

THE UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER
POLICY TOWARD JAPAN

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Bachelor of Arts

Northeastern State College

Tahlequah, Oklahoma

1968

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College
of the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
May, 1970

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THE UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER
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PREFACE

Since the end of World War II a great deal of attention has been given to one of the most dramatic events of the war--the dropping of the atomic bomb. This event is often credited with bringing the war to an end. Less study, though, has been directed at the role of the policy which persisted during the last two years of the war to serve as the sole means of ending the conflict. The unconditional surrender policy became an issue among American officials who felt the Japanese would never accept it without significant modifications. One purpose of this thesis will be to examine dissension toward the policy and reasons for the continuation of the formula. Another purpose will be to examine the Japanese reaction and note the variety of responses by the Japanese hierarchy.

No work of this nature is completed without aid and advice from a number of sources. I was fortunate that Dr. Sidney D. Brown channeled my basic interest in Asian civilizations into meaningful studies. Dr. John A. Sylvester served as reader and critic and gave immeasurable assistance as such. Finally, to Faye for all those reasons one dedicates and is dedicated to his wife, and for other reasons that she knows.

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CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF THE UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER POLICY

In connection with World War II peace negotiations, President Roosevelt first used the term unconditional surrender at the Casablanca Conference in January, 1943. From its inception controversy has surrounded the policy, and there is even a lack of certainty and a difference of opinion as to the exact origin of the term as it applied to the settlement of World War II.

General Eisenhower noted that President Roosevelt had used the phrase at a Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting on January 7, 1943,¹ prior to and in preparation for the Casablanca Conference, leading one to believe that the term had not "flashed" through the President's mind as he liked to have people suppose. Two military historians confirmed Eisenhower's assertion that the President used the unconditional surrender term at the Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting, and in their research they found that "no study of this formula was made at the time by the army staff, or by the joint staff either before or after the President's comment."² Robert

¹Dwight Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1958), p. 489n7.

²Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, United States Army in World War II. The War Department: Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-42 (Washington, D. C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953), p. 380.

Sherwood has pointed out that Roosevelt liked to think of himself as a "frivolous fellow" who decided policy on the "spur-of-the-moment."³ This might be an indication that the President was confident of his ability to formulate policy without preparation. Yet Norman H. Davis, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Security Problems, had apprised the President of the subcommittee's consensus that "nothing short of unconditional surrender by the principal enemies, Germany and Japan, could be accepted...." Although the actual date of the meeting between Roosevelt and Davis is unknown, it is certain that it was prior to Casablanca and possibly as early as April 15, 1942.⁴

It was Sunday, January 24, 1943, at a press conference that Roosevelt first publicly used the term. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was present and was at best ambiguous about his part in forming this policy. The President's son, Elliott Roosevelt, noted that Churchill heard the President use the term the day before the press meeting, and the Prime Minister even toasted unconditional surrender as they worked out a draft for the conference communique.⁵ Churchill declared in his multivolume history of the war that he had no recollection of the things mentioned in Elliott Roosevelt's book, but thought that the idea might have come up during informal talks. In July, 1949, during Parliamentary debates, Churchill reiterated "with equal inaccuracy" (the Prime

³Robert Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: an Intimate History (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 696.

⁴U. S. Department of State, Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-45 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 127.

⁵Elliott Roosevelt, As He Saw It (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1946), pp. 117 and 119. See also: Lord Hankey, Politics: Trials and Errors (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1950), p. 28.

Minister's words) that the first time he heard the term was at the press conference. Churchill's political colleague, Anthony Eden, finally established that Churchill had sent a message to Clement Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister, proposing the term as a policy toward Germany and Japan on January 19, 1943; Churchill later admitted that he had also used the phrase in a conversation with FDR on January 20, 1943.⁶

There seems to be ample evidence that Roosevelt had given consideration to the idea of unconditional surrender before the press meeting. Harry Hopkins noticed that the President had notes at the press meeting at Casablanca which he consulted occasionally. These notes mentioned the term and Hopkins' biographer thought it was a true and deliberate statement of FDR's policy.⁷ Samuel I. Rosenman, a confidant to the President, also thought the statement had been carefully thought out.⁸ Roosevelt's explanation was that as he thought of the difficulty of getting the French Generals Henri Giraud and Charles De Galle together, he likened it in his mind to the difficulty of arranging a meeting between Lee and Grant toward the end of the Civil War. Suddenly he remembered that Grant had been called "Old Unconditional Surrender," and the next thing he knew he had used the term as policy for ending the war.⁹ Actually Grant had used the term at the battle of Ft. Donelson in response to a message asking for conditions of surrender for the

⁶Winston S. Churchill, The Second World War, Vol. IV: The Hinge of Fate (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), pp. 684-85, 687-88. See also: Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, pp. 972-73n.

⁷Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, pp. 696-97.

⁸Samuel I. Rosenman, Working With Roosevelt (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), p. 371.

⁹Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, p. 696.

Confederate forces led by General Simon B. Buckner. Contrary to the President's memory, the Union General's terms were quite liberal to Lee at Appomattox.¹⁰ Grant's terms, limited to one battle, were not meant to encompass a policy toward the whole of the Confederacy; and were given without prior consultation or consideration of future political consequences.

Whatever circumstances led the President to inaugurate this policy, there is no question that he continued to support it and often repeated that unconditionality was the only means of surrender for the Axis. Later during the war when there was talk of modifying the formula, the President maintained his desire to keep it. Roosevelt, nonetheless, seemed determined that unconditional surrender would not be associated with a harsh peace. At the time of Casablanca he emphasized the unconditional surrender meant only a reasonable assurance for world peace, that it meant the destruction of a philosophy based on conquest, and not the destruction of populations.¹¹ In an address given on February 12, 1943, the President stated that unconditional surrender was not to be used harshly against the people of the Axis nations, but the intention was to impose punishment on the "guilty, barbaric leaders."¹²

It is clearly evident that Roosevelt was determined that the policy be carried out and that from the first he intended that the Japanese be

¹⁰Grant's exact words to Buckner were: "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted." J. G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1961), p. 204.

¹¹Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, p. 696.

¹²U. S. Department of State, Bulletin, VIII (February 13, 1943), President Franklin Roosevelt, "The War," 146.

included in the unconditional formula. As noted earlier, the Subcommittee on Security Problems had named Japan as one of the principal enemies to which the policy should be directed, and Churchill's message to Attlee on January 19, 1943, mentioned the policy as pointed at Japan as well as Germany. Five days later at the Casablanca Conference the President stated that "the elimination of German, Japanese, and Italian war power means the unconditional surrender by Germany, Italy, and Japan."¹³ On another occasion, February 12, 1943, the President said, "...our policy toward our Japanese enemies is precisely the same as our policy toward our Nazi enemies: it is the policy of fighting hard on all fronts and ending the war as quickly as we can on the uncompromising terms of unconditional surrender."¹⁴ At a press conference in Hawaii July 29, 1944, when FDR was asked if he was going to make unconditional surrender his goal in the Pacific, he replied that at Casablanca he had made no differentiation between the European enemy and the Far Eastern enemy; "the same thing applied to Japan," he declared.¹⁵

The reasons behind Roosevelt's initiation of the unconditional policy are not easily ascertained. Sherwood is one of several writers who felt that the President was influenced by the Armistice of 1918.¹⁶ The failure of Wilson's idealistic scheme for making peace, the subsequent rise of Nazism, and Hitler's abusive speeches toward the Versailles Diktat were most likely in the President's mind as he began to formulate

¹³Rosenman, Working With Roosevelt, pp. 370-71.

¹⁴U. S. Department of State, Bulletin, VIII, 146.

¹⁵Rosenman, Working With Roosevelt, pp. 370-71.

¹⁶Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, p. 791.

a policy for ending the war.

Representative Jessie Sumner of Illinois in a speech on the floor of the House of Representatives recalled for the President's attention the Armistice of 1918. She noted that Roosevelt himself had used a negotiated peace--a taboo term to the New Dealers, she contended--with Darlan for entrance into Africa and with Bagdolio to secure the surrender of Italy. She questioned the wisdom of insisting on unconditional surrender and referred the President to a book by Harry R. Rudin on the World War I Armistice.¹⁷ Rudin revealed that in World War I there had been a vigorous effort to have unconditional surrender as the policy for ending the war. During the final months of the war after Wilson had issued his "Fourteen Points" calling for a negotiated peace, several Senators took issue with the President and demanded an unconditional surrender of Germany.¹⁸ Critics of the President in Congress read letters from their constituents to show that American citizens were demanding unconditional surrender. Even Colonel House in his diary indicated the "nearly unanimous sentiment in this country against anything but unconditional surrender as the motto for the war." General Pershing, head of the American Expeditionary Forces, stated in a memorandum to the Supreme Command that he believed the only way to obtain a complete victory was to continue the war until Germany had surrendered unconditionally.¹⁹

¹⁷U. S. Congress, House. Remarks of Miss Jessie Sumner, "Unconditional Surrender." 79th Cong., 1st sess., January 9, 1945. Congressional Record, XCI, 145.

¹⁸Senators Lodge of Massachusetts, Poindexter of Washington and Johnson of California desired unconditional surrender. Lodge of Massachusetts declared to the press on one occasion: "I believe in a dictated, not a negotiated peace." Harry R. Rudin, Armistice 1918 (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1944), pp. 173 and 106.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 106, 103, 124, and 184-86.

Representative Sumner observed that terms such as "negotiated peace and unconditional surrender" had become betes noirs to the leaders of 1918. She believed that the lesson to be learned from World War I was the senselessness of fighting on blindly until unconditional surrender could be obtained since Wilson had been able to secure every concession he asked through a negotiated peace. She concluded, therefore, that the unconditional surrender policy was an anachronism.²⁰

Another reason for initiating and promoting the unconditional policy was that the President felt it would have positive propaganda effects in the Allied countries. The policy was to give the Allies a common goal of victory and possibly strengthen their resolve during the war. The average person would accept unconditional surrender as the just deserts for countries who would precipitate an international war.

Yet international legal problems were involved in a policy so broad and vaguely defined as unconditional surrender. Historically, surrender has been defined as a giving up by a military commander of an area or group under his command, quite similar to the way it was used by Grant in the Civil War. Surrender, therefore, does not usually constitute a form of ending the war, but as President Roosevelt used the term, it implied a political act; that is, the conquered countries would be completely controlled by the victorious ones. There seems to be no precedent for the manner in which the President used the term.²¹ Although

²⁰U. S. Congress, House. Sumner, "Unconditional Surrender," p. 146.

²¹Francis C. Balling, "Unconditional Surrender and a Unilateral Declaration of Peace," American Political Science Review, XXXIX (1945), 474. Balling preferred as a more exact term for the President's policy: "political capitulation stipulating unconditional surrender." pp. 475-76.

there might be advantages in the policy, e.g. flexibility since the policy would be unilaterally declared, there are also problems. It would, of course, be political suicide to the government which yielded to such a demand, and it would be viewed at a later period as a forced measure and would assume an aura much as the Treaty of Versailles did to the Germans in the 1930's.²² Unconditional surrender would seem to be a contradiction in itself since surrender presupposes conditions.

International legal problems would not have stood in the way of implementing the policy if there had been a degree of certainty in its applicability and success. Since there could be no such guarantee, Allied response revealed a wide range of impressions to the unconditional policy. Japanese reaction eventually polarized around two groups--the peace party and the war-continuation faction who disagreed on Japan's ability to continue the war and the necessity of accepting unconditional surrender.

²²Ibid., pp. 478-80. See also: Paul Kecskemeti, Strategic Surrender; the Politics of Victory and Defeat (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1958), p. 236.

CHAPTER II

ALLIED RESPONSE AND JAPANESE REACTION TO UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

Generally the policy of unconditional surrender was not well received by the leadership groups in America and in the Allied countries, particularly because of its vagueness and the supposed difficulty in defining the term. There was also a fear that it might be a stumbling block to future negotiations for peace. Actually, none of the Allies were ever to take a definite position on unconditional surrender, so it was to remain essentially an American policy.

Winston Churchill showed his ability to equivocate on a sensitive issue. His position could probably be best defined as supporting the policy, yet desiring to lessen its psychological impact lest it be used for propaganda purposes by the Axis and made to appear as a harsh policy for peace. In a House of Commons speech February 11, 1943, he stated: "But our inflexible insistence on unconditional surrender does not mean that we shall stain our victorious arms by any cruel treatment of whole populations, but...no vestige of the Japanese war plotting machine will be left to us when the work is done."¹ Robert Sherwood corresponded with Churchill in an attempt to discover the Prime Minister's views on

¹Lord Hankey, Politics: Trials and Errors (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1950), p. 32.

the formula and was told that he would not have used the term himself.² Churchill emphasized this position when he wrote in his book on World War II: "I felt there would be no rigid insistence upon unconditional surrender apart from what was necessary for world peace and future security..."³ Churchill's position was a sort of accommodation to a fait accompli which he had no great influence in planning.

The British Foreign Office did not like the term. The Foreign Office foresaw difficulties in adequately defining the term and was also worried about its propaganda effects in the Axis nations. The term "prompt surrender" was preferred over the more severe sounding unconditional surrender.⁴

If Churchill's position on unconditional surrender was ambiguous, Stalin's was at best confusing. Contrary to the President's belief that "Old Joe" would like the idea, Stalin's reaction was at first less than enthusiastic, and only later did he accept the policy, then with mixed feelings. William Phillips, a political advisor to Eisenhower, noted that Stalin had opposed the policy at Teheran in December, 1943.⁵ Cordell Hull, Secretary of State at that time, defined the Russian position as desiring a clearer definition of the term as it played on

²Robert Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins; an Intimate History (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 696.

³Winston S. Churchill, The Second World War, Vol. VI: Triumph and Tragedy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), p. 642.

⁴Robert Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964), pp. 239-40. See also: John L. Chase, "Unconditional Surrender Reconsidered," Political Science Quarterly, LXX (June, 1955), 259; and Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York: MacMillan Company, 1948), p. 1571.

⁵Hull, Memoirs, p. 1571.

Axis fears of the unknown.⁶ The fact that the Russians did not use the formula in discussions with the Finns when the two countries were negotiating for peace was an indication they were not entirely committed to the policy. British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden tried to use the Russian approach to Finland as an opportunity to soften unconditional surrender, but he still felt that the policy was desirable when applied to Germany and Japan.⁷

It is difficult to ascertain exactly when the Marshal began to consider the formula worthwhile,⁸ but by the last months of the war he desired its application to Japan. Although he saw continued resistance by the Japanese if the policy was retained, he was in favor of maintaining it. Harry Hopkins reported that in his talks with Stalin the Marshal had preferred to go through with unconditional surrender so that the Japanese military might be destroyed once and for all. He thought, however, that if the Japanese sought softer terms, or if unconditional surrender became a stumbling block to negotiations, the Allies should be prepared to accept a negotiated surrender. Stalin believed that unconditional surrender could be effected during the occupation.⁹

⁶Ibid., pp. 1571-74; and Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, p. 782.

⁷Hull, Memoirs, pp. 1574-75.

⁸I. Deutscher, Stalin, a Political Biography (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 521, set the date at May, 1943. Herbert Feis, Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 220-21, thought mid-1943. Anne Armstrong, Unconditional Surrender; the Impact of the Casablanca Policy on World War II (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1961), p. 55, suggested it was at Yalta in February, 1945.

⁹Herbert Feis, Between War and Peace: The Potsdam Conference (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 115; William D. Leahy, I Was There, the Personal Story of the Chief of Staff

President Roosevelt's Secretary of State was not present at Casablanca, and his absence further strengthens the belief that the President made the policy of unconditional surrender without consulting his associates as to its wisdom. Hull's absence also reflected the declining importance of the State Department in wartime foreign policy making. Dean Acheson, Truman's post-war Secretary of State, at this time an assistant to Hull, wrote of a "drifting State Department" without a firm policy on the conduct of the war. Acheson thought there ought to have been something a little better than Roosevelt's unconditional formula and faulted the Department, himself included, for not making contributions to the "achievement of political purposes through the war."¹⁰ John J. McCloy of the War Department later wrote that during this period officials concentrated so heavily on the war effort that they overlooked political considerations.¹¹ Since neither the State Department nor Hull had had a part in making the policy, it took them by surprise, and they generally opposed it. Hull thought the Allied policy for peace should be more flexible; yet he did think that "in some cases the most severe terms should be imposed. I had Germany and

to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman Based on His Notes and Diaries Made at the Time (New York: Whittlesey House, 1950), p. 383; and Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, Vol. I: Year of Decisions (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), p. 265.

¹⁰Gaddis Smith, American Diplomacy During the Second World War, 1941-45 (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965), p. 53; and Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation; My Years in the State Department (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 38.

¹¹John J. McCloy, The Challenge to American Foreign Policy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 44.

Japan in mind in this connection."¹²

Because of bronchitis Admiral William D. Leahy did not attend Casablanca either but met with the President afterwards and was briefed on the developments at the Conference. He also considered the unconditional doctrine a "surprising development," and from a military point of view the Admiral thought its execution might add to "...difficulties in succeeding campaigns because it would mean that we would have to destroy the enemy."¹³ In Leahy's memoirs he erred or became confused on two points concerning the doctrine. For one thing he thought that the policy had not been discussed with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.¹⁴ This is contrary to General Eisenhower's assertion and the evidence obtained by Matloff and Snell in their volume of the military history series.¹⁵ For another, he asserted that "at Casablanca and subsequent meetings we had not agreed with anybody to demand an unconditional surrender of Japan."¹⁶ This ignored the President's statement that clearly included the Japanese in the unconditional policy.¹⁷

It is very likely that the unconditional policy had the effect of unifying the United Nations on a definite program for ending the war. The policy helped to commit them to carrying on the war until the victory was final. Yet in many respects it is questionable if the concept

¹²Hull, Memoirs, p. 1570.

¹³Leahy, I Was There, p. 145.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵See Chapter I, Note 1.

¹⁶Leahy, I Was There, p. 385.

¹⁷See Chapter I, pp. 4-5.

had value in regard to the Japanese. During the final months of the war it remained a dread and mysterious term, and tended to polarize Japanese officials around the idea of a fight-to-the-death struggle or to surrender without relinquishing the normal rights of belligerents, which to the Japanese meant the retention of the Emperor.

The unconditional surrender policy had not really come to the attention of the Japanese until the Cairo Declaration, November and December, 1943.¹⁸ Only after unconditional surrender had been officially proclaimed at Cairo did the Japanese begin to take the doctrine seriously. Former Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru¹⁹ declared that he then realized that "nothing but practically unconditional surrender could save the country."²⁰ The Cairo Declaration was viewed only as a basis for negotiations which would not actually be applied. It was felt that through negotiations the terms might be lessened, since the Japanese still considered themselves in a viable military position.²¹ The Japanese could understand provisions of the Cairo Declaration for taking their territories if they were defeated, but unconditional surrender

¹⁸Robert Butow, Japan's Decision to Surrender (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1954), p. 39; and F. C. Jones, Japan's New Order in East Asia; Its Rise and Fall, 1937-45 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 423.

¹⁹In this paper all Japanese names will be written with family names first.

²⁰Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 25n45.

²¹United States, Strategic Bombing Survey, Interrogations of Japanese Officials, II (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 320, interrogating Toyoda. Hereafter referred to as USSBS, Interrogations, II.

seemed unrealistic and out of the question.²² Japanese response, therefore, was directed mainly to the Potsdam Declaration which called for unconditional surrender of the armed forces.²³

After discussions were held among the Japanese leaders, it was decided that there should be no official comment on the Potsdam Declaration. Foreign Minister Togo was instrumental in getting this decision, and since he felt that the first reactions to the Declaration were not entirely bad, he was optimistic about negotiations to clear up any difficulties.²⁴ His idea was to remain silent perhaps noting that since there had been a change between the Cairo and Potsdam Declarations, other more substantial changes might follow. Unfortunately Premier Suzuki was influenced by the opposition of the military and announced that the Japanese reaction was that of "mokusatsu."²⁵ The problem lay in the translation and interpretation of this term. Kawai Kazuo, editor of the Nippon Times during the war, has contended that it has no exact equivalent in English, but the best translation is probably

²²United States, Strategic Bombing Survey, Japan's Struggle to End the War (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 5 and 6. Hereafter referred to as USSBS, Japan's Struggle. Lester Brooks, Behind Japan's Surrender (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), pp. 115-16.

²³See Chapter IV for details on the conference and the declaration.

²⁴Togo Shigenori, The Cause of Japan, trans. and ed. Togo Fumihiko and Ben Bruce Blakeney (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), p. 311.

²⁵Suzuki's words were: "I consider the joint proclamation of the three powers to be a rehash of the Cairo Declaration. The government does not regard it as a thing of any great value; the government will just ignore [mokusatsu] it." Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 148. See also Togo, Cause of Japan, pp. 313-14; Shigemitsu Mamoru, Japan and Her Destiny; My Struggle for Peace, trans. Oswald White, ed. Major General F.S.G. Piggott (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1958), p. 358; and Nippon Times, July 30, 1945, p. 1.

"to withhold comment." Instead it was picked up by the newspapers and translated variously: "rejection by ignoring," "silent contempt," or "unworthy of public notice."²⁶ Kato Masuo, a Japanese reporter for the Domei News Agency at the time, has declared that at no time was it actually rejected but was carefully being considered.²⁷ Nevertheless the Premier did call it "a thing of no great value" and only a "rehash of the Cairo Declaration."

In the United States the Premier's statement was translated in the pejorative sense.²⁸ Members of the American government were outspoken on Suzuki's statement. Under Secretary Joseph Grew called it unfortunate if not "utterly stupid."²⁹ Secretary of State Byrnes and Secretary of War Stimson both declared that this statement was largely responsible for the use of the atomic bomb.³⁰ It has even been asserted that this statement was used as a pretext for Russia's entry into the war.³¹

²⁶Kawai Kuzuo, "Mokusatsu, Japan's Response to the Potsdam Declaration," Pacific Historical Review, XIX (1950), 412-13; Shigemitsu, Struggle for Peace, p. 358; and Kase Toshikazu, Journey to the Missouri New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 211.

²⁷Kato Masuo, The Lost War; a Japanese Reporter's Inside Story (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 234.

²⁸An editorialist of the New York Times wrote: "...the Imperial Japanese Government has officially rejected the Allies' unconditional surrender ultimatum as beneath its notice and unworthy of a formal reply." July 30, 1945, p. 18.

²⁹Joseph C. Grew, Turbulent Era; A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, ed. Walter Johnson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), p. 1426.

³⁰James F. Byrnes, Speaking Frankly (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 263; and Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 625.

³¹Kawai, "Mokusatsu," p. 414; Shigemitsu, Struggle for Peace, p. 359; and Kase, Journey to the Missouri, p. 211. See Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 153-54 for the Soviet Declaration of War.

Suzuki has continued to be an enigma. From the time he became Premier until his resignation, no one could ever be quite certain of his position on ending the war. Suzuki assumed the premiership on the dissolution of the Koiso Cabinet in April, 1945, which fell largely because of the loss of Okinawa. The Prime Minister's ambiguity during his tenure arose partly from his fear of assassination by radical elements within the army which to the very end pressed for a continued struggle.³² This is understandable since Suzuki was wounded in an abortive attempt by the Imperial Way Faction, an ultranationalist group within the army, to gain control of the government by assassinating the more moderate members of the service.³³

The old Admiral may also have been employing a subtle Japanese art known as haragei. To say one thing but to mean another is the idea behind haragei, in the hope that the person to whom you are talking will know your true feeling while any uninvited listener will be confused. Perhaps to the military Suzuki put up a front of continued resistance while his friends would know that he desired efforts for peace.³⁴ In statements to the press and in speeches to the Diet, therefore, it would seem that Suzuki had resumed the attitude of the two previous Premiers

³²Mark Gayn, Japan Diary (New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1948), p. 287; Candee Yale Maxon, Control of Japanese Foreign Policy, a Study of Civil-Military Rivalry, 1930-1945 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), p. 198; and Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 75.

³³Kuroki Yukichi, "From War to Peace Cabinets," Contemporary Japan: a Review of Japanese Affairs, XIV (April-December, 1945), p. 183.

³⁴Hashimoto Tetsuma, Untold Story of Japanese-American Negotiations (Tokyo: Shiuonso Press, 1946), p. 129; USSBS, Japan's Struggle, p. 6; Maxon, Control of Japanese Foreign Policy, p. 198; and Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 70.

by calling for renewed efforts in the prosecution of the war.³⁵ Yet Foreign Minister Togo who had discussed at length with the Premier his outlook on finalizing the war, interpreted his speeches as mere rhetoric. Togo was later to state: "It may be that occasionally he [Suzuki] was obliged to say things he did not mean. Although he may have been vacillating at times, I believe I can safely say that his determination to conclude an early peace remained unchanged."³⁶ Fear of assassination might well have been a motivating factor in the use of haragei, but it must be understood that these concepts do not give a full explanation of Suzuki's disposition. His lack of information on the military situation and his unwitting use by the military die-hards--best seen in his moku-satsu statement--led him at times to believe that Japan could be saved even at that late date.

There is little question on the attitude of the military. Former wartime Premier Tojo had become a member of the jushin (senior statesmen) who advised the Emperor on choosing new premiers, and so had a part in suggesting a new man when it was felt Koiso should not continue. Tojo had been opposed to Suzuki as a new premier since he felt the issue on choosing a new premier should be the Admiral's war policy. He considered "either to fight to a finish or to make peace, even if it means

³⁵Suzuki called for the death of "one hundred million" rather than surrender. Nippon Times, April 9, 1945, p. 1; in a speech to the 87th Extraordinary Session of the Diet, June 9, 1945, Suzuki stated, "I hear the enemy is now urging an unconditional surrender....There is but one way for our nation to follow, and that is to fight to the very end to guard our self-existence." Kase, Journey to the Missouri, p. 151; and Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 68-69.

³⁶Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 72-73 and 73n52.

unconditional surrender" the essential question.³⁷ Since he desired a "fight to the finish," he opposed Suzuki whom he presumed too conciliatory. Suzuki was supported by the rest of the senior statesmen since they felt he would not be swayed by the army. Actually his appointment came more as a result of a direct imperial command than in the traditional manner of advice to the throne by the jushin.³⁸ This gave him the opportunity to be independent of any factional control.

After the Potsdam Declaration, opposition on the part of the military to unconditional surrender increased. General Minami Jiro, one of the more moderate generals, said in an interview that "the peace conditions [Potsdam] actually mean unconditional surrender. They also make clear the enemy's desire to control the world."³⁹ There are also indications that after dissemination of the document, telegrams poured in from frontline commanders calling for a rejection of unconditional surrender.⁴⁰

The military had regained the law in May, 1936, which required that only generals and admirals on active duty could be appointed as Army-Navy Minister. The result was to make cabinets dependent on military support. The ability of the military to break up cabinets by resigning was a constant threat to the Suzuki cabinet group which was looking to an early surrender.

The military leadership was burdened by a bureaucratic concept

³⁷Jones, Japan's New Order, p. 431.

³⁸Kuroki, "From War to Peace Cabinets," pp. 184-85.

³⁹Nippon Times, July 30, 1945, p. 1.

⁴⁰Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 148.

known as gekokujo--"rule of the higher by the lower."⁴¹ Often men in lower hierarchical positions were able to pressure their superiors through the use of gekokujo. An example of this concept was in the use of ringisei, one of the peculiar characteristics of Japanese administration. This is usually in the form of a policy paper drafted by a low-ranking official who has no real authority himself. As the document is passed through the bureaucracy, there is a tendency for higher officials to accept it without change or modification. In essence, therefore, decision-making takes place in the lower echelons, where administrators will bear no responsibility and often feel none, and to a great extent have a myopic view of the situation on which they write.⁴² This was particularly true during the final days of the war when the secretariat to the military cabinet members pressured for war continuation.

The navy was often more willing than the army to obtain a realistic view of the war situation;⁴³ therefore, Tojo's Navy Minister Shimada assigned Rear Admiral Takagi Sokichi to investigate Japan's war potential. Takagi carried out his investigation from September, 1943, to February, 1944, but because he went far beyond what Tojo's cabinet members had in mind, he withheld his information until a more propitious moment. His conclusion was that Japan could not possibly win and must

⁴¹Maruyama Masao, Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics, ed. Ivan Morris (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 109-11 and 322.

⁴²Tsujii Kiyooki, "Decision-Making in the Japanese Government: a Study of Ringisei," Robert E. Ward, ed., Political Development in Modern Japan (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 457-68.

⁴³USSBS, Japan's Struggle, p. 3; Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 21 and 22; and Gayn, Japan Diary, pp. 274-76 and 280.

seek a compromise peace. When Admiral Yonai Mitsumasa became Navy Minister during the Koiso Cabinet, he was inclined toward Takagi's views. Takagi had trusted Yonai as being one who supported peace moves and had given him the results of the investigation in March, 1944.⁴⁴

The military made use of publicists for propaganda purposes, especially to mold public opinion in favor of the continuation of the war.⁴⁵ One example of this use was during the incident of Suzuki's statement of mokusatsu. Although an agreement had been made in the cabinet that editorial comment should not be made on the Potsdam Declaration until the government had had time to review it thoroughly, Foreign Minister Togo feared that War Minister Anami was attempting to persuade newspapers to interpret the term in a negative sense.⁴⁶ Togo was able to prevent the War Minister from having mokusatsu interpreted by the newspapers as "rejecting by ignoring," but Anami used his power during the tense moments when peace was almost assured. On August 11 and 12, 1945, newspapers carried headlines such as "War Minister Exhorts Army in Stirring Call...[to] Press Forward to Smash Enemies..." and "Total Wartime Effort Asked Japanese Nation."⁴⁷ Newspapers were not allowed to print certain sections of the Potsdam Declaration. Phrases such as the Japanese military forces "shall be permitted to return to

⁴⁴Kase, Journey to the Missouri, p. 213.

⁴⁵Kawai, "Mokusatsu," p. 412.

⁴⁶Zacharias felt that the Japanese navy was on the United States' side in the sense of bringing the war to a close, so in his broadcasts he made no mention of Japanese naval ineffectiveness. Ellis M. Zacharias, Secret Missions; the Story of an Intelligence Officer (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), p. 360.

⁴⁷Nippon Times, August 11 and 12, 1945, p. 1 on both days.

their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives" or "We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation."⁴⁸ It was not until the end of the war that newspapers were permitted to print the full texts of both the Cairo and Potsdam Declarations.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, the newspapers themselves printed their own harangues against the Allies and their proposals. On the first of August, 1945, the Domei News Agency called the Potsdam Declaration "a one-man show put on by America." The agency did note a change between the Cairo and the Potsdam Declaration but considered this merely subterfuge and warned against "the enemy's political offensive which will be continued in the future and especially against his scheming propaganda."⁵⁰ The newspapers also quoted sources from the West which gave the unconditional surrender formula an evil appearance or made it seem as if it were unpopular with certain individuals in substantial positions. On one occasion David Viklund, London correspondent of Dagensynheter Viklund was quoted as saying: "London is earnestly discussing the problem whether the unconditional terms for Japan can be mildened [sic.] so that Japanese face can be kept, and the Allies will not suffer from enormous losses in the future."⁵¹

The Foreign Office suggested that the terms of the Allies should be released in full and that the only course for the government to take was

⁴⁸Kato, Lost War, pp. 233-34; and Kawai, "Mokusatsu," p. 411.

⁴⁹Nippon Times, August 16, 1945, p. 2.

⁵⁰Ibid., August 1, 1945, p. 3.

⁵¹Ibid., August 3, 1945, p. 3.

to say nothing at all. This essentially was Foreign Minister Togo's attitude, but, as noted, Suzuki's press statement dashed these hopes. Togo later stated in his memoirs that Japan was willing to accept the Potsdam Declaration unconditionally, but that was not to surrender unconditionally. Since the declaration of unconditional surrender applied only to the armed forces and not to the nation, officials thought that it offered considerable latitude.⁵² Perhaps Japanese diplomats were willing to accept unconditional surrender as enunciated in the Declaration but wanted to have the appearance of a negotiated peace.

Togo's intention in taking the post of Foreign Minister in the Suzuki cabinet was to work for peace and because it was generally known he opposed the war, Suzuki selected him.⁵³ As early as January, 1942, Togo had instructed his staff in the Foreign Office to study ways of ending the war and to prepare to "seize the chance" for peace when it came. He had even made his views on foreign policy known to the Diet, a risky position in a country where "thought-control" police were constantly on the watch for deviant behavior.⁵⁴ To be inclined toward peace was one thing but to be willing to accept unconditional surrender was another--this Togo was not entirely ready to do. "There was no thought of unconditional surrender in this country. We were concerned with the steps to be taken to obtain suitable conditions; in other words how we could obtain a negotiated peace," he stated on one occasion.⁵⁵

⁵²Togo, Cause of Japan, p. 399; and Kato, Lost War, p. 233.

⁵³Ibid., p. 282; and Jones, Japan's New Order, p. 216n1.

⁵⁴Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 8n1 and 65n33.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 87n29 and 123.

And another time he called the Allied position "illogical, unacceptable to the Japanese people, and a distortion of historical fact."⁵⁶

If the Japanese were not ready in July, 1945, to accept an unconditional surrender but were still looking to a negotiated peace, there was no problem in their minds as to what the principle and non-negotiable condition would be--the continuation of the ageless imperial system.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 40n31.

CHAPTER III

THE FUTURE STATUS OF THE JAPANESE EMPEROR AS A FACTOR IN UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

Defining the future position of the Japanese Emperor became the focal point for efforts to modify the unconditional surrender formula. As it became progressively clear that the Allies would win the war in the Pacific, efforts were made to explain to the Japanese as well as the Allied peoples what role he would play in an occupied Japan.

Under Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew who had been United States ambassador to Japan (1932-41) was probably the most adamant for the continuation of the imperial system. Throughout the war Grew had opposed propaganda against the Emperor and questioned the wisdom of bombing the Emperor's palace. He felt that it would be difficult to secure the surrender of Japan without some undertaking by the President guaranteeing that unconditional surrender would not mean the elimination of the imperial dynasty. Grew, therefore, sent a memo to President Truman on May 28, 1945, putting forth his views. In this memo he noted that the greatest obstacle to unconditional surrender was the belief that it might mean the end of the imperial system.¹ Grew also gave the President a draft of a proposed proclamation to the Japanese which in

¹Joseph C. Grew, Turbulent Era, a Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, ed. Walter Johnson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), p. 1429.

many respects was similar to the Potsdam Declaration, but in one significant detail it was different. The former ambassador proposed that the government of Japan might become a "constitutional monarchy."² Grew had attempted to clarify his position before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on December 12, 1944, by stating that he had never felt that the Emperor should be retained or eliminated after the war. He told the Committee that he believed that the problem should be left fluid.³ It would seem that by May, 1945, his views had become somewhat altered. In a letter to Samuel Rosenman, Counsel to President Truman, on June 16, 1945, Grew contended for the right of the Japanese to determine their own political structure. Two days later, the President ruled against such a step but desired that the subject of the Emperor's status be entered on the agenda of the upcoming Potsdam Conference.⁴

The former Ambassador was supported in his views by several Asian experts who were advisors to him at the State Department: Eugene H. Dooman, formerly counselor of the American Embassy in Tokyo; Joseph W. Ballantine, Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department; and George H. Blakeslee, Chairman of the Far Eastern Area Committee of the State Department.⁵ All of these men had long connections with the State Department and Japanese relations. Dooman was born in Japan and had worked for the Department as an interpreter; Ballantine had also been an interpreter and had spent many years in

²Ibid., p. 1433.

³Ibid., p. 1417.

⁴Ibid., pp. 1435 and 1437.

⁵Ibid., p. 1422.

Japan; and Blakeslee was an expert in international relations who had taught and visited in Japan a number of times. It is interesting that Ellis M. Zacharias found Grew and his advisors determined to continue the war with Japan to its total defeat and to avoid any deals with the Emperor.⁶

Under Secretary Grew believed that Secretary of War Stimson, Secretary of the Navy Forrestal, and General Marshall, Chief of Staff, U. S. Army, disagreed with him on the position of the Emperor. In a meeting at the Pentagon May 29, 1945, they discussed Grew's memo of the day before which noted the fear of the Japanese that unconditional surrender would mean the end of the imperial system. Marshall thought that publication of the statement at that time would be premature.⁷ In the view of Stimson and his military advisors, it was necessary to consider that some of Japan's leaders would presume any conciliatory move as an indication of weakness. For this reason he did not support Grew on an immediate statement.⁸ In regard to later statements of the Secretary, it appears that Stimson at first opposed the idea of retention, but by the time of the Potsdam Conference had changed his mind. In a memo to the President July 2, 1945, he stated that the United States should not exclude the idea of constitutional monarchy.⁹ Grew recognized that at

⁶Ellis M. Zacharias, Secret Missions; the Story of an Intelligence Officer (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), p. 333.

⁷Herbert Feis, Japan Subdued: The Atomic Bomb and the End of the War in the Pacific (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 19.

⁸Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 628.

⁹Ibid., p. 623.

Potsdam Stimson worked energetically for a statement on the Emperor. While there Stimson spoke to Truman of the importance of reassuring the Japanese on the meaning of unconditional surrender. He desired an insertion on the point of the continuation of the Emperor in the formal warning statement, but when he heard that Byrnes preferred not to put it in, he hoped that the President might be willing to assure the Japanese verbally through diplomatic channels.¹⁰

At a State-War-Navy meeting May 28, 1945, Forrestal had asked if it would be sufficient to say that unconditional surrender concerned only the Japanese military and did not mean the destruction of the nation. Grew's advisor Dooman was of the opinion that it would not suffice since the Japanese were imbued with the idea that it meant the destruction of their philosophy of government.¹¹ This is not to imply that the Navy Secretary believed that the Emperor should be set aside, since Forrestal had early subscribed to Grew's notion that a decision on the Emperor should be deferred until a military occupation had been effected. At a State-War-Navy meeting June 26, 1945, he supported the draft that Grew had given President Truman in May.¹² Forrestal may have been influenced partially by his assistant, John J. McCloy, who

¹⁰U. S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference), (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), II, 1272n3. Hereafter referred to as FRUS, Potsdam, II. This was from a section of Stimson's diary dated July 24, 1945.

¹¹Walter Millis., ed., The Forrestal Diaries (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), p. 66.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 53 and 71. Feis noted that at an earlier State-War-Navy meeting June 12, 1945, Forrestal took up Grew's cause. The Navy Secretary was concerned about the relationship of the Japanese people to the Emperor. Feis, Japan Subdued, p. 19.

thought the Japanese ought to be permitted to retain the Emperor, and Ellis M. Zacharias, a naval intelligence officer who prepared a plan for the Secretary, "A Strategic Plan to Effect the Occupation of Japan," emphasizing the importance of the imperial family.¹³

Admiral William Leahy, Chief of Staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, was in agreement with the idea of maintaining the imperial system because of military reasons. He indicated that it was unwise to consider the execution of the Emperor as some advisors to the President desired. In his opinion it would mean a great loss of life if there was to be an invasion of the Japanese homeland; therefore, at the Potsdam Conference he wished there would be an explanation to the Japanese that unconditional surrender did not mean the destruction of their government.¹⁴ Yet Leahy did not go so far as to support the Grew proposal for a Japanese constitutional monarchy. As a spokesman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he thought it wise to make no statement on the position of the Emperor at that time.¹⁵

The Foreign Morale Analysis Division (FMAD) of the Office of War Information made studies of Japanese morale during the war and found that Japanese attitudes toward the Emperor never weakened. Alexander H. Leighton, head of FMAD, has noted that in the winter and spring of 1945 his analysts advised policy-makers against employing attacks on the

¹³ Millis, Forrestal Diaries, p. 71; Zacharias, Secret Missions, p. 337; and Robert Butow, Japan's Decision to Surrender (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1954), p. 139n79.

¹⁴ William D. Leahy, I Was There, the Personal Story of the Chief of Staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman Based on His Notes and Diaries Made at the Time (New York: Whittlesey House, 1950), pp. 418-19 and 434.

¹⁵ FRUS, Potsdam, II, 1269.

Emperor or the imperial institution since it would have no psychological benefit and might in fact harden enemy resistance. He further felt that the United States should make it clear that it was not going to abolish the imperial household, but army and navy authorities felt that the time was not ripe for such a declaration.¹⁶

Those individuals who opposed the retention of the Emperor usually did so for one of two reasons. They either felt that he personified the myth of Japanese racial superiority, or they believed the American people would accept no modification of the unconditional doctrine as that would be tantamount to appeasement. James F. Byrnes who became Secretary of State to Truman in July, 1945, learned of the differences of opinion on the Japanese Emperor and took with him to Potsdam memos on the varying views. He seems to have been influenced by those who opposed imperial retention.

Byrnes consulted with former Secretary of State Cordell Hull before Potsdam. The new Secretary of State wanted Hull's opinion on Grew's proposal for the maintenance of the Emperor. To Hull it sounded too much like appeasement. It not only seemed to guarantee continuance of the Emperor but also his feudal privileges and the privileges of a ruling caste.¹⁷ During his tenure Hull had dealt with the same problem and had concluded that the supreme authority in Japan would have to be the Allied military government. He decided that it would be best to make use of the Emperor so the military government could function

¹⁶Alexander H. Leighton, Human Relations in a Changing World (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1949), pp. 55, 56, 130, 126 and 229.

¹⁷Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York: MacMillan Company, 1948), p. 1594.

effectively.¹⁸ Hull received a message from Byrnes on July 17, 1945, which stated that he agreed with Hull's statement that an announcement on the Emperor should be delayed.¹⁹

Assistant Secretary of State Archibald MacLeish sent a memo to Byrnes July 6, 1945, and quoted an analysis made by the Department June 13. This analysis noted that the Japanese, without exception, were for the preservation and the non-molestation of the Emperor, and that these factors comprised "irreducible Japanese terms." MacLeish recommended that no public statement be made on the Emperor until there was further study by the State Department.²⁰ Another State Department position paper dated July 3, 1945, that Byrnes had with him at Potsdam noted the difficulty in abolishing the Emperorship.²¹

Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson appeared to have been one of Byrnes' advisors who desired the removal of the Emperor. In a memo from MacLeish to Byrnes July 6, 1945, MacLeish stated that Acheson had pointed out in a staff meeting that the institution of the Emperor was an "anachronistic, feudal institution" easily manipulated by feudal-minded groups.²² Acheson thought that leaving the throne intact was to run the risk that it would be used in the future as it had been in the past, as he saw the Emperor as a weak leader who had yielded to military

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 1591-93, from a memo dated May 9, 1944.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 1593-95.

²⁰FRUS, Potsdam, I, 895-97.

²¹Ibid., pp. 885-87.

²²Ibid., p. 896.

demands for war and could not be relied upon.²³ Obviously it was this kind of thinking to which Zacharias referred when he noted that he found in the State Department men who were avoiding any kind of deals with the Emperor. They failed to detect forces in Japan which were potentially or actually ready to talk peace.²⁴

One other advisor to Byrnes presented the view of opposition to imperial retention. Secretary Forrestal was told by Grew July 6, 1945, that he feared his draft proposal might be ditched on the way to Potsdam by Charles E. Bohlen among others. Bohlen in particular might object because of his close association with the Russians and view a clarification on the unconditional surrender formula as a desire to end the war before Russia had an opportunity to enter.²⁵

There was some discussion on the issue in Congress. Senator Homer E. Capehart was the most outspoken in favor of retaining the Emperor. He thought that if the retention of the Emperor was for "face-saving" on the part of the Japanese, he was willing to accept it. Moreover he did not accept the philosophy that the Japanese would not consider themselves beaten until the Emperor was removed.²⁶ His views were known to the Japanese and were welcomed by those working for peace.²⁷ Senator

²³Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation; My Years in the State Department (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969), pp. 112-13.

²⁴Zacharias, Secret Missions, p. 333.

²⁵Millis, Forrestal Diaries, pp. 73-74.

²⁶U. S. Congress. Senate. Remarks of Homer E. Capehart, "Terms of Surrender for Japan." 79th Cong., 1st sess., July 12, 1945. Congressional Record, XCI, 7438.

²⁷Kase Toshikazu, Journey to the Missouri (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 199.

Elbert D. Thomas of Utah, a former Mormon missionary to Japan (1907-1912), who aided in the psychological warfare aimed at the Japanese, believed it would be the wisest policy to retain the Emperor.²⁸ Yet as early as 1943 there was a desire by some that the Emperor be severed from a position in any future government. Representative Warren Magnuson of Washington in November, 1943, supported an article by Dr. B. A. Liu of the Chinese News Service entitled "The Mikado Must Go." This article called for Hirohito's removal and even advocated trying him as a war criminal.²⁹ Other senators toward the end of the war would agree that the Emperor should not retain his sovereignty and perhaps not even his nominal position.³⁰ It is interesting, however, that in Congress the man who had had personal experience in Japan was committed to the idea of imperial retention.

At the Potsdam Conference the group which opposed any mention of the Emperor had its way, as the final communique made no statement on his future status. However, this was not the last attempt to get some statement of a positive nature on the Emperor. During the final days of the Pacific war when the Japanese were negotiating for a peace settlement, there were high level discussions in Washington on altering the unconditional surrender policy to allow for the retention of the Emperor.

²⁸New York Times, August 11, 1945, p. 8.

²⁹U. S. Congress. House. Extension of Remarks of Warren Magnuson, "The Mikado Must Go," taken from an article by Dr. B. A. Liu in the Chinese News Service. 78th Cong., 1st sess., November 9, 1943. Congressional Record, LXXXIX, A4756-58.

³⁰Among them could be found Senators Brien McMahon (D-Conn.), Tom Stewart (D-Tenn.), Richard Russell (D-Ga.), William Langer (R-N.D.), and Joseph Ball (R-Minn.). New York Times, August 11, 1945, p. 8.

In the early morning hours of August 10, 1945, the United States received through the Swiss government a message from Japan that they were ready to accept the Potsdam Declaration "with the understanding that said Declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign ruler." Admiral Leahy urged immediate acceptance since he felt it would be necessary to use Hirohito in effecting the surrender. Stimson also contended for acceptance of the proposal as he observed along with Leahy the importance of continuing the Emperor in order to get to surrender the many scattered armies of the Japanese who would "own no other authority."³¹ Byrnes disagreed. He could not see why the United States should retreat from its policy of unconditional surrender. He reasoned that it should be the United States who set conditions, not Japan. He also pointed out that it would be necessary to get the assent of the British and the Russians who had signed the Potsdam Declaration with the idea of conditional surrender and that would cause delay.³² Truman agreed with Byrnes since he also felt that the government should not reverse itself too sharply from the unconditional formula.³³ The reply³⁴ was

³¹James F. Byrnes, Speaking Frankly (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 209; Leahy, I Was There, p. 434; and Stimson, On Active Service, p. 627. There was some discussion over the definition of the term "sovereign." If it meant he was only to be a titular head, it might be acceptable, but if it meant "power of self-determination," the opposition would be more vigorous. New York Times, August 11, 1945, p. 3.

³²Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, p. 209; and Byrnes, All in One Lifetime (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 305.

³³Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, Vol. I, Year of Decisions (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), p. 428; and Stimson, On Active Service, p. 626.

³⁴"From the moment of surrender, the authority of the Emperor and

ambiguous. While it showed that the Emperor was to have no power, which had been true for some time anyway, he was to remain in his position at least to effect the surrender.

It has been suggested that the absence of any mention of the Emperor in the Potsdam Declaration posed a serious problem for those in Japan who were trying to bring the war to an end. Those individuals were especially hampered since the preservation of the imperial house had been the basis of their efforts.³⁵

Kido Koichi, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, was one of those who felt that the "high aim" of getting Japan out of the war was to retain the Emperor's status.³⁶ It is interesting though that a notation in Kido's diary January 6, 1944, completely overlooked this point. When considering the steps that should be taken by Japan if Germany collapsed, he listed five points as a basis for negotiation without mentioning the fate of the Emperor.³⁷ Perhaps he felt it was such an obvious condition that he need not even note it.

In a statement drafted on February 13, 1945, to be given to the

the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied powers...

"The Emperor will be required to authorize and ensure the signature by the government of Japan and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters of the surrender terms...and to issue such other orders as the Supreme Commander may require...

"The ultimate form of government of Japan shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the people." Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, pp. 309-10.

³⁵Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 140.

³⁶Ibid., p. 113.

³⁷International Military Tribunals, Far East: Kido's Diary, pp. 31071-73, hereafter referred to as IMTFE; and Kase, Journey to the Missouri, pp. 130-31.

Emperor, Prince Konoye and Yoshida Shigeru, confidant to several influential Japanese officials, noted that British and American opinion had not at that time gone to the length of contemplating making changes in the Japanese political structure.³⁸ It is surprising that even as late as February, 1945, two well-informed members of the Japanese government did not realize the place of the unconditional surrender policy as the sole formula for ending the war. Others were more realistic.

Col. Matsutani Makota in the spring of 1944 was in charge of a planning unit called Group 20. In a position paper entitled "Measures for the Termination of the Greater East Asia War," this group declared that Japan should end the war with only the guarantee that the "national polity" (kokutai or essentially the Emperor) be safeguarded. These were the minimum terms; everything else might have to be sacrificed.³⁹ The reason behind such a proposal might have been Japan's continued military defeats. Matsutani and the members of Group 20 from the General Staff would be keenly aware of Japan's fading military might.

The Japanese ambassador to the Soviet Union, Sato Naotake, decided in mid-July, 1945, that his government should accept the Allied surrender demands (at this time based on the Potsdam Declaration) providing that it could get some guarantee on the future of the Emperor. He put forth his views in a message to Foreign Minister Togo who replied that Sato should try to use the good offices of the Soviet Union to obtain peace terms short of unconditional surrender. What Togo desired was a

³⁸Yoshida Shigeru, The Yoshida Memoirs: the Story of Japan in Crisis, trans. Yoshida Kenichi (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), p. 25

³⁹Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 26-27; and Lester Brooks, Behind Japan's Surrender (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), pp. 122-23.

positive definition of the term, especially as it affected the Emperor's role in the government.⁴⁰

It was Premier Suzuki, probably more than any other, who felt that the institution must be left undisturbed. Suzuki had acted as an advisor to the Emperor in his early years, and a close relationship had grown up between the two, so it came as no surprise when Suzuki in a statement to the Diet April, 1945, stressed the importance of the imperial position. Again in June Suzuki indicated his loyalty to the Emperor when he stated: "Unconditional surrender will only mean that our national structure...will be destroyed."⁴¹ Unconditional surrender would remain unacceptable to the old Premier as long as he associated it with the dissolution of the imperial house.

At the meetings of the Supreme Council for the Direction for the War during the final days of the war, the question of the Emperor's future status became a paramount issue. Even those Japanese officials who supported a peace movement with virtually unconditional terms were concerned about the Emperor's future situation, while those Japanese who favored a "fight-to-the-death" made the Emperor's status the principal issue, thereby hoping to forestall surrender.

When the Supreme Council met the morning of August 9, Togo stated that the Potsdam Declaration had to be complied with, but conditionally; that is, he demanded the "preservation of the National polity [the

⁴⁰Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 130, 131, 149, and 159n24.

⁴¹Zacharias, Secret Missions, p. 370; and Brooks, Behind Japan's Surrender, p. 31.

Emperor] as the indispensable condition of acceptance."⁴² He reiterated this single condition throughout the Supreme Council and cabinet meetings of the next two days. In the cabinet six were for the sole reservation on the Emperor, three were for additional inclusions, and five were neutral but seemed to favor a reduction in the number of conditions.⁴³ At the late night meeting of the Supreme Council August 9, Suzuki took an unprecedented step by calling for an imperial decision. The Emperor himself made the final decision for surrender. After the conference Baron Hiranuma suggested the wording of the reservation statement that was to be sent to the United States.⁴⁴ The phrase originally to be used might have been more acceptable to the Allies according to Butow. It read: "on the understanding that it [the Potsdam Declaration] did not include any demand for a change in the status of the Emperor under the national laws."⁴⁵

The Supreme Council received Byrnes' reply⁴⁶ on August 13. The wording of the reply caused a renewal of the controversy over the Emperor's status. Togo feared outside interference with the institution but worked to have the reply accepted. The Foreign Minister interpreted the phrase "subject to" in a more acceptable way by defining

⁴²Togo Shigenori, The Cause of Japan, trans. and ed. Togo Fumihiko and Ben Bruce Blakeney (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), pp. 316-17.

⁴³Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 170. See Chapter IV for details.

⁴⁴"with the understanding that said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler." Kase, Journey to the Missouri, pp. 130-31.

⁴⁵Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 137 and 173n16.

⁴⁶See above p. 34, note 34.

it "restricted by" rather than "subordinate to."⁴⁷ Togo also had to deal with a problem in the Foreign Office over the correct translation of the term "government" which had been decoded "the Government." The former was considered as referring to the national polity while the latter meant only the administration without any connection to the Emperor. After some deliberation, experts in the Foreign Office finally agreed that it did not include the Emperor.⁴⁸ The term was probably given this interpretation because of Togo's desire for peace.

The members of the Supreme Council who wanted to continue the war used the principle of imperial preservation as a stopgap against peace moves. Minister of War General Anami Korechika, Army Chief of Staff Umezu Yoshijiro, and Navy Chief of Staff Toyoda Soemu outlined four conditions for acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, the Emperor's permanence being the fundamental condition.⁴⁹ They were aroused by Byrnes' reply as they thought it would mean the end of the Emperor, so they proposed to send another note to the Allies that specified that the Emperor would not be under the control of the Allied Supreme Command.⁵⁰

The failure of the Supreme Council to come to a decision on

⁴⁷Togo, Cause of Japan, p. 326; and Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 201.

⁴⁸Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 198.

⁴⁹Kase, Journey to the Missouri, p. 231; and Shigemitsu Manoru, Japan and Her Destiny; My Struggle for Peace, trans. Oswald White, ed. Major General F.S.G. Piggott (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1958), p. 359.

⁵⁰Kato Masuo, The Lost War; a Japanese Reporter's Inside Story. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 238; F. C. Jones, Japan's New Order in East Asia; its Rise and Fall 1937-45, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 447.

Byrnes' reply made it necessary for the Emperor again to make the final decision in a hurriedly called Imperial Conference August 14. The Emperor accepted the Byrnes reply as the Foreign Office had recommended and commanded that it be accepted by the unwilling members of the Council and the cabinet.⁵¹

If the American government had made a formal statement to the effect that surrender would not mean Hirohito's elimination, could the war have been brought to an earlier conclusion? This was the primary question looming over the future status of the Emperor. Former Ambassador Grew felt that if the President had issued the recommended statement in May, there might have been an earlier peace settlement.⁵² Stimson, who also took a conciliatory view on the question of the Emperor, concluded that the United States might be found guilty of prolonging the war by delaying in stating its position on the Emperor.⁵³

It is clear that as far as the Japanese were concerned, no satisfactory statement was ever made on the Emperor. It is quite possible if the United States had published a statement, even as ambiguous as Byrnes' final reply, with the implication of imperial continuation, the Supreme Council might have acquiesced to "unconditional surrender."

There seems to have been several occasions when the United States could have used the opportunity for making a statement on the Emperor.

⁵¹Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 194, 194n13, and 206. See also Shigemitsu, Japan and Her Destiny, p. 362.

⁵²Grew, Turbulent Era, p. 1428. See above pp. 25 and 26 for Grew's proposal.

⁵³Stimson, On Active Service, p. 629.

Zacharias referred to a report in December, 1944, that stated a formula could be worked out for peace if unconditional surrender could be modified to permit retention of the Emperor.⁵⁴ Butow found it difficult to understand why the Togo-Sato messages regarding the Emperor did not have a greater impact on the United States' policy toward the imperial system.⁵⁵ Byrnes can be blamed more than any other person in this respect. He was undoubtedly influenced by Hull, and it is fairly certain that he had made up his mind that no statement on the Emperor should be released at the Potsdam Conference--the most likely place to seize the opportunity for revision. Byrnes' final reply clearly showed Hull's influence, as the type of government eventually planned for Japan was largely as Hull had earlier outlined.⁵⁶

Hanson Baldwin, military affairs editor for the New York Times, has been one of the severest critics of United States wartime policy. He asserted that the Japanese could have surrendered had the Potsdam Declaration included a promise to permit the Emperor to remain.⁵⁷ It is interesting that during the war Baldwin felt a strong case was being made by those who wanted the Emperor removed. He called Hirohito the symbol of the system that bore responsibility for the war and hinted that he should be dethroned.⁵⁸ Other individuals more acquainted with

⁵⁴Zacharias, Secret Missions, p. 335.

⁵⁵Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 135.

⁵⁶See above p. 30 for Hull's proposals.

⁵⁷Hanson W. Baldwin, Great Mistakes of the War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 92.

⁵⁸New York Times, August 6, 1945, p. 3; and New York Times, August 11, 1945, p. 4.

Oriental thought realized that although the Emperor was a symbol, he was an essential and cherished symbol. Moreover, the imperial system was essentially passive; it would be foolish to destroy it, especially since the Emperor would be necessary to hold up a new regime.⁵⁹

In examining the Japanese decision to surrender, one realizes that no foolproof answer can be given on the effect of American refusal to state positively the Emperor's future position. Some have held to the idea that if the United States had hedged on unconditional surrender by permitting the imperial system to continue, the civilian members of the Japanese government would have ordered a cessation of hostilities.⁶⁰ On the other hand, United States officials could only believe what had been true to them for some time: that the Emperor was controlled by the military, and any statement would not aid the peace group since the militarists still had the power to dissolve cabinets and replace peace-minded individuals with men determined to "fight-to-the-death."

In the final analysis indecision before the Potsdam Conference and inertia in the final days of the war worked in a way that American leaders hedged on any firm commitment to the Emperor's future role. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that the Japanese would have surrendered sooner because of the military's control of the decision-making process and the inability or unwillingness to correctly interpret the leniency of unconditional surrender.

⁵⁹M. Searle Bates and Kenneth Scott Latourette, "The Future of Japan--an American View," Pacific Affairs, XVII (June, 1944), p. 192.

⁶⁰Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 123; and Stimson, On Active Service, p. 628.

CHAPTER IV
THE MODIFICATION AND FINAL ACCEPTANCE OF
UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

In view of the dissension over the unconditional formula, it should not be surprising that repeated efforts were made to have the policy modified. Not only were some worried about the failure of the government to take a definite stand on the Emperor's future status, but others felt that the policy would have a harmful impact on groups in Japan who favored peace.

Captain Ellis M. Zacharias, a naval intelligence officer during the war, desired changes that would make unconditional surrender acceptable to the Japanese government. He made Japanese language broadcasts in an attempt to influence those Japanese leaders who had the power to continue the war or accept unconditional surrender and who had access to transcripts of his broadcasts.¹ When Zacharias first heard of the Pearl Harbor attack, he realized the need for "psychological as well as physical attack" to win the war in the Pacific.² He was surprised upon his arrival in Washington, February, 1945, that policymakers in the War and Navy Departments and in the Joint Chiefs of Staff were victims of Japanese propaganda. He noted that even the Office of War Information

¹Ellis M. Zacharias, Secret Missions: The Story of an Intelligence Officer (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), p. 359.

²Ibid., p. 304.

felt the Japanese resistance was still strong and that the Japanese were not open to psychological attacks.³

The Captain proposed a plan, Operation Plan I-45, which was to explain the meaning of unconditional surrender to the Japanese people. His idea was to conduct an intensive psychological campaign against the Japanese high command in order to effect the unconditional surrender of Japan without the necessity of a landing on the main islands. He further proposed to explain that the unconditional doctrine was only a military term that meant the cessation of hostilities and yielding of arms rather than the extermination or enslavement of the Japanese people.⁴

Zacharias was given the assignment by Secretary Forrestal through the influence of Elmer Davis, head of the Office of War Information, and made his first broadcast VE Day, May 8, 1945. In this broadcast he read President Truman's statement that "...our blows will not cease until the Japanese military and naval forces [italics mine] lay down their arms in unconditional surrender. Just what does the unconditional surrender of the armed forces [italics mine] mean for the Japanese people?"⁵ It is noteworthy that not the Japanese people or even the Japanese government, but only the armed forces were to surrender unconditionally. This was one phase in a movement to alter the unconditional

³Ibid., pp. 332 and 334. Alexander Leighton, head of FMAD, also found this to be true. He noted in March, 1944, that there were many men in top positions who felt that Japanese morale was a solid wall of strength. Human Relations in a Changing World (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1959), pp. 46-47.

⁴Ibid., pp. 344-45. See also his broadcasts of May 19, 1945, and June 9, 1945, in Ibid., pp. 403 and 410.

⁵Ibid., p. 401.

policy. Further efforts to alter the policy centered on the position of the Emperor, as other endeavors proved futile. In subsequent broadcasts he continued to stress that the formula did not mean enslavement and that in American hands it would be a "humanitarian gesture of great constructive value."⁶

Despite his work Zacharias concluded that there was need for further clarification of the concept. He agreed with a Naval psychological warfare group, OP-16-W, which found the term to be a contradiction since surrender was a condition in itself, and that the Japanese were using the formula for their own propaganda efforts, thereby forcing the United States to take a defensive position.⁷ His broadcasts no doubt were effective as a relative of the Emperor, Prince Takamatsu, stated after the war that his messages had provided ammunition for the peace party to win out. Kase Toshikazu, an officer in the Japanese Foreign Ministry and personal secretary to Foreign Minister Togo also acknowledged the importance of the broadcasts.⁸

It was at Potsdam that major efforts were made to have the policy modified. Of course, the principal issue was the future position of the Emperor but, as earlier noted, no definite decision was ever reached. When it became clear that the policy would continue under President Truman, the idea developed to give the formula a less frightening appearance. Zacharias had been one part of the redefining project. The Potsdam Declaration was to be another part.

⁶Ibid., p. 419.

⁷Ibid., p. 377.

⁸Ibid., p. 375; and Kase Toshikazu, Journey to the Missouri (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 202.

The primary function of the Potsdam Conference was to issue a joint statement on the treatment of Japan at the end of the war. In a briefing paper for the Conference, drafted possibly by the State and War Departments, certain proposals were made so the Japanese might be better informed on the precise meaning of unconditional surrender. It was felt that a statement on Allied aims would tend to lessen Japanese fear of the unknown element in unconditional surrender. The proposed statement might also help to create a conflict in Japan between "die-hard militarists and those who wish to end the war," and weaken Japanese propaganda with its malicious approach to the policy.⁹

Secretary of State Stimson stated prior to the Potsdam Conference of July, 1945, that the "principal political, social and military objective of the United States in the summer of 1945 was the prompt and complete surrender of Japan."¹⁰ Yet in a memo to the President dated July 2, 1945, the Secretary, in trying to find an alternative to the forceful occupation of Japan, suggested warning them of what was due to come (the atomic bomb?) and giving them a chance to capitulate. He further felt that their government was wise enough to accept unconditional surrender.¹¹

At a Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting in June, also before the Conference, questions arose that were related to the whole course of future operations necessary to bring an end to the war. But it was not until

⁹U. S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers. The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference), (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), I, 884.

¹⁰Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 617.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 621-22; and FRUS, Potsdam, I, 890-92.

the end of the meeting that someone--unknown--suggested that a political attempt be made to end the war. Perhaps this is not surprising in a meeting composed primarily of military men, but it has been purported that this showed the habit of wartime policy-making to confine large questions on the conduct of the war to purely military considerations.¹² After this meeting a paper was drawn up which embodied essentially what was used in the Potsdam communique. Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy reasoned that if preparation of this document had been better, with proposals such as were actually put into effect in Japan after the war, that Japanese surrender might have been induced.¹³

The actual declaration was released at Potsdam on July 26, 1945, and was largely the work of Stimson, Dooman, Grew and Byrnes.¹⁴ Acheson later declared that the statement disturbed him, as he feared it would cost the Allies the opportunity for complete victory over Japan. He regarded it as not the desired ultimatum but an invitation which might lead the United Nations into a trap. He had the feeling that the war might end inconclusively with the Japanese military still in control.¹⁵

In a State Department memo prepared by the Office of Far Eastern

¹²John J. McCloy, The Challenge to American Foreign Policy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 40-42.

¹³Ibid., p. 43; and Leahy, I Was There, p. 383. Robert Butow credited McCloy along with Grew and Forrestal for efforts to promote a definition of unconditional surrender that the Japanese could accept. Decision to Surrender, p. 139n79.

¹⁴Lester Brooks, Behind Japan's Surrender (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 158.

¹⁵Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 113.

Affairs, July 30, the traditional policies of the Department toward unconditional surrender were noted. The department viewed the policy as "contemplating a unilateral surrender with no contractual elements whatever," but the memo noted that if the Declaration were accepted as written, it could be interpreted to come under international law.¹⁶

The proclamation significantly called for the unconditional surrender of the "Japanese armed forces" rather than the Japanese government. This was a meaningful alteration since the department up to that time had interpreted the unconditional formula "as applying to Japan, thus covering not only the armed forces, but also the emperor, the government, and the people."¹⁷ At the Potsdam Conference then, the change in policy used by President Truman and broadcast to the Japanese by Zacharias May 8 was put into the official communique. The efforts of the men who wanted further modification of the policy, such as Zacharias or McCloy, were disregarded. The formula stood with only a slight alteration.

A question remains on why the policy was not made even more conciliatory when the American delegation learned that the Japanese had initiated peace feelers through Russia. The Japanese hoped to arrive at some settlement short of unconditional surrender by using the then neutral Russians as mediators. They even were willing to send one of their ablest representatives, Prince Konoye, to the Soviet Union but found themselves rebuffed on attempted meetings with Russian Foreign Minister Molotov. When Stalin mentioned the peace feelers to Byrnes during the Conference, the Marshal gave Secretary Byrnes the impression

¹⁶FRUS, Potsdam, II, 1284-85.

¹⁷Ibid.

that he was not anxious to see the war end before Russia could obtain concessions in China.¹⁸ Harry Hopkins, a special adviser to the President, in a cable to Truman in May also noted the peace maneuvers, but Stalin's intention was to go through with unconditional surrender. The Marshal suggested using milder terms, but at war's end "to give them the works."¹⁹ Nevertheless Stalin had said that the last message to him by the Japanese was that they would fight to the death rather than accept unconditional surrender.²⁰ Ostensibly the declaration might have been relaxed with the knowledge of these peace maneuvers in the hope the Japanese might yield without the necessity of an Allied invasion. Actually it had almost the reverse effect, since it stimulated the Allies to impress upon all Japanese leaders the hopelessness of their situation.²¹

It was not to frighten the Japanese into submission but rather, as President Truman stated, "It was to spare the Japanese public from utter destruction."²² Stimson felt it was important to emphasize the double character of the declaration, since it was designed to promise

¹⁸James F. Byrnes, All in One Lifetime (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 290.

¹⁹Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, pp. 903-4..

²⁰James F. Byrnes, Speaking Frankly (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 262. Acting Secretary of State Grew made a statement on Japanese peace offers, July 10, 1945, and viewed them as "familiar weapons of psychological warfare and will be used as such by the Japanese." U. S. Department of State, Bulletin, XIII (July 15, 1945), Joseph Grew, "Concerning Japanese Peace Offers," p. 84.

²¹Stimson, On Active Service, p. 629.

²²Leahy, I Was There, p. 432.

"destruction if Japan resisted, and hope, if she surrendered."²³

In spite of Zacharias' broadcasts, President Truman's message of May 8 and the apparent modification at Potsdam, the unconditional formula remained to a large part of the Japanese establishment a "dread and mysterious term"²⁴ which would be used by some of them as a pretext for continuing the war to a fight-to-the-death struggle. If it was intended to create within the Japanese hierarchy a conflict between peace supporters and military "diehards," then the Potsdam Declaration accomplished one of its functions. After Potsdam the dichotomy which had been forming over the continue-the-war issue hardened into two factions which heatedly debated the question of surrender in the final days of the war.

The group that was working in Japan for some sort of accommodation to the unconditional formula has become known as the "peace party." Generally they were former cabinet members or high-ranking officials from the foreign office. Although these persons were working to end the war and were ready to accept unconditional surrender, usually with the sole reservation on the Emperor's future status, they wanted to give the appearance of a negotiated peace.²⁵ The primary and most influential members of the peace party were: Wakatsuki Reijiro, Premier in 1931; Okada Keisuke, Premier 1934-35; Prince Konoye Fumimaro, diplomat and Premier 1937-39 and 1940-41; and Marquis Kido Koichi, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, who functioned as personal adviser to the Emperor. These

²³Stimson, On Active Service, p. 624.

²⁴Zacharias, Secret Missions, p. 380.

²⁵Kase, Journey to the Missouri, p. 203.

senior advisers began as early as 1943 to have private and secret meetings to discuss means to ending the war.²⁶ They hoped to find some go-between to reach a negotiated settlement with the Allies, but as seen in their attempts through the Soviet Union, their activities proved futile.

Early in 1943 Konoye had initiated meetings with Wakatsuki and Okada; the focal point of their discussions had been on how to terminate hostilities.²⁷ Okada kept Marquis Matsudaira Yasumasa, Kido's private secretary, informed of their talks so the senior statesmen's feelings would be understood by the Lord Keeper and subsequently reach the Emperor. Besides Matsudaira there were others of the secretarial staff who were clandestinely working for peace and helped to prepare the way for surrender. Among them can be counted Colonel Matsutani, Suzuki's secretary; Admiral Takagi, representative of Navy Minister Yonai; and Kase Toshikazu, secretary to Togo. Their secrecy was not foolproof as seen in Matsudaira's dismissal in May, 1945. He was forced out by the army, largely because he was considered too much of an Anglophile. This group did important behind-the-scenes work in keeping the various peace advocates advised of one another's position.²⁸

²⁶Ibid., p. 177; Shigemitsu Manoru, Japan and Her Destiny; My Struggle for Peace, trans. Oswald White, ed. Major General F.S.G. Piggott (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1958), p. 336; Mark Gayn, Japan Diary (New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1948), p. 280; and Yale Candee Maxon, Control of Japanese Foreign Policy, a Study of Civil-Military Rivalry, 1930-1945 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), p. 190.

²⁷Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 16 and 16n26.

²⁸F. C. Jones, Japan's New Order in East Asia; its Rise and Fall, 1937-45 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 432; Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 83n20; Shigemitsu, Japan and Her Destiny, p. 334; and Kase, Journey to the Missouri, p. 206.

Kido Koichi was one of the most adamant in his desire for peace, yet at times was unrealistic in his views of peace settlement. At a meeting with his secretary, Matsudaira, January 6, 1944, he mentioned conditions under which Japan might be willing to surrender should Germany fall. These terms consisted mainly of land concessions. When he subsequently related his ideas to Shigemitsu Manoru, Foreign Minister during the Koiso Cabinet, the Lord Keeper found his ideas were not well accepted. Shigemitsu had by this time taken a more realistic view of the war and realized that nothing but practically unconditional surrender would be obtainable. Even as late as June 8, 1945, Kido was drafting a tentative plan for peace with substantially the same concessions for ending the war as his proposal in January.²⁹

To make his plans for peace workable the Lord Keeper called on Suzuki, Togo, and Yonai on June 13 to obtain their reactions to his plan. Surprisingly he found each of the men in general agreement with his proposals but unaware of the others' feelings on the subject.³⁰ This leads one to believe that it was only after the Potsdam Declaration that determined and coordinated efforts were made to accept surrender.

It was in a new high-level council organized in August, 1944, that the peace party hoped to convince the leaders unwilling to surrender of the urgent need for peace. The Supreme Council for the Direction of the War, as it was called, was composed of six members who in the Suzuki

²⁹International Military Tribunals, Far East: Kido's Diary, pp. 31071-73 and 31147-51, hereafter referred to as IMTFE. Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 18, 24-26, and 25n45. Shigemitsu noted plans of this sort by Kido as early as May, 1943. Japan and Her Destiny, p. 300.

³⁰IMTFE, pp. 31153-54; and Shigemitsu, Japan and Her Destiny, p. 356.

Cabinet included: Premier Suzuki, Foreign Minister Togo; War Minister Anami Korechika, Navy Minister Yonai Mitsumasa, Army Chief of Staff Umezu Yoshijiro, and Navy Chief of Staff Toyoda Soemu. This limitation to six members was largely the work of the peace advocates, since they felt their chances of bringing an end to the war would be better in a small group.³¹

Unfortunately for the efforts of the peace party, the early work of the Supreme Council did not point toward peace. At a meeting June 6, 1945, a decision was made to prosecute the war fully, regardless of the difficulties. Togo, who was unaware of the meeting until just before it was called, was surprised at this development and especially Suzuki's acceptance of the army's position.³² It is interesting that at this meeting the military secretariat was also involved along with some other cabinet ministers. Often when a large number was present it was difficult for one to speak against the majority opinion. Perhaps this was the reason for Suzuki's action, plus the fact, according to Togo, that the Premier did not place a great deal of importance on documents.³³ At another meeting June 18, 1945, the members decided that resistance should be continued as long as unconditional surrender was demanded. Yet there were proposals to begin peace negotiations through Russia with

³¹ Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 37n27; Kase, Journey to the Missouri, p. 145; Maxon, Control of Japanese Foreign Policy, pp. 192-93; and Togo Shigenori, The Cause of Japan, trans. and ed. Togo Fumihiko and Ben Bruce Blakeney (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), p. 283.

³² Kase, Journey to the Missouri, p. 172; and Togo, Cause of Japan, pp. 291-94.

³³ Maxon, Control of Japanese Foreign Policy, p. 200; Togo, Cause of Japan, p. 291-94, and Brooks, Behind Japan's Surrender, p. 142.

a view to terminating the war by September, 1945.³⁴

One of the chief problems was that the Supreme Council did not work on the basis of majority rule but on unanimity, or more precisely general agreement and unity. Also, its decisions were not final until ratified by the full cabinet.³⁵ This necessity for unity made it difficult for the supporters of peace since the Council was usually split three to three: Suzuki, Togo, and Yonai for peace, usually with the single condition; Anami, Umezu, and Toyoda for continuation of the war. Whereas the militarists were able to dissolve cabinets, it was necessary for the former three to take steps toward peace cautiously.³⁶

At the same time the peace party was working through the Supreme Council to find the solutions to end the war, there was a group of militarists who favored its continuation. The principal argument between the two groups was the desire on the part of the militarists to have one last fight to prove their worth and possibly strengthen Japan's negotiating position. The peace group, of course, wanted to begin negotiations at once, i.e. at least after the issuance of the Potsdam Declaration. Those who supported a fight-to-the-death emphasized the "spirit of Japan" even after it became apparent the nation

³⁴Togo, Cause of Japan, p. 296; and Kase, Journey to the Missouri, p. 184.

³⁵Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 38 and 38n29; and United States, Strategic Bombing Survey, Japan's Struggle to End the War (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 4. Hereafter referred to as USSBS, Japan's Struggle.

³⁶This was forcefully brought home to the jushin on April 5, 1945, during a discussion on whether to accept unconditional surrender or not. Tojo who became a member of this group on the dissolution of his cabinet gave a grim reminder of the military's power to break up a cabinet. Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 60-61 and 60n11.

was defeated.³⁷

The principle of ringisei, the control of the upper echelons by lower administrators, was effective in controlling decisions on ending the war until the Supreme Council began to meet in more private sessions with only the major six cabinet members present.³⁸ This is perhaps one reason why the "Fundamental Policy" of June 6, 1945, was issued. The secretaries for the conference were in attendance and made it difficult for the military to take other than a hard line position.³⁹

Peace advocates had to contend mainly with three members of the Supreme Council: General Anami, War Minister; General Umezu, Army Chief of Staff; and Admiral Toyoda, Navy Chief of Staff. These men were particularly opposed to sections of the Potsdam Declaration which made them appear unscrupulous and liable to harsh punishment at war's end. The sentence in paragraph four which referred to "those self-willed militaristic advisers" was especially distasteful to the military cabinet members.⁴⁰ The other active member of the military in the

³⁷Kase, Journey to the Missouri, p. 148; and Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 12.

³⁸Butow called the advisers the "fanatical young officer element." Decision to Surrender, p. 82n19. Maruyama also referred to "ruffians associated with the military" who manipulated the subordinates. Thought and Behavior, pp. 107-8.

³⁹Maxon, Control of Japanese Foreign Policy, p. 200; and Kase, Journey to the Missouri, p. 89. The Secretariat consisted of the Chiefs of the Military and Naval Affairs Bureau, the Vice-Chiefs of the Army and Navy General Staffs, and the Chief Cabinet Secretary. Maruyama, Thought and Behavior, pp. 108 and 323. The Chief Cabinet Secretary, Sakomizu Hisatsune, was probably the only member who endorsed peace negotiations. His father-in-law was Okada Keisuke who has already been named as a member of the peace faction and was the one to recommend Sakomizu for the position. Brooks, Behind Japan's Surrender, p. 27; and USSBS, Japan's Struggle, p. 3.

⁴⁰Kawai, "Mokusatsu," pp. 411 and 412n6.

Supreme Council, Navy Minister Yonai, seemed to take a somewhat more conciliatory view toward ending the hostilities. As noted above Yonai as Navy Minister in the Koiso cabinet had Takagi carry out an investigation on war potential. Since Takagi's conclusions, which the Minister had known prior to taking the position, were at variance with the military's general position, it seems evident that Yonai cannot be counted with the other military members of the Supreme Council.⁴¹ During interrogations after the war the Navy Minister stated that he had voiced an opinion to Suzuki that the war should not be continued. This statement may have been to save himself from Allied retribution, but it is now generally accepted that he opposed the war.⁴² Yonai was in the confidence of Kido and agreed with the Lord Keeper that peace maneuvers were necessary in June, 1945.⁴³

On the morning of August 7, after the atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima, Suzuki and Togo conferred with the Emperor and stated that the time had come to accept the Potsdam Declaration. Kido had also spoken to the Emperor and had voiced the same opinion.⁴⁴ The Supreme Council met that same day; the army attempted to minimize the bombing and wanted to await a more thorough investigation. In the meantime the army desired four conditions imposed on any negotiations toward peace;

⁴¹ Gayn, Japan Diary, pp. 274-76 and 280; USSBS, Japan's Struggle, p. 3.

⁴² USSBS, Interrogations of Japanese Officials (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), II, 332, interrogation of Yonai. See also USSBS, Interrogations, II, 319, interrogation of Nomura; and Brooks, Behind Japan's Surrender, p. 53.

⁴³ IMTFE, pp. 31153-54.

⁴⁴ USSBS, Japan's Struggle, p. 8; and Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 152n35.

these were: (1) the position of the Emperor had to be maintained; (2) there should be no occupation of the Japanese homeland; (3) Japan would withdraw and disarm her own troops; and (4) war criminals could be tried and punished by Japan.⁴⁵ The conditions prescribed by the military members showed how thoroughly unaware they were of the Allies' insistence on unconditional surrender.

The failure of the Supreme Council to make a decision and reach unity on a surrender formula brought Togo to eventually suggest an Imperial Conference, i.e. the Emperor plus the "big six," which was to meet late August 9. During the day there was a great deal of discussion by the peace faction. Confidential meetings were held to develop a strategy which could be used in the Imperial Conference to convince the "war-continuation" group of the necessity for immediate peace. Shigemitsu met with Kido and contended that the four conditions set by the military would be viewed by the Allies as a rejection. Kido met with the Emperor and stated that the only alternative left to Japan was to surrender to the Potsdam terms; he found the Emperor likeminded.⁴⁶

At the Imperial Conference, Anami, Umezu, and Toyoda were opposed to any surrender without the four conditions. Togo and Yonai unexpectedly had another man on their side. Baron Hiranuma Kiichiro who was not a member of the Council but who was present asked several embarrassing questions of the military, especially as to their ability to

⁴⁵Shigemitsu, Japan and Her Destiny, p. 359; Jones, Japan's New Order, p. 444; and USSBS, Japan's Struggle, p. 8.

⁴⁶IMTFE, pp. 31172 and 31176; and Butow, Decision to Surrender, pp. 153 and 159n56.

continue the war.⁴⁷ His position came as a surprise since he had been against earlier peace moves and had been decidedly for the "Fundamental Policy" issued June 6.⁴⁸ Suzuki seemed to remain undecided, so in the early morning hours of August 12 the old Premier turned to the Emperor and asked for an imperial decision. Suzuki already knew the Emperor's position which had been related to him by Kido at the Emperor's request; therefore, the Premier was instrumental in the final decision.⁴⁹ Hirohito admonished the Council to "endure the unendurable and suffer what is insufferable."

During the next few days discussions continued in the Supreme Council and in the Cabinet on the question of accepting unconditional surrender. It was not until August 14 over the opposition of Anami and Umezumi that the final decision was made, and this at the insistence of the Emperor.⁵⁰

In summation one might note that although the desire for modification of the unconditional policy was present prior to the Potsdam Conference, the steps toward revision were either slow or ineffectual. Zacharias made the first and probably only documented revision when he relayed President Truman's speech calling for the unconditional

⁴⁷Brooks, Behind Japan's Surrender, p. 80; and William Craig, The Fall of Japan (New York: The Dial Press, 1967), p. 117.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 143. Butow regarded the Baron as a "jingoistic nationalist" as late as April but also noted that his position be considered in the light of haragei. Decision to Surrender, p. 69 and 69n46.

⁴⁹Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 153; and Brooks, Behind Japan's Surrender, p. 171.

⁵⁰For a detailed description of the final meetings at which essentially the same arguments were voiced pro and con as at the meeting of August 9-10, see Butow, Decision to Surrender.

surrender of the armed forces. This change was carried out in the final Potsdam communique, but, as important as this change was, it did not satisfy Japanese leadership groups. Zacharias nevertheless continued to emphasize the need for further clarification. Suggestions for alteration of the formula were also made by Stimson, Grew and others, but the final statement on which the United States based its surrender program--the Potsdam Declaration--was unconditional surrender, essentially undisturbed. In regard to the Japanese it would seem that more than any other factor the necessity for unity in the Supreme Council hampered the debates on accepting the Potsdam Declaration. The fact that it took an imperial decision to alter this requirement shows the tenacity of the military opposition.

There has always been a great deal of debate on what finally brought about the surrender. Arguments have centered around two events unrelated to internal political struggles but which played a large role in the final decision--the atomic bombs and Russia's entry into the war. Perhaps sufficient attention has not been given to factors, such as unconditional surrender, which were present during the whole course of final discussions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Several questions arise in any evaluation of wisdom and effectiveness of the unconditional formula. Would certain American modifications have made its acceptance more palatable? The most logical change would have been on the Japanese imperial structure, but a serious and substantial change on this point never came. Apparently the Japanese accepted Byrnes' reply, i.e. the Emperor would have no power but might be permitted to remain, because of its omissions rather than its content.¹

Potsdam would have been the appropriate place and the opportune time to alter the unconditional policy since the individuals with authority were present, and Japan by that time remained the sole belligerent. Yet the declaration which called for the unconditional surrender of the "Japanese armed forces" rather than the government was not a significant change. This was not innovative or imaginative thinking but policy-making which was tied to the proposals of the past. Hanson Baldwin, a critic of American wartime policy, called it "merely a restatement of the politically impossible."²

President Roosevelt used a military term, at least in the context of his thinking on the Lee-Grant surrender, in an attempt to gain a

¹For an analysis of these points see Chapter III.

²Hanson W. Baldwin, Great Mistakes of the War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 92.

political solution. He looked back to the failure of World War I, forward to shaping the Axis into non-belligerent nations, and at the time presented the policy without consulting his political and military advisers or the Allied nations.³ One can understand the continuation of a policy during the tenure of its author, but one wonders why Truman let it remain with but slight alteration. Perhaps he did not realize at the time as he was later to write that "a major difficulty that arises in connection with such a formula as unconditional surrender is that it cuts across the line which should divide political from military decisions."⁴

Others realized this neglect of the political sphere of wartime policy-making. Acheson wrote of a "drifting State Department," McCloy commented on the slight attention given to political thinking, and Baldwin called unconditional surrender "a policy of political bankruptcy."⁵ The idea was to postpone all issues until the end of the war to show Allied determination in the war effort and so as not to unduly burden war planning. The problem of this practice was that war planning

³Dwight Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1958), p. 489n7; Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, United States Army in World War II. The War Department: Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-42 (Washington, D. C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953), p. 380; Winston S. Churchill, The Second World War, Vol. IV: The Hinge of Fate (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), pp. 684-85 and 687-88; Robert Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins; an Intimate History (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), pp. 696-97.

⁴Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, Vol. I; Year of Decisions (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), p. 210.

⁵Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation; My Years in the State Department (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969), p. 38; John J. McCloy, The Challenge to American Foreign Policy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 44; and Baldwin, Mistakes of the War, p. 24.

and policy planning were complementary and virtually inseparable aspects of the same goal--winning the war.⁶

Baldwin called unconditional surrender "perhaps the biggest political mistake of the war."⁷ It was a mistake in the sense that instead of making significant changes in the policy Roosevelt and Truman only tried to lessen its psychological impact. Roosevelt called it a "reasonable assurance for world peace;" Truman explained that it did not mean "the extermination or enslavement of the Japanese people."⁸ The idea that any alteration of the policy would be considered a sign of weakness and perhaps spur the Japanese to a greater war effort was an oft-repeated and important consideration.⁹ Inertia, therefore, hampered in no small way any significant modification.

In regard to Japanese acceptance the question on the advisability of the policy rests mainly on whether it hampered the peace party and aided the war-continuation faction and if it had the effect, therefore, of prolonging the war.

The Japanese, it would seem, were not so interested in explanations as they were in alterations, especially meaningful ones. Japanese officials knew of Zacharias' broadcasts, Grew's effort to retain the imperial system, and certain Allied unresponsiveness to the unconditional

⁶Gaddis Smith, American Diplomacy During the Second World War, 1941-45 (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965), p. 51.

⁷Baldwin, Mistakes of the War, p. 14.

⁸Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, p. 696; and Ellis M. Zacharias, Secret Missions; the Story of an Intelligence Officer (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), p. 401.

⁹Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 628.

doctrine. What they were looking for was a negotiated peace. Foreign Minister Togo later wrote that the American insistence on unconditional surrender hampered the peace movement in Japan.¹⁰ Yet an astute observer of the Japanese political scene noticed a pattern in the hierarchy similar to the American situation. Inertia in Japan's elite was as much a problem to surrender as in America. Maruyama believed that the leaders merely adapted themselves to existing policies and were always being dragged along by "forces of circumstances."¹¹ The leaders were often carried along by fais accomplis which tended to keep the peace faction docile and make the war-continuation group belligerent. An excellent example of this would be the SCDW meeting of June 6, 1945, and the unanimous acceptance of the "Fundamental Policy," a decision to continue the full prosecution of the war.¹²

Hull was probably incorrect when he wrote that Japan surrendered when she perceived that "unconditional surrender could be applied conditionally."¹³ Zacharias also accepted this view since he felt that if interpretations had been given to unconditional surrender in June rather than in July, the war would have been ended without the two dramatic events of August.¹⁴ Yet as far as I can determine, the Japanese

¹⁰Togo Shigenori, The Cause of Japan, trans. and ed. Togo Fumihiko and Ben Bruce Blakeney (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), pp. 316-17.

¹¹Maruyama Masao, Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics, ed. Ivan Morris (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 105 and 107-08.

¹²See above Chapter IV, p. 53.

¹³Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York: MacMillan Company), 1948, p. 1582.

¹⁴Zacharias, Secret Missions, pp. 367-68.

officials never thought there was any real change in the unconditional formula. Byrnes' reply¹⁵ caused as much opposition to surrendering as earlier proposals. It was neither the atomic bombs nor Russia's entry into the war, therefore, which actually made the Japanese surrender, but these circumstances brought a sense of urgency and forced the hand of the Japanese, making defeat a reality.¹⁶ Naval Minister Toyoda stated during an interrogation after the war that, apart from Soviet intervention, the navy would probably have been unwilling to terminate the war.¹⁷ This attitude would have been even more true of the army.

The final and most difficult question then remains--did the unconditional surrender policy have the effect of prolonging the war? Several knowledgeable individuals have taken the position that it had such a consequence. Grew and Stimson took this position, especially as it related to the Emperor's future status. Zacharias and Butow also considered it a likely possibility.¹⁸ S. A. Golunsky, Associate Counsel at the IMTFE, argued that unconditional surrender might have had the

¹⁵See above Chapter III, p. 34n34.

¹⁶Kase, Toshikazu, Journey to the Missouri (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), pp. 214 and 217; United States, Strategic Bombing Survey, Japan's Struggle to End the War (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 12.

¹⁷United States, Strategic Bombing Survey, Interrogations of Japanese Officials, II (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 320, interrogating Toyoda.

¹⁸Joseph C. Grew, Turbulent Era, a Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, ed. Walter Johnson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), p. 1428. Stimson, On Active Service, pp. 628-69; Zacharias, Secret Missions, p. 335; and Robert Butow, Japan's Decision to Surrender (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1954), pp. 132-35. One author noted that "the charge that unconditional surrender prolonged Japan's will to fight is less substantial and applies primarily to the American refusal to promise that Japan could keep the institution of the Emperor." Smith, Diplomacy, p. 57.

effect of prolonging the war, but only indirectly. It was, he felt, Japan's refusal to accept the doctrine and not the formula itself which caused the Russians to fear an indefinite extension of the conflict.¹⁹

It would seem that a message as ambiguous as Byrnes' reply would not have been sufficient to bring about an earlier surrender, while a clear-cut position on the Emperor would have amounted to rejecting the policy--which Byrnes and Truman were unwilling to do. Certainly a degree of rhetoric was involved as well as a desire on the part of some Japanese officials to maintain their privileged positions by keeping the imperial institution. Yet the arguments for surrender, with the stipulation that the imperial system remain intact, seem to have been sincerely motivated. In the final analysis it seems that the formula did not significantly prolong the war.

¹⁹Butow, Decision to Surrender, p. 158n54.

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