflict to the winds of fate". (40)

Probably, Roosevelt felt, that the concessions at Yalta were the most effective way of winning Manchuria back for China, at least politically. Stalin had expressed his readiness to conclude a Pact of friendship and alliance with China. Later, in June 1945, he also stated that he wanted a unified, stable China to control all of Manchuria as part of a united China.

All the same, we begin to see Roosevelt's immediate acceptance of Stalin's conditions, without any bargaining

Sherwood points out that the most surprising thing about the Yalta accord is that it involved Roosevelt in a kind of firm commitment, which he generally managed to avoid as it would deny him the post-war freedom of action.

in a different light, even as we weigh the alternatives he had before him. Refusal to accept Stalin's conditions would not only have meant conducting the Pacific War without Soviet assistance, but the exclusion of the Soviet Union would have roused the "Russian apprehensions, if not hostility". The Soviet Union was also in a better bargaining position and if her demands were rejected by Roosevelt, Stalin could have conceivably made his bargain with Japan, as Japan would have been ready to offer much to keep Russia neutral. (41) In fact, as early as September 1944, when Japan's position became desperate in the War, the Japanese Government anticipated the concessions they might have to make to the Soviet Union in order to bring her into the War on their side, or if this were not possible, to restrain her from participating in the Pacific War. The Japanese Government was prepared to concede the following: (42)

1. Demand of navigation in the Tsugaru Straits.
3. Abandonment of fishery concessions.
5. Tolerate Soviet Union's peaceful activities in China, Manchuria and other Japanese areas.

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41 Snell, n. 33, pp. 155-7.

42 Shusen Shiroku, n. 19, pp. 156-64.

7. Abolition of all Defence Alliances.

8. Abrogation of Tripartite Alliance and Anti-Comintern Pact.

9. Transfer of South Sakhalin.

10. Transfer of North Kuriles.

It also cannot be denied that the Soviet Union was powerful enough and also eager to gain control over this region even without any commitment by USA. The Soviet Union looked upon the defeat of Japan and the regaining of the northern territories as "liquidating the blemish cast upon their country in 1904". (43) The Yalta Agreement has thus to be explained not from hindsight, but in the context of the critical times the world was passing through. It also fitted in with Roosevelt's sympathies and admiration for the Soviet Union for her performance during the War and his strong belief that once the USSR was reassured of her security in western and eastern frontiers, she would co-operate with the USA in maintaining peace in the post-war

43 Stalin's speech to the people at the end of the war quoted in Snell, n. 33, p. 163.

In their assessment of relations between Soviet Union and Japan during November 1943, the US Chiefs of Staff concluded: ".... the strategic security .... (of USSR) requires ultimate expulsion of Japan from mainland of Asia and from Southern Sakhalin .... " Cairo and Teheran Papers, p. 234.
world. But future events have borne out the truth in Stalin's following statement at Yalta:

An alliance against common enemy is something clear and understandable. Far more complicated is an alliance after the war for securing lasting peace and the fruits of victory. (44)

While the American insistence on the Soviet participation in the Pacific War and their acquiescence to Stalin's conditions seem to be clear, what were the Soviet motivations? Why did Soviet Union commit herself on her own initiative to embroil her armies in the East, especially when the tide of war had turned against Japan? When Stalin made his first commitment, the Soviet Union was bearing the major brunt of the German attack and the opening of the second front by USA and Britain still seemed to be remote. Stalin might have thought that this commitment would ensure a quick opening of the Anglo-American second front. Secondly, Stalin might have felt that non-involvement in the Pacific theatre of war, might also deprive him of a voice in the shaping of the future Far East, which would be secretly decided between the USA, Britain and China. Actually in Stalin's talks with Harry L. Hopkins in May 1945, he openly disclosed that Soviet Union would like

to have a say in what was done about Japan and that he expected the Soviet forces to share in the actual occupation of Japan. (45)

PEACE EFFORTS WITHIN JAPAN

The progress in the first six months of the War seemed to confirm that the strategy of a "bold beginning" at Pearl Harbour was going to yield fruitful results. Within the second year of the War, it became clear to the Jushin as well as Marquis Kido Koichi, the Keeper of the Privy Seal, that it would be wiser not to prolong the hostilities. This view was actually corroborated by the detailed study made by Rear Admiral /Sokichi Takagi/ of the Navy and also Col. Matsutani Makoto of the Army. The Emperor too desired peace at the earliest moment. He told Premier Tojo Hideki on 10 February 1942 that the longer the War was drawn out, the performance of the Army would also worsen. Hence a policy should be evolved for stopping hostilities, while at the same time consolidating Japan's gains of natural

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resources in the South. But the Army Cabinet did not encourage any talks about peace. Peace advocates and those who talked of the possibility of defeat of Japan were considered to be traitors and rebels and ruthlessly suppressed. The ever vigilant eyes and ears of the gendarmarie did not spare even the Jushin and the Cabinet Ministers. (46) The "peace wishers" were also wary of the internal disturbances which a premature revelation of the "peace discussions at the fountainhead" would provoke. Consequently, these discussions held in secret could hardly achieve anything dramatic. Still, in such difficult circumstances, even the inclusion of Shigemitsu Mamoru in the Tojo Cabinet as the Foreign Minister was considered to be a minor victory in "diverting Japan's foreign policy from channels of war into those of peace". On the defection of Italy in 1943, Shigemitsu made vain attempts to induce Germany to make peace with the Soviet Union as he considered that it would be a step forward to

46 Jushin were the Elder Statesmen. The Jushin Kaiqi or the Conference of Senior Statesmen came into being in 1940 on the insistence of Prince Saionji. It was a conference of former Premiers which the Lord Privy Seal, Marquis Kido Koichi would convene. Jushin advised the Emperor about the selection of a new Premier. Marquis Kido was close to the Throne and the main stream of events. His political power was, therefore, of decisive importance. Details of the Jushin's views in Shusen Shiroku, n. 19, pp. 87-116. Robert J. C. Butow, Japan decides to surrender, (Stanford, 1954), pp. 13-19.
general peace. The "no separate peace" clause in the Tripartite Treaty actually supported the Army contention of fighting to the bitter end and Shigemitsu concluded that he could not make much headway towards convincing the Army about peace, before an actual German collapse.\(^{47}\)

At the Casablanca Conference held between 14-26 January 1943, it was made clear that the British and American leaders would fight till the unconditional surrender of the Axis Powers. This made the prospects of peace moves within Japan bleak. The Cairo Declaration by Roosevelt, Chiang Kai-Shek and Winston Churchill on 1 December 1943 had stated that Japan would be required to relinquish all the territories she had acquired since 1895 on the ground that they were either "stolen" from the Chinese or taken by "violence and greed".\(^{48}\) This suggestion was not at all acceptable to the Japanese people and was considered by many as a distortion of historical facts.\(^{49}\) But the Declaration gave a clear indication of the territories which Japan would be deprived


\(^{48}\) The Casablanca Conference was held between 14-26 January 1943. The Agreement on "Unconditional Surrender" was made clear in the Press interview by Roosevelt and Churchill on 26 January 1943 and later in the President's address before the White House Correspondents Association on 12 January 1943. *Documents on American Foreign Relations 1943*, p. 255, 169, 209.

\(^{49}\) Butow, n. 46, pp. 39-40. Shigemitsu, n. 47, pp. 300-1.
of, in case the war ended to her disadvantage. Although this included the restoration of South Sakhalin to the Soviet Union, the Japanese at this stage could not think that Kuriles would also be included.

The fall of Saipan in June 1944 brought to a head the various pressures building up against Tojo and in the end his Cabinet was forced to resign. But no radical changes were in the air. The new Koiso Cabinet was also concerned only with the successful conduct of the War and "peace did not come within its purview". Peace had still to be planned outside the Cabinet. (50)

In the meantime, the Emperor who was viewing with great anxiety the Japanese reverses and the advance of the Allies, was perturbed by the fall of Leyte on 25 December 1944. This led to his granting audiences individually to the Jushin between 7-26 February 1945. A collective audience was avoided to allay military suspicions. Most of the Jushin did not disclose their privately held beliefs that Japan had already lost the War.

49 cont.
Shusen Shiroku, n. 19, pp. 81-85
Premier Tojo Hideki's broadcast to the world on 8 December 1943 - "Refutation of Cairo and Teheran Conferences". Ibid., pp. 82-84.

Hirota Koki, Count Makino Nobuaki, Konoye Fumimaro and Tojo Hideki discussed the role of the Soviet Union. The possibility of the Soviet Union joining hands with the USA and UK against Japan was stressed. There was also an awareness that Germany's defeat was a matter of time.

Konoye expressed his fears about the possibility of a communist revolution accompanying defeat. He pointed out that the situation within Japan was favourable to the accomplishment of a communist revolution. There was poverty in the life of the people, a rise in the voice of labour and an expansion of pro-Soviet feeling flowing out of an increase in enmity against America and Britain. A great number of young military men seemed to think that communism was compatible with the Imperial system. One group of militarists was sponsoring a rapprochement with the Soviet Union at any cost, while others were thinking in terms of an alliance with the Yenan Chinese communist regime. Konoye felt that the internal and external scene was becoming increasingly favourable for the communist revolution. Attempts therefore should be made to end the war as early as possible. He also suggested that the elimination of extremists from the military was the prerequisite to saving Japan from the communist revolution. Once this element was removed, it was possible that the attitude of the Allies towards Japan might also change and they might be moved to give careful consideration to the question of continuing the War. At the same time, Konoye
cautioned against the Soviet Union which had not abandoned her plans to bolshevise the world. He drew attention to the Soviet activities with respect to Yugoslavia, Poland, Rumania, Hungary and Finland and stated that there was a danger of Soviet intervention in the internal activities of Japan. These discussions of the Jushin with the Emperor, however, did not lead to any concrete decisions about peace making. (51)

Even as late as April 1945, Premier Koiso Kuniaki's plans for peace aimed at detaching the Chungking Government from the Anglo-American bloc and mediating between Russia and Germany to make peace, so that Russia could be brought over to the side of the Axis. Since Japan officially supported the Nanking Government, Koiso's secret contacts with the Chungking Government were not approved by the other Cabinet members and under a directive from the Emperor, these negotiations were suspended. (52)

Shigemitsu's personal efforts to sound the intentions of USA and Britain through the Swedish Ambassador Widar Bagge, were not followed up by his successor Togo Shigenori. The conditions of Japan were not such that Togo could comply with the suggestion of Bagge that an official request be made for Sweden's good offices in this regard. By that time, the Japanese

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52 Shigemitsu, n. 47, pp. 326-9, 331-3.
Government had also committed itself to make an all-out effort to achieve peace through the Soviet Union. (53)

Soviet denunciation of Neutrality pact

Following the fall of Koiso Cabinet, Admiral Suzuki Kantaro was appointed Premier on the implied understanding that he would pursue the path of peace and Togo Shigenori accepted the Foreign Minister's post on the express understanding, that if in his analysis of Japan's position, peace manoeuvres were essential, he could take the necessary measures. (54) Togo resumed office on 6 April 1945, just a day after the denunciation of the Neutrality Pact by the Soviet Union. The Neutrality Pact concluded on 13 April 1941 was valid for five years. According to Art. 3 of the Pact, unless either of the contracting parties denounced the Pact one year before the expiration of the term, it would be automatically prolonged for the next five years. The Soviet Union explained in her statement that since the conclusion of the Pact, the situation had changed considerably. Japan had been assisting Germany in her War against Soviet Union and was also actually waging a war against the UK and USA, who were the allies of Soviet Union. Therefore, the meaning of the Pact had been lost and it was not possible to

54 Premier Koiso Kuniaki baulked in his
to continue it. (55)

As already mentioned, since 1944, the Japanese Government had been requesting the Soviet Union for re-statement of their continued goodwill. The Soviet War time Conferences of Malta, Teheran and Yalta with UK and USA made Japan uneasy that Soviet Union might promise assistance to the Allies in the Pacific War. In fact, after the Yalta Conference, on 22 February 1945, Ambassador Sato Naotake asked Russia's Foreign Secretary V.M. Molotov specifically whether the Crimea Conference was concerned with the Far Eastern affairs. On receiving emphatic denials from Molotov, that Japan was not discussed at the Conference, Sato asked for an assurance that the Soviet Union was in agreement with Japan's stand, that the Neutrality Treaty would not be abrogated and allowed to continue. Molotov appreciated Japan's position, but stated that the question had not been given due consideration on the Soviet side. The subsequent attempts made by

54 contd.

attempts to achieve co-ordination between the Army and the Government and thus to play a decisive part in the execution of the war, resigned on 5 April 1945.
Shigemitsu, n. 47, p. 342.
The reasons for the fall of Koiso Cabinet, the efforts taken by Jushin for the formation of the Suzuki Cabinet and persuading Togo to be the Foreign Minister are dealt with in detail in Shusen Shiroku, n. 19, pp. 250-62, 268-87.
Also see Butow, n. 46, pp. 59-66.

Sato to obtain the Soviet views on this question were unsuccessful. Finally, on 5 April 1945, Sato was given a reply by the denunciation of the Pact. However, Molotov affirmed on 27 April, that in spite of the denunciation, his Government proposed to abide by the provisions of the Neutrality Pact under which the two countries would enjoy neutral relations till the expiration of the Pact in April 1946. In spite of these assurances, the sense of haste shown by the Soviet Union to make the announcement (the announcement could have waited till 24 April 1945, as the Pact was validated on 25 April 1941), made more audible the alarm signals already heard in the eastward movement of the Soviet troops since 1945. (56)

Although the Army never publicly admitted it, it was acutely conscious of the deteriorating military situation. As early as June 1944, a section of the Army General Staff headed by Col. Matsutani Makoto prepared a thesis entitled "Measures for the termination of the Greater East Asia War". This was classified as a state secret and it made the rounds of the top officials in all the army and navy departments. This document concluded that Japan should endeavour to end hostilities in case of Germany's collapse in Europe. Any attempt to continue

56 Shusen Shiroku, n. 19, pp. 264-6.
fighting after that would only result in harsher terms for Japan. The thesis included several plans for various eventualities. It was recommended that in the event of Japan being faced with a choice of giving in or committing national suicide, she should be content to end the war with nothing more than an Allied guarantee that the "national polity would be safeguarded and the imperial homeland preserved". Everything else including the disputed issue of territory would have to be given up. Though no one raised any objection to this document, Col. Matsutani was rewarded for his initiative and wisdom by Premier Tojo with orders reassigning him to Japan's expeditionary forces in China. (57)

Although the voice of the junior officers was thus muffled, on 5 September 1944, in the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War, War Minister Sugiyama Gen, announced openly for the first time the Army's proposals of peace, giving an indication that steps could be taken for termination of hostilities. The War Minister also supported the Foreign Minister's proposal of sending an envoy to the Soviet Union to promote goodwill between the two nations. The various concessions proposed by the

57 Butow, n. 46, pp. 26-27.
Toshikazu Kase, Eclipse of the Rising Sun (London, 1951), pp. 75-76.
Col. Matsutani was later brought back to Tokyo as Premier Suzuki's private secretary and participated in the peace efforts.
Foreign Minister in the eventuality of seeking Soviet good offices, were also unopposed by the Army Chiefs. (58)

In a meeting between the War Ministry and the Army General Staff Officers in February 1945, the strategy of carrying out a decisive battle on the homefront and making preparations for this purpose was officially adopted. (59)

The Soviet Union's denunciation of the Neutrality Treaty on 5 April 1945 made it clear to the Army that Soviet entry into the Pacific War was imminent. In April 1945, the Army decided to abandon Manchuria and withdrew most of the troops and equipment for the defence of the mainland. Manchuria and Korea were almost left defenceless. Hence, the Army High Command explored possibilities of approaching the Soviet Union through Yenan to prevent Soviet participation in the War. After the German surrender, the Military High Command realised that the end of the war was only a matter of time. They were very realistic in their assessment that Soviet Union would launch an attack in Manchuria at a time when Japan would be experiencing the greatest difficulties. After the heavy damages Soviet Union had suffered in Europe, they calculated that the Soviet Union, while not losing an opportunity to capture Manchuria, would try to take it when Japan's position was the weakest. In


59Butow, n. 46, p. 92, foot note 42.
other words, they felt that the Soviet participation in the Pacific War and American landing in the mainland of Japan would be simultaneous. (60)

Since April 1945, the main object of the Japanese military high command appeared to be the use of diplomacy to keep the Soviet Union out of the Pacific War. It seemed to them that a rapprochement with the Soviet Union would enable them to continue the Pacific War. It should be made clear here that the misgivings of the Army inner circles were not made public and even after the German defeat, a statement was issued by the Government on 9 May 1945 that the German surrender caused not the slightest change in the Imperial War objectives. Japan proposed to fight till the end, in co-operation with the nations in East Asia, against USA and UK "who wished to trample East Asia with their violence and greed". (61)

Japan seeks Soviet mediation

In April 1945, General Umezu Yoshijiro, Chief of General Staff, approached Foreign Minister Togo to evolve ways and means of keeping the USSR away from the Pacific War.

60 Shusen Shiroku, n. 19, pp. 237, 266-7, 320, 558, Annexure, pp. 2-4.

Since the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War, which decided the fundamental policies of the War, generally included secretaries, making the meetings very formal and preventing frank exchange of opinion, Togo suggested meetings of the six members only, viz., the Premier, War and Navy Ministers, Army and Navy Chiefs of Staff and the Foreign Minister. The military members welcomed this. They wanted the meetings to be kept secret since they feared that it would affect the morale of the forces, if the nature of the meetings was widely known.

During the discussions of the Big Six held from 11-14 May 1945, Foreign Minister Togo made it clear that since Japan had stood around watching while the Allies and the Soviet Union had been holding one conference after the other, it was already too late to expect any military or economic aid from the Soviet Union. However, Navy Minister Yonai Mitsumasa hoped that Japan could exchange cruisers for petroleum and air-craft from the Soviet Union. A plan was finally evolved which would serve as a guide to the Foreign Office to make overtures to the Kremlin. The Plan listed in the order of priority and preference was as follows:

Point 1: The Soviet Union must be prevented from entering the War in the Pacific.

Point 2: The Kremlin should be induced into an attitude of friendship towards Japan.
Point 3: Mediation of the conflict on terms favourable to Japan should be sought through Soviet good offices.

Before deciding about peace mediations through Soviet Union, mediation by China, Switzerland, Sweden or the Vatican was studied but there was general agreement that such efforts would lead to the Allies demanding Japan's unconditional surrender and should not be undertaken. It is interesting to note that General Umezu came to the conclusion that only the USSR would be able to mediate for peace on terms favourable to Japan. Premier Suzuki stated that Stalin could be expected to act fairly. War Minister Anami Korechika remarked that the USSR would not wish to have a weakened Japan, in view of the possible confrontation with the USA in the postwar world. Anami's remarks are worth noting as they reflect the realisation by Japan of her importance in the post-war world. As we shall see later, while the US-USSR confrontation by itself worked to Japan's advantage, Japan also did not fail to utilise it for her own benefit.

When Foreign Minister Togo explained that Japan would have to pay a high price for achieving any one of the three objectives outlined above, the other members accepted this in principle. It was tentatively agreed that in return for Soviet services, the Treaty of Portsmouth and the Soviet Japanese Basic Agreement could be abrogated. In other
words, restoration in general of the status prior to the Russo-Japanese War was agreed to, provided that autonomy for Korea would not be included, the question being reserved to Japan's arbitrament. South Manchuria should be neutralised. It may be noted that the above concessions were based on the draft proposals put up by the then Foreign Minister, Shigematsu Mamoru in September 1944. (62)

After settling the terms for the USSR, it was agreed that former Premier Hirota Koki should be entrusted with preliminary negotiations with the Soviet Ambassador Jacob G. Malik. Then, the meeting turned to the discussion of terms for peace with the Allies. Here, a controversy developed among the members. The Army Chiefs took the rigid stand that the occupation of extensive enemy territories by Japan put them in a stronger bargaining position. Togo rightly insisted that they should be guided not by the relative extent of territory occupied but the general trend of the war and the prospects. The Army Chiefs could not concede this, though the Navy Minister Yonai supported Togo. The refusal by the Army to admit that Japan was heading towards a defeat, if not already defeated, made the task of the Foreign Minister more difficult. It may be noted that at the time of the meeting, the Americans had already landed in full strength in Okinawa and the military had lost hopes of recovering

62 This section on the efforts made in April-May 1945 to get a consensus on Soviet mediation is based on Shusen Shiroku (contd.)
Okinawa. (63) Japan had no system of protection against the American bombing assaults. Production of weapons and ammunition was falling fast. The oil stocks had dwindled and there was no prospect of getting fresh supplies. While the army and air force were being more or less adequately fed, the supply of rice and other necessities was not sufficient to keep the civilian population above subsistence level. Their rations had been cut down. With the control of the supply routes by the Americans, prospects of import of rice were dim.

The militarists were not completely blind. They knew that they had little chance of ending the Pacific War with a glorious victory for Japan. At the same time, they were confident of one operational victory in the decisive battle in the mainland. One important section of the Japanese military argued that, even if Japan sought peace through a neutral nation, the fact that Japan was surrendering would lead to a complete split in the national unity and polity. Therefore, after winning a victory on the mainland, they could negotiate a settlement on favourable terms. (64)

62 continued:
  Also see Ibid., p. 157 and Butow, n. 46, pp. 88-89, footnote 34.


64 Ibid., Butow, n. 46, p. 95.
Since the meeting was getting into a deadlock, Admiral Yonai suggested that the effectuation of Point 3 be deferred for the time being. Premier Suzuki also felt that, in the first instance, the Soviet attitude should be explored. The Big Six therefore agreed that the realisation of Point 3 could be dropped temporarily.

The attitude of the Army was revealed once again in the Imperial Conference decision of 8 June 1945 to continue resistance. The Army argued that the nearer the enemy approached the mainland of Japan, the more advantageous it would be for the armed forces. How they proposed to achieve this, when they did not have air supremacy, was not explained. (65)

This decision was incompatible with the peace moves made earlier and did not open out any avenues for efforts in the direction. But Togo took it only as a move to heighten public morale and did not call a halt to the negotiations with the Soviet Union. In the meantime, Togo also came to know, through Kido, that Premier Suzuki had not informed the Emperor of the momentous decisions taken by the Big Six between 11-14 May, 1945. This also explains the Emperor approving the anomalous Imperial Conference decision of 8 June, 1945.

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65 Shusen Shiroku, n. 19, ch. 27 "Senso kansui yoko no kettei", pp. 351-381, gives in detail the speeches made in the above conference by the various members. The final decision is on p. 365.
On receiving a report from Kido about the above decisions, the Emperor instructed Togo to put an end to the hostilities through the good offices of USSR, making such concessions as would lead to peace with honour. On the strength of these instructions, Togo, in the Big Six meeting of 18 June, secured the agreement of the members to his ascertaining the Soviet attitude by the beginning of July, with a view to "terminating the war, if possible, by September". (66) The Big Six made it clear, however, that the nation had no choice but to continue the war as long as the enemy insisted upon unconditional surrender.

The Hirota-Malik talks could be started only on 3 June and continued on 4 June 1945. Hirota met Malik at Hotel Gora in Hakone and the talks were held in a friendly atmosphere. In those two days, Hirota could only prepare the ground and no concrete issues could be taken up. After the meeting of the Big Six on 18 June 1945, Foreign Minister Togo asked Hirota to redouble his efforts with Malik, so that Russian mediation could materialise before the rumoured meeting of the Heads of States of the USA, UK and USSR.

The talks were started again on 24 June 1945. At Malik's request, Hirota came out with the concrete views of his Government that Japan was prepared to work in cooperation with the Soviet Union for preservation of peace.

in Asia. All problems arising in Manchuria and China could be settled by the two countries. Hirota also suggested that if the Soviet army and the Japanese navy could join forces, Japan and the Soviet Union could become the strongest Powers of the world. In other words, Hirota seemed to hint that Japan and Soviet Union could make East and South East Asia their own exclusive domain, eliminating the Anglo-Saxon powers. Hirota offered to Malik that Japan could provide Soviet Union with the natural resources in the South, viz., copper, tungsten, etc. and would be grateful for Soviet oil. Malik turned down this proposal stating that Soviet Union did not have enough oil to supply Japan, nor was shipping of the raw materials from the South possible at that time. Thus the meeting ended without any concrete conclusions. Hirota made another bid on 29 June to evoke some concrete comments from Malik about Soviet wishes. In this meeting, Hirota spelled out the concessions which Japan would offer, in case a non-aggression Treaty would be concluded between Japan and the Soviet Union. While mentioning Japan's willingness to give up fishery concessions in return for oil, Hirota clearly stated that Japan would accede to the neutralisation of Manchuria and the withdrawal of Japanese forces from that region. He also offered to discuss any other points which the Soviet Union might wish to bring up. Without commenting on these issues, Malik asked whether Japan was not conducting any peace negotiations through Sweden.
Hirota denied this and stated that Japan would approach Soviet Union, if she wanted to start such negotiations. Malik agreed to convey the Japanese proposals to his Government and resume the conversation upon receipt of instructions.

After this meeting, Malik refused to see Hirota on grounds of illness. On 10 July 1945, Hirota went to see him for the last time without getting any commitment. Togo's attempts to request Malik to call on him did not materialise. Later, the Japanese Foreign Office understood from the Soviet Embassy that the Japanese proposals had been sent by courier and not by telegram. It was clear that Hirota-Malik talks had come to a nought. Ambassador Sato, who had been informed of the Hirota-Malik conversations, had raised the subject with Molotov, but he found the Soviet Foreign Minister disinterested in the Japanese offers. (67)

In the meantime, the constant bombings of the country and the acute shortages of all necessities, led to fears about the possibility of serious unrest among the people. Pressures from other Ministers and from non-official circles were put on the Foreign Minister to make peace. Among the Big Six, only Foreign Minister Togo seriously considered the possibility of the Soviet Union

having already sold out to the highest bidder. But having no knowledge about the Yalta Agreement and also prompted by the fear that a direct approach to the Allies would produce the entirely unacceptable demand for unconditional surrender, Togo charted the diplomatic course to the "unknown but enticing port of call, the Soviet Union".

Togo did not avail of the unusual opportunity, which existed in Switzerland in the spring and summer of 1945 for negotiations with the USA through the Office of Strategic Services, as that organisation had recommended unconditional surrender. Japan had also committed herself to depend on the good offices of the Soviet Union for mediation. Washington, on her part, was too concerned in winning Soviet Union to her side, to take notice of these unauthorised peace feelers. (68) It may also be mentioned that though Washington was aware of the weakening will of Japan, she did not consider it her task to cajole Japan to lay down arms, but rather this stimulated the American leaders to press home on all Japanese leaders the hopelessness of their cause. (69)

Thus, while the peace seekers were receiving no support from the Allies, in Japan, the Emperor began to take an active and personal interest in the exertions for early termination of hostilities. This was made clear in an audience to the members of the Big Six on 22 June, 1945. Again, when it became evident that the Hirota-Malik-talks

68 Togo n. 53, pp. 299-300, Butow, n. 46, pp. 102-111.
69 Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, (continued)
were not making any progress, the Emperor directed on 7 July 1945 that a special Envoy should be sent to Moscow. He also approved that Prince Konoye Fumimaro should be delegated for this purpose. Accordingly, instructions were sent to Ambassador Sato on 12 July 1945 that the Emperor grieved at the increasing havoc and sacrifices inflicted on the people by the belligerents of this War, was earnestly desirous of seeing the War ended early and peace restored. For this purpose, he intended to send Prince Konoye as his special representative. When this cable reached Moscow, the Soviet leaders were preparing to leave for Berlin. Since Ambassador Malik also had been given the same message to be conveyed to the Kremlin, the Soviet leaders should already have been aware of Japan's wishes. (70) However, they did not consider the message to be so important as to merit giving an audience to Ambassador Sato before they left for Moscow. The message could be delivered only to Deputy Foreign Commissar, Alexander Lozovsky. He was requested by Ambassador Sato that it should be conveyed to Molotov and the reply sent at least from Berlin, so that Prince Konoye could meet the Soviet leaders after their return. Stalin and Molotov left for the Potsdam Conference without acceding to the Japanese request for the despatch of an envoy. Nor did they send any communication from Berlin. The whole episode of

69 contd.
seeking Soviet mediation turned out to be "angling in waters where no fish lived".

Ambassador Sato in the Soviet Union, while endeavouring to follow his Government's instructions, repeatedly urged in his cables that there was no prospect of a negotiated peace and that Japan should surrender unconditionally without delay. (71) The Japanese Government and the High Command in Japan, however, still firmly believed that the war potential was sufficient to give the enemy a severe blow and felt that the insistence of unconditional surrender by the enemy, would only strengthen their resolve to fight the war to the bitter end. (72)

Despite Sato's realistic appraisals that Japan would do well not to expect any miracle out of Soviet mediation, even assuming that Soviet Union agreed to do so, it appears that Togo continued to rest his hopes in the USSR, as he deferred acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration on the ground that the views of the Soviet Union had not yet been received. While Togo's insistence in treating the Declaration with the greatest circumspection is understandable, his continued faith in the Soviet mediation until the actual declaration of war by the Soviet Union is

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72 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 1249.
difficult to explain. Togo relied on the USSR in spite of Sato's cables analysing the possibility of Soviet Union joining the Allies, because he was still in the dark about the Yalta Agreement. (73) But the fact that his views were not altered even after receiving a report from Ambassador Okamoto Suemasa in Sweden on 27 July 1945 about the Yalta Accord, shows that Togo was like a drowning man clutching at a straw. (74)

The indications by the Soviet Union were quite ominous and clear. While delaying their meeting with Sato on the pretext of lack of time, the Soviet leaders found ample time to have repeated meetings with T.V. Soong, China's Foreign Minister. The deference of a decision about the Special Envoy till consultations with the USA and Britain were possible, did not brighten the prospects for Japan. In fact, Stalin had made it quite clear in his talks with Hopkins on 28 May 1945 that unconditional surrender by Japan must be insisted upon and if milder terms were agreed to, the Occupation forces should impose their will and gain substantially the same results. (75)

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73 Sato's cables nos. 1427 and 1433 of 20 and 21 July 1945 to Foreign Minister Togo.

74 Butow, n. 46, p. 144 (footnote 9)

75 Potsdam Papers, n. 45, vol. 1, pp. 41-47.
Stalin's mind had been made up and Japan was knocking against a blank wall.

At the same time, it is very doubtful whether Japan would have gained quicker and better results, even if she had offered to negotiate directly with the USA, as long as she held on to the position of not accepting an unconditional surrender. The USA was fully aware of Japan's frantic attempts to secure the mediation of the Soviet Union. (76)

But from the intercepted correspondence between Togo and Sato, it was also clear that Japan had not yet decided to surrender, though she was acutely conscious of being hemmed in on all sides and of her internal resources fast running out.

POTSDAM DECLARATION

The inflexible position which might be adopted by Japan, when faced with a demand for unconditional surrender without any reservations, was foreseen by the specialists of the Division of Special Research (East Asia Planning Group) in the US State Department. In January 1943 at

76 Potsdam Papers, n. 45, p. 873.
USA had broken the Japanese code early in the War. Trumman learnt of the Japanese peace feelers a day or two before meeting Stalin at Potsdam.
Casablanca Conference, Churchill and Roosevelt agreed that the War would end only "with the unconditional surrender of the Axis Powers". In order to interpret the concept of unconditional surrender in the case of Japan, the specialists prepared a document. This took the position that the terms of surrender for Japan would be predicated on the assumption that the institution of the Emperor would be allowed to continue. In other words, taking into account the special position of the institution of Emperor in Japan, "indirect occupation" was recommended. In August 1944, it was also recommended that Japan should be given some indication that unconditional surrender meant something less drastic than annihilation. In early December 1944, the Japan section of the Office of War Information prepared a statement to be made by the Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius that

while the United States intended to destroy Japanese militarism and prevent Japanese aggression in the future, it did not plan to destroy Japan as a State or to deprive the Japanese of their right to settle their basic economic, political and social problems.

President Roosevelt also seemed to have approved of this. But such a statement was not made at that time.

In the first part of 1945, a workable definition of "unconditional surrender" based on the State Department's earlier paper was approved by the State War and Navy Coordinating Committee. (77) In May 1945, Acting Secretary of

State Joseph C. Grew reiterated that the insistence of a military surrender without an undertaking for the continuation of the Imperial dynasty would produce "a fusion of race solidity and antipathy", which had no analogy in the case of Germany. He, therefore, suggested that the President's earlier statement of 8 May 1945 laying down that unconditional surrender did not mean the enslavement of the Japanese people, should be amplified to include a guarantee of preserving the Imperial line. This was approved in principle by President Harry S. Truman and also by the Secretaries of War and Navy and the Chiefs of Staff. But it was considered that, for certain military reasons, it would be inadvisable to make the proclamation right then. Fighting in Okinawa was still going on and such a declaration might be interpreted by the Japanese as a sign of weakness. (78)

Henry L. The issue was taken up again by Stimson, Secretary of War, in his letter to the President on 2 July 1945. Stimson stressed that in view of the extremely sensitive national pride of the Japanese, the operation for the occupation of Japan, after landing on the mainland, would be

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(78) President's statement of 8 May 1945 in Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1944-45, pp. 229-30. Also see Harry S. Truman, Year of Decisions (London 1955) pp. 346-7. Joseph C. Grew, Turbulent Era (London, 1953), vol. 2, pp. 1421-4. Draft Statement in pp. 1431-4. The text of the above draft statement is found to be identical (except for para. 11) with the later draft submitted by Stimson to the President. However, authors of the Potsdam Papers (continued)
long, costly and arduous. Hence it would be worthwhile tendering a warning just before the actual invasion, making clear the impending destruction, thus giving Japan an opportunity to surrender. In order to increase the chances of the acceptance of the warning by Japan, Stimson proposed to include a clause that in establishing a peaceable government in Japan, in future, the possibility of a constitutional monarchy under the Imperial dynasty would not be excluded. (79)

78 cont'd.

hold that the actual draft prepared by Grew in May 1945 was something entirely different and there has been an error in the publication in Turbulent Era. Since the original draft is not published in the Potsdam Papers, a comparison is not possible. But it may not be wrong to assume that the idea carried over in the later drafts was the one drafted originally by the specialists in the East Asia Department.

Potsdam Papers, n. 45, vol. 1, p. 897 (footnote 1)

79 Stimson's memo. to the President with all the enclosures. Potsdam Papers, n. 45, vol. 1, p. 888-94. The clause relating to the Emperor read as follows:

"The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as our objectives have been accomplished and there has been established beyond doubt a peacefully inclined responsible government of a character representative of the Japanese people. This may include a constitutional monarchy under the present dynasty, if the peace loving nations can be convinced of the genuine determination of such a Government to follow policies of peace which will render impossible the future development of aggressive militarism in Japan." The underlined portion is Stimson's draft as amended by the State Department to make the intention more explicit.

Ibid., p. 899.
The inclusion of this clause was strongly opposed by one section in the State Department itself, which held that such an interpretation of the unconditional surrender would create an invidious distinction in favour of Japan as against Germany, as in Germany, the restoration of characteristic German political institutions had been strictly prohibited. Therefore, a guarantee in the case of Japan would be undoubtedly resented by the majority of the American people. The Emperor system was also considered to be an "anachronistic, feudal institution" carrying the inherent risk of another war in the future. Grew tried to counter this opposition with his argument that it was the military element and not the Emperor, who was responsible for the war and he repeated his fears about the impossibility of abolishing the Emperor institution. However, Grew's arguments failed to convince the opposition. (80)

The clause relating to the Emperor did not win the approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff either. They feared that this would be misconstrued by some extreme devotees of the Emperor to mean a commitment by the United Nations to depose or execute the present Emperor and instal some other member of the Imperial family, while the radical

80 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 895-7, 900-1.
Grew's detailed views on the Emperor system can be found in his statement before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on 12 December 1944. Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1944-45, n. 78, pp. 226-9.
elements would interpret it to mean retention of the Emperor system and Emperor worship. In short, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, from the military point of view, were anxious that no situation was created, which would make it impossible for them to utilise the authority of the Emperor to carry out an effective surrender of the Japanese forces. Therefore, while accepting the importance of the Emperor, they advised against any commitment about the Emperor system.

Cordell Hull to whom Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, had referred the proposed Proclamation for comments, advised the withholding of the clause regarding the Emperor till the climax of the Allied bombing and the entry of the Soviet Union into the War. He felt that the imponderables on the Japanese side were too many and in case the Proclamation did not have the desired effect, terrible political repercussions would follow in America. Byrnes finally accepted this position and the provision about the Emperor was finally removed from the Proclamation. But Stimson reiterated to the President the importance of this assurance to the Japanese and the President agreed to his suggestion that "... the President would watch carefully so that the Japanese might be reassured verbally through diplomatic channels, if it was found that they were hanging fire on that one point". (81)

President Truman had decided to issue the Declaration from the Potsdam meeting, as he intended to demonstrate to Japan the unity of purpose of the Allies. He also hoped that by that time, success of the atom bomb would be known and the participation of the Soviet Union in the War would be finally settled. If the atomic tests were successful, Truman wished to give Japan a clear chance before using the newly acquired weapon. If the atomic test was a failure, Truman hoped that a surrender could be effected without a costly operation in the mainland involving millions of American lives. (82)

Thus the Potsdam Declaration was originally mooted with the idea of making public some sort of a definition of "unconditional surrender", so that the Japanese might be persuaded to surrender rather than to continue fighting till they were annihilated. But the timing of the warning and the dropping of the atom bomb swiftly following the 'rejection' of the Proclamation by Japan led to its being treated as a mere warning about "a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on earth". In any case, the omission of any guarantee regarding the Emperor in the Declaration made it difficult for Japan's Foreign Minister Togo to recommend its acceptance without reservations, although he felt that there had been moderation in

82 Truman, n. 78, p. 347.
the attitude of the Allies. (83)

At the same time, the Foreign Minister prevailed upon the Cabinet not to reject it because of the dangerous consequences such a course would lead to. He decided to obtain some clarification from the Allies. Togo was actually fumbling for a means to accept the Declaration. In the meanwhile, Premier Suzuki, pressed by the more militant elements, announced on 28 July 1945 that the Government had decided to mokusatsu the Proclamation. Although Suzuki stated later that his intention was only to reserve judgement in using the expression mokusatsu, the whole world understood his Press report as a rejection of the Potsdam Declaration. (84) The intercepted cables should have given an idea to the President that Japan only proposed to withhold comment at that time, and that the absence of any guarantee about the

83 Togo held the mistaken belief that the Declaration as such and the moderate attitude of the Allies was the result of the report of the Russians at Potsdam about the Emperor's desires. Togo, n. 53, p. 307.
Shusen Shiroku, n. 19, pp. 504-5.

84 Shusen Shiroku, n. 19, pp. 512-3.
Butow, n. 46, pp. 140-1, 143-9.
Mokusatsu comes closest to the meaning of withholding comment implying that something is held back. But it also has the meaning 'ignore'. In spite of the Mokusatsu statement, perceiving sections of the Japanese public understood that peace was near. The Stock Exchanges, long dormant, began to show a sudden spurt of activity. Kazuo Kawai, "Mokusatsu, Japan's Response to the Potsdam Declaration", Pacific Historical Review, vol. 19, November 1950, p. 413.
Emperor was making it difficult for the Japanese Government to accept the Declaration. Yet, no steps were taken to give assurances to Japan in this regard, as contemplated by the President earlier. The President seemed to have lost interest in exploring the possibilities of bringing hostilities to an end through issue of further warnings and waiting for Japan to lay down arms. He gave his approval for dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima, as planned earlier. The magnitude of destruction, which the atom bomb would cause, did not deter the American decision to use it. Victory and a quick victory seemed to have been the overriding factor and no price paid by Japan was considered to be too high. It was also believed that a tremendous shock carrying the convincing proof of the Allied Powers to destroy the Empire, would extract a genuine surrender from Japan. The so-called "rejection" of the Potsdam Declaration by Japan, therefore, seemed to confirm the worst fears of the US leaders about the suicidal struggles of Japan and the unfortunate decision to use the bomb was taken to speed up victory. The Soviet Union also, quoting the intractability of Japan, finally announced her inability to mediate and marched her forces into Manchuria.

SOVIE T ENTRY INTO PACIFIC WAR

As had been explained earlier, the United States had all along been anxious about Soviet entry into the Pacific
War and finally obtained a commitment from Stalin that he would enter the Pacific War three months after the defeat of Germany. Therefore, the American strategic plans for invasion of Japanese mainland took the Russian entry into Manchuria as part of the plan. It is true that on 24 April 1945 the Joint Chiefs of Staff, while reviewing the Pacific strategy, stated that "because of our estimated ability to interdict Japanese movement between the Asiatic mainland and Japan proper, early Russian entry into the war against Japan and attendant containing of the Kwantung Army is no longer necessary to make invasion feasible". (85) But at the same time, as was made clear in the Conference at the White House on 18 June 1945, it was agreed that "the impact of Russian entry on the already hopeless Japanese may well be the decisive action levering them into capitulation at that time or shortly thereafter, if we land in Japan". However, as remarked by Admiral Ernest J. King at the Conference,

... regardless of the desirability of Russians entering the war, they were not indispensable and we should not go so far as to beg them to come in. While the cost of defeating Japan would be greater, ... we could handle it alone. The realisation of this fact should greatly strengthen the President's hand in the forthcoming Conference". (86)

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86 Ibid., p. 79.
At Potsdam, the President asked Stimson to reconsider the question of the Soviet entry into the War, in view of the new factor of the success of the atom bomb tests. Army Chief of Staff, Gen. George C. Marshall's advice to Stimson was that, though with the possession of the atom bomb, Russian assistance was no longer really needed nor much wanted, Russian entry would bring the end quicker and with smaller loss of life. He also added that, since in any event, the Soviet forces would be able, if they chose, to secure control of Manchuria (and possibly Korea and the Kuriles), it was still expedient to solicit their entry. (87) Therefore the knowledge of the new weapon did not affect the American inclination to have Russia enter the war as incisively as Prime Minister Churchill imagined it to be. (88)

The Soviet Union was not consulted about the contents of the Potsdam Declaration, though Truman informed Stalin about its issue. As explained by Byrnes later, Soviet Union was not yet at war with Japan and could not be asked to subscribe to it. But as soon as it was released, a copy was sent to Molotov's residence. This brought forth a request from Molotov for the postponement of the Declaration by a few days. As the Declaration had already been issued, nothing could be done about it.

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On 29 July, Truman received a request from Molotov that it would be helpful if the American and British Governments would address a formal letter to the Soviet Union asking her to enter the War. He suggested that this might be based on the refusal of Japan to accept the Declaration and the wish of the Allies to put a quick end to the War. The President was surprised. Byrnes was displeased that the US Government should perform the unpleasant task of asking the Soviet Union to break the Neutrality Pact and he did not want to urge the Russians to enter the War. Yet the Russian request was not completely turned down. President Truman approved the draft, which concluded with the following:

It seems to me under the terms of Moscow Declaration and the Provisions of the (UN) Charter, above referred to (art. 103), it would be proper for the Soviet Union to indicate its willingness to consult and co-operate with other Great Powers now at war with Japan with a view to joint action on behalf of the community of nations to maintain peace and security.

(89)

Attlee concurred in this.

Molotov quoted the above allied request as justification for Soviet attack on Japan, in his interview with Ambassador Sato on 8 August 1945. It is difficult to state that the dropping of the atom bomb hastened Soviet entry into the War. In May 1945, Stalin had told Hopkins that the Soviet army would be fully deployed on the

89 Byrnes, n. 76, pp. 297-8.
JAPAN SURRENDERS

The atomic bombardment of Hiroshima, followed by the Soviet entry into the war, and the atomic bombing of Nagasaki seemed to kill all hopes of improvement of the already critical situation in the country, which was crumbling under the continuous aerial bombardments. These factors forced the Emperor to throw his weight in favour of accepting the Declaration. War Minister Anami, Army Chief of Staff Umezu and Admiral Toyoda had pleaded, that if possible, occupation should be completely prevented or at least Tokyo should be spared, while restricting other occupation points to the minimum. They also desired that demobilisation of the Japanese forces should be done by the Japanese Generals themselves and that the war criminals should be tried by Japan and not by the Allies. But with the support of the Emperor, Togo was able to set aside these objections and forwarded the acceptance of the declaration with the only reservation "with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler". (91)


Washington was faced with a dilemma when presented with the Japanese request. It was clear that an outright rejection of such a request would have strengthened the determination of Japan to continue resistance. Therefore, it was finally decided to convey to Japan that the Emperor would be subject to the authority of the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) implying that SCAP would supervise and might limit the Emperor's authority, without eradicating Imperial prerogatives and governmental authority. Initially, Molotov objected to the reservation made by Japan and was sceptical about the wisdom of accepting it, but later, agreed to the reply proposed by the USA. (92)

The interpretation given by the Allies was once again not acceptable to the War Minister, as it still endangered the national polity and he wished to continue the negotiations with USA. If no favourable reply was received, there was no alternative but to "carry on the struggle even at the cost of 100 million lives". Once again it was the Emperor's determination to accept the Declaration that settled the issue. The Emperor in a voice choked with emotion stated that he agreed with the Foreign Minister that

"it (the Allied reply) was not intended to subvert the national polity of Japan, but unless the war be brought to an end at this moment, I fear that the national polity will be destroyed and the nation annihilated. It is, therefore, my wish that we bear the unbearable and accept the Allied reply, thus to preserve the State as a State and spare my subjects further suffering ... "(93)

The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Soviet Union's declaration of war, by themselves, could not break Japan's resistance, but these created "an unusual atmosphere in which theretofore static factor of Emperor could be made active in such an extraordinary way as to work what was virtually a political miracle". Even then, the fact that the Emperor had to express his desires twice and at length, makes it clear that the compliance was by no means automatic. (94) While the older officers were thus brought around, the younger officers tried to "protect" the Emperor from being "misguided" by his advisers by staging a coup and doing away with such statesmen who failed to realise that it was useless for the people of Japan to survive, if the structure of the State was changed. These officers were foiled in their attempts, but the people of Japan, who were already dazed by the Imperial broadcast announcing Japan's defeat, were confused further by the leaflets dropped by airmen, denying the validity of the Imperial Rescript and

93 Togo, n. 53, pp. 333-4.
Shusen Shiroku, n. 19, pp. 697-702.

94 Butow, n. 46, pp. 231-3.
calling upon them to rise in defence of the Throne. (95)

These peculiar conditions existing in Japan prompted Foreign Minister Togo to follow up the letter informing the Allies of the Imperial Rescript, promulgating the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, with another communication transmitting the conditions, laid down by the War Minister, as desires. These included the restriction of the points of Allied Occupation to the minimum and also advance intimation about them. Since disarming of the Japanese forces was a delicate task, Togo also requested that under the command of Hign Majesty, the Emperor, the Japanese forces should be allowed to disarm themselves and that the honour of the soldiers should be respected, as for instance, permitting them to wear their swords. This communication was not appreciated by President Truman, who considered that Japan should know that "unconditional surrender was not a matter for negotiations". (96)

Two Imperial Rescripts were issued asking the Japanese forces to lay down arms and several Imperial Princes were sent to China, Korea and the Southern areas to explain the Emperor's wish in person to the Japanese forces. Numerous influential persons issued proclamations, made radio addresses, and did everything in their power to curb

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95 Ibid., pp. 211-23.

96 Shusen Shiroku, n. 19, pp. 720-1.

Truman, n. 78, pp. 389-90.
any tendency on the part of the masses to disbelieve or contravene the wishes of His Majesty. On 15 August 1945, Premier Suzuki resigned along with his Cabinet, as he was sorely distressed that he had caused the Emperor so much trouble. The Imperial mandate fell on Prince Higashikuni Naruhiko. This unprecedented step of a member of the Imperial family heading a Cabinet, checkmated the extremists from using obstructionist tactics against the Cabinet.

The War was over. Japan had been completely defeated. The vacuum, thus created in the Pacific, had to be filled and a battle of wits between the USA and the Soviet Union started in earnest.

**US-USSR CONFLICT OVER JAPAN BEGINS**

Since early 1942, the East Asia Planning Group in the State Department had been preparing papers on all possible problems regarding the postwar occupation of Japan. The emphasis of planning by these Committees within the State Department seemed to have been on the type of occupation government to be instituted in Japan, reformation of Japanese institutions, etc. These papers were discussed in the Inter-Divisional Area Committee for the Far East and the Territorial Sub-Committee. Unfortunately, there was very little communication between these Committees in the State Department and the President. If the Cairo Declaration differed
very little from the tentative conclusions reached by these Committees, it was "by chance and not design". Even though a set of documents was prepared by these Committees for the President for the Yalta Conference, they were not used. For security reasons the Yalta protocol was kept secret and the planning staff were not aware of the commitments made by the USA to the Soviet Union, which would have an effect on the postwar situation in the Far East. (97)

It appears that the USA hoped to fill the power vacuum created in the Far East by the unconditional surrender of Japan through the establishment of a strong and unified China. They also regarded the Sino-Soviet cooperation as the *sine qua non* for peace and security in the Far East. The British assessment of the weakness of China and their doubts about the future stability of China were dismissed by American officials as arising out of British colonial ambitions. The USA hoped to take up the leadership in assisting China to develop a strong and unified Government. (98) Therefore, even while discussing the political effects of the expected Soviet entry into the Pacific War, Acting Secretary of State Grew in his Memo to Secretary of War James V. Stimson and Secretary of Navy Forrestal only wished to have


98 Yalta Papers, n. 29, pp. 351-7.
Soviet commitments regarding the territorial integrity of China and Soviet support of Chiang Kai-Shek. (99)

It was proposed to build up China as a useful power to police Japan in the Far East. (100) In the postwar objectives of the USA in regard to Japan, a negative role was assigned to her, viz., Japan should be prevented from being a menace to the USA and other countries in the Pacific area. (101)

However, in May 1945, Secretary of Navy James V. Forrestal raised the issue of American political objectives in the Far East. Forrestal posed a question whether the USA had thought about a counterweight to the Russian influence in the Far East and should it be China or Japan which should take this role. Ambassador Harriman in the Soviet Union also expressed his concern over the need for a re-examination of US objectives in the Far East. (102)

99The Entry of the Soviet Union into the War against Japan, n. 85, pp. 68-70.


On 24 July 1945, Secretary of War Stimson discussed with Truman the proposed targets for the dropping of the atom bomb and his diary entry reads as follows:

July 24) ... We (Stimson and Truman) had a few words about the S.I. program and I again gave my reasons for eliminating one of the proposed targets. He again reiterated with the utmost emphasis his own concurring belief on that subject and he was particularly emphatic in agreeing with my suggestion that if elimination was not done, the bitterness which would be caused by such a wanton act might make it impossible during the long postwar period to reconcile the Japanese to us in that area, than to the Russians. It might thus, I pointed out, be the means of preventing what our policy demanded viz., a sympathetic Japan to the United States, in case there should be any aggression by Russia in Manchuria.¹

Stimson and Truman were referring to the elimination of Kyoto as the proposed target for atomic bombardment. The above conversation suggests that the United States, even before the War ended, was conscious of the need for a postwar Japan more reconciled to the USA rather than the Soviet Union. Although Herbert Feis states that "even when final victory was near, the Soviet Union and United States had not dealt with one another as rival claimants or antagonists for the right to occupy or control Japan after the War" (104) if not in the State Department, the President and the War and Navy Secretaries started thinking in terms of American

¹ Potsdam Papers, n. 45, vol. 2, p. 1373 (footnote 3)

influence in Japan taking ascendency over that of Soviet Union. Again, as early as September 1944, with the tacit consent of Churchill, the USA had decided that Japan came under the jurisdiction of the United States. (105) In July 1945, when there was a possibility of the Soviet Union entering the war in the near future, there was no change in this policy. The preponderance of the American forces in Japan and a unified, not zonal Government for Japan, was justified by the fact that the USA would have assumed the major share of the burden in accomplishing Japan's defeat. The unified character of Japan from administrative, economic, social and ethnic points of view, was also cited as one of the factors for a single zone of occupation. It was decided that while the other Allies would be allowed participation in the establishment of policies, the controlling voice would be that of USA. In short, the United States had decided to take advantage of the presence of her forces in the Pacific region to assume control of the Japanese ship of State and steer it according to her own wishes. She was, therefore, able to checkmate all the moves made by Soviet Union to acquire an effective share in the occupation as well as control of Japan. (106)


106 Ibid. Truman, n. 78, p. 42. Truman states in his Memoirs "our experience with them (Russians) in Germany and in Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland was such that I decided to take no chances in a joint set-up with the Russians (in Japan)."
While the Soviet Union had assured herself by the Yalta accord of the control of the outlying territories of Japan, the first attempt made by her to assure her own participation in the occupation of Japanese mainland, was by the insertion of a clause giving her a voice in determining the candidacy of the Allied High Command in Japan, in the draft reply proposed to be issued to Japan about the Potsdam Declaration. This was strongly objected to by the USA and the Soviet Union was forced to withdraw it. (107) Again, Stalin tried to include Northern Hokkaido in the region of surrender to Soviet forces. He argued that Russian public opinion would be seriously offended, if they were not allowed participation in the occupation of Japan in view of the Japanese occupation of the Soviet Far East in 1919-21. This request was firmly rejected by Truman, who would only permit a token Soviet force under the overall command of General Douglas MacArthur just as in the case of other Allied token forces. (108) Soviet Union declined this concession. Finally, the Soviet Union tried to propose changes in the Instrument of Surrender, through military channels, which might open the door for a Control Council type of occupation in Japan. MacArthur replied to General Alexei Antonov that this matter

107 Ibid., pp. 362-3.

108 Ibid., pp. 312-3. Correspondence, n. 9, pp. 266-7.
should be dealt with at the Government level. Since the purpose was not served, Antonov wrote back to MacArthur that "the General Staff of the Red Army will not insist on these corrections". (109)

Thus the USA set in motion her policy of shaping the destiny of the Pacific region through the actual presence of her military forces. The Soviet Union could not passively acquiesce in this policy and withdraw from the arena giving it up as a lost cause. Consequently, in the next phase of Japan's history, we see the continuation of this struggle between the USA and the Soviet Union, each trying to introduce her respective 'way of life' into Japan.

LOST OPPORTUNITY

The Soviet Union missed an opportunity given by Japan for increasing her influence over Japan and improving her image among the Japanese people. Her refusal to mediate on behalf of Japan might have been forgiven. But her last-

109 Truman, n. 78, pp. 376-7.
Text of Instrument of Surrender signed by Japan on 2 September 1945 in Documents on American Foreign Relation 1945-46, n. 92, p. 109.
MacArthur's supreme authority is clear from the directive issued to him by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Text in Ibid., p. 273.
minute attack on Japan was considered a "stab in the back" and left a lasting bitterness in the minds of the Japanese people. This brought into focus the Soviet objective, that she wanted a Japan completely crushed. The Soviet Union, while honouring her commitment to the USA to enter the Pacific War, also hoped to obtain the allocation of a Soviet zone in Japan by marching her troops in. But the atom bomb killed this hope and the War ended without a single Russian soldier landing on the mainland of Japan. Neither could the Soviet Union get American approval for a separate Soviet zone. However, the six day war gave her an opportunity to occupy South Sakhalin and the Kuriles and thus appropriate for herself the promises made in Yalta.

Japan, in her desperate moments, turned towards the Soviet Union for help, but met with a refusal. The fear of severity of the terms of American demand for unconditional surrender drove her to the Soviet Union, but her basic distrust of the Soviet Union was in no way reduced. Her anxiety to prevent Japan becoming a prey to communist subversion and her fear that the Soviet Union might prove a real threat in this regard was also in no way diminished. At the same time, there was an awareness that the combination of the Soviet Union and Japan could help to drive the Anglo-Saxon Powers out of East Asia and South East Asia. Japan did not expect the war-time cooperation between the USA and USSR to continue. She calculated that she would benefit by the US-USSR confrontation, which would ensue, and the actual
events prove her to be right.

In the postwar power set-up in the Far East, the US State Department worked on the assumption that Japan would disappear as a great Oriental Power for a long time to come. They felt that stability in the Far East would be maintained by China, aided by the USA, and China would also help to police Japan. Most of the planners in State Department thought in terms of enforcement of peace through an international organisation. However, even before the War ended, the War and Navy Departments were discussing the advisability of having a Japan more friendly towards USA than the Soviet Union, though this did not form a plank of US policy. The US determination that she should occupy a predominant role in the Occupation and that Japan should have a unified undivided zone of occupation, spared Japan the pain and misery of a divided country with very little hope for unification, as was the fate of Germany and Korea. As such, the US-USSR confrontation proved advantageous to Japan even before the Occupation began. General Anami, Japan's War Minister, predicted that it would not be in USSR's interests to have a weakened Japan in her future confrontation with USA. He was right in his analysis that Japan had the capability to assist one Power against the other in the case of confrontation in the Far East and that it would be in the interests of USSR to rehabilitate and strengthen Japan. However, the Power, which was in a position to take this initiative, and mould Japan for her own purposes was the USA and not the
USSR. USSR's desire "to break Japan's spine" made her blind to the post-war power configuration in the Far East and the potentiality of Japan.