

Journal of Strategy and Politics

Issue 2 (Autumn 2015)



Institute for the Study of Strategy and Politics



Special Issue: The End of the Pacific War

**Journal of Strategy and Politics,
Issue 2
Autumn 2015**

**Institute for the Study of
Strategy and Politics**

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Contents

Editor’s Note	iv
Endgame: August 1945 in Asia and the Pacific	v
The Endgame That Almost Was: Roosevelt and the Defeat of Japan by James D. Perry.....	1
Ending the War in the Pacific: Stalin’s Strategic Intentions by David M. Glantz	70
The Hokkaido Myth by D. M. Giangreco	148
A Succession of Miracles by John T. Kuehn	165
Truman and the End Game Of the Pacific War by Richard C. Thornton	183
Speaker Biographies	217

Editor's Note

This issue of the *Journal of Strategy and Politics* presents some of the results of the Institute's symposium on the End of the Pacific War, which was held at the Navy Memorial in Washington, DC, on August 6, 2015 – the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.

The intent of the conference was to examine questions of politics and strategy in the “endgame” of the war – i.e., what type of postwar world did the combatants hope to achieve, and how did their military operations support these political goals. We investigated these questions from American, Japanese, and Soviet perspectives. The speakers were noted historians with relevant expertise in military history: Richard B. Frank, David Glantz, D. M. Giangreco, Norman Friedman, John T. Kuehn, and Institute staff Richard C. Thornton and James D. Perry. We were particularly concerned to counter “revisionist” interpretations of the atomic attacks and the end of the war that still hold sway in academia and to correct common misconceptions about American, Japanese, and Soviet actions.

The symposium was a great success. It was advertised on H-Net, via social media, via Navy Memorial flyers and calendar, on other networks of WWII historians, and on local publications' events sites. In addition, over 300 individual invitations were sent to congressional staff, military academies and associations, civilian university history departments, veterans groups, foreign embassies, students, and interested friends of the Institute. This outreach yielded an audience of one hundred attendees. C-SPAN's American History TV Channel filmed the entire symposium, and later aired the presentations. Links to these videos can be found on the Institute website.

The Institute is grateful for the generous grant from the Bradley Foundation that made the symposium possible.

Endgame: August 1945 in Asia and the Pacific

A Historical Symposium Commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the
End of the Pacific War

Thursday, 6 August 2015
U.S. Navy Memorial Naval Heritage Center
701 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

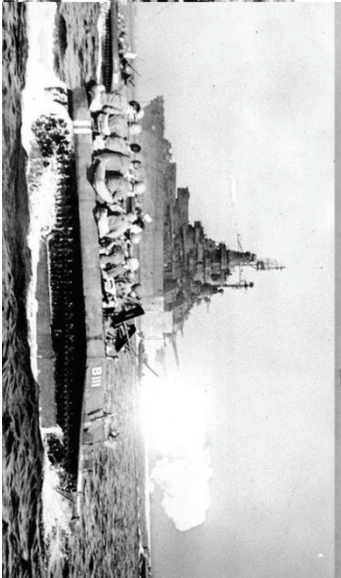
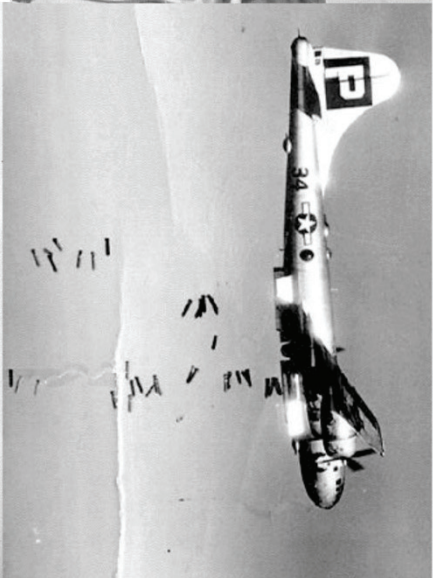
Agenda

- 8:30 a.m.-9:00 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast
9:00 a.m.-9:05 a.m. Welcome and Introduction
– *Richard C. Thornton*
- 9:05 a.m.-10:00 a.m. American Strategy and the Asia-Pacific
Endgame
– *James Perry*
- 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Nightmares Beyond Atomic Bombs: Ending
the War with Japan
– *Dr. Richard B. Frank*
- 11:00 a.m.-11:15 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Stalin’s Strategy for Ending the Pacific War
– *David Glantz*
- 12:15 p.m.-1:30 p.m. Lunch and Remarks by Mark T. Weber,
Curator, U.S. Navy Memorial Foundation
- 1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m. The Hokkaido Myth: U.S., Soviet, and
Japanese Plans for the Invasion – and Defense
of – Northern Japan
– *D.M. Giangreco*
- 2:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Visualizing a Future War: Wargaming at
Newport and the Pacific War
– *Norman Friedman*

3:30 p.m.-3:45 p.m.	Coffee Break
3:45 p.m.-4:45 p.m.	A Succession of Miracles: Japan's Decision to Surrender – <i>John T. Kuehn</i>
4:45 p.m.-5:40 p.m.	Truman and the Pacific War Endgame – <i>Richard C. Thornton</i>
5:40 p.m.-7:00 p.m.	Cocktail Reception

The Endgame That Almost Was: Roosevelt and the Defeat of Japan

James D. Perry

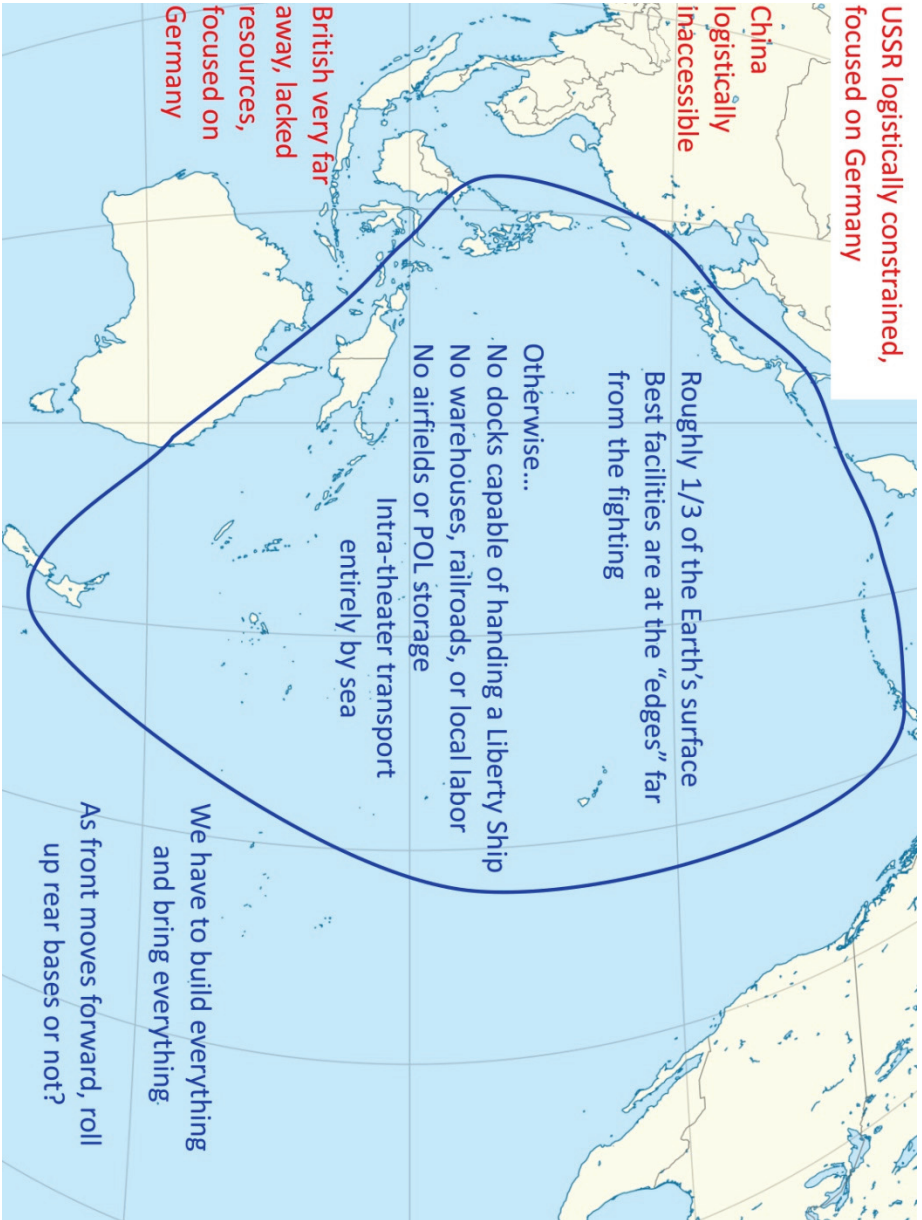


Overview

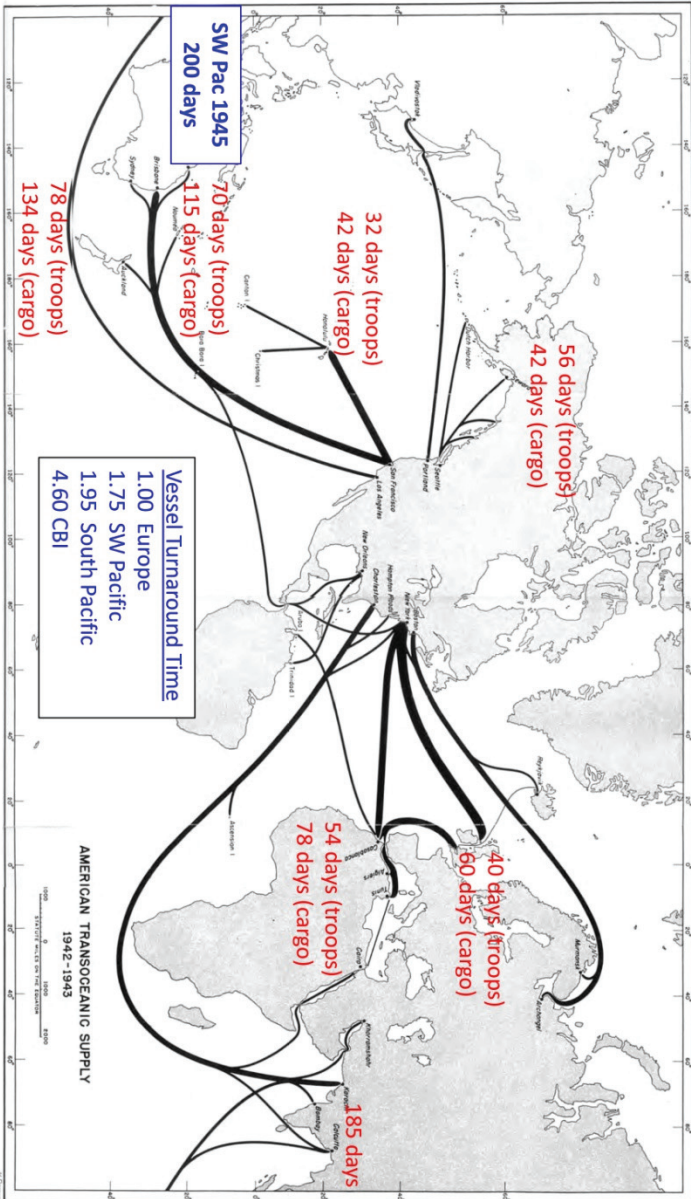
- Geography and Logistics
- Roosevelt's Global Strategy
- Balancing the European and Pacific Theaters
- Pacific Planning, 1942 – 1945
- The Hokkaido Option

Geography and Logistics





Vessel Turnaround Time, 1943 (load, sail, unload, return)



Western Pacific is *big*...
as well as far from CONUS



Amphibious Invasion Distances Much Greater in the Pacific

Operation	Transit	Miles	Operation	Transit	Miles
Overlord	Portsmouth-Normandy	100	Olympic	Okinawa-Kyushu	400
Overlord	Plymouth-Normandy	200	Iceberg	Leyte-Okinawa	1,100
Avalanche	Palermo-Salerno	200	Iceberg	Guam-Okinawa	1,400
Husky	Tunis-Sicily	250	King Two	Hollandia-Leyte	1,400
Avalanche	Tunis-Salerno	350	Olympic	Guam-Kyushu, P.I.-Kyushu	1,500
Dragoon	Naples-Riviera	450	King Two	Manus-Leyte	1,750
Dragoon	Oran-Riviera	800	Galvanic	Pearl Harbor-Makin	2,300
Husky	Oran-Sicily	900	Flintlock	Hawaii-Eniwetok	2,700
Torch	Glasgow-Algiers	2,760	Galvanic	Wellington-Tarawa	3,000
Torch	Norfolk-Morocco	3,750	Iceberg	Guadalcanal-Okinawa	3,300
			Forager	Hawaii-Saipan	3,700
			Detachment	Hawaii-Iwo Jima	4,000
			Iceberg	Oahu-Okinawa	4,600
			Flintlock	San Diego-Kwajalein	5,000



Basing Asymmetry

800 miles = B-17 or P-51

Possible bases: Bonins,

Ryukyus, Formosa, China

USSR Maritime Province

good but inaccessible

Marianas and Luzon

within B-29 range only

Central Pacific was

“carriers vs. few planes,
few bases”

Invasion of Japan would

be “carriers vs. many
planes, many bases”

Overwhelming air-sea superiority and abundant amphibious lift were the prerequisites for taking the offensive in 1944-45.



Ships in Service Commissioned After Pearl Harbor						
Class	1942	Jan-Jun 43	July-Dec 43	Jan-Jun 44	July-Dec 44	Jan-Sep 45
CV Essex	1	4	7	10	14	17
CVL Independence		5	9	9	9	8
CVE Bogue to C. Bay	9	14	30	58	60	66
BB South Dakota Iowa	4	4 2	4 2	4 4	4 4	4 4
CA Baltimore		2	4	4	5	13
CL Atlanta/Cleveland	6	8	13	17	24	32
DD Benson to Gearing	76	152	260	331	401	549
AP/APA Navy Transports	21	62	97	185	273	329
USAT Army Transports	362	580	847	1,359	1,626	1,455

Roosevelt's Global Strategy





Interpreting Roosevelt's Strategy

1. He had no strategy – an opportunist who reacted to events
2. He was a prisoner of public opinion and Congressional politics
3. He put aside “politics” and focused only on winning the war
 - Virtuous (naïve?) Americans versus the devious (wise?) British and ruthless Soviets
 - Cold War argument: he should have tried to contain Stalin as well as defeat the Axis (e.g., no “Yalta give-away”)
4. He had a definite vision for the postwar world
 - But was he a dupe, an appeaser, or a realist?



Interpreting Roosevelt's Strategy

Complicating matters...

- Died before he could fully execute his strategy
- Secretive – no diary or memoirs, hated note-taking in meetings
- Deceptive – made incompatible promises to different people
- Outbreak of Cold War made wartime relationship with USSR a political hot potato and a problem for those involved in it
 - Churchill wanted Anglo-American unity after the war, and papered over wartime disagreements with FDR
 - Easier for Americans to assert “we only thought about winning the war” than to justify cooperation with Stalin

The Official Strategy: “Germany First”

- ABC-1 Agreement and Rainbow 5 War Plan (1941)
 - US to make main military effort in Europe, stay on the defensive in the Pacific
- Arcadia Conference (Washington, December 1941)
 - ABC-1 “Germany First” logic endorsed
 - Churchill proposes to invade North Africa in 1942 and France in 1943
 - Allies will contain Japan & defend SLOCs to Australia
 - Declaration By United Nations: Allies, including the USSR, pledge to fight for “complete victory” over Axis and no separate peace or armistice
- Actual conduct of the war deviated from the agreed strategy – but whose fault was this?



Who Deviated from “Germany First” – and Why?

Traditional Criticisms of
British Mediterranean Strategy...

Peripheral

Diversion from the Second Front

Hindered Buildup in UK

“Suction Pump” for Resources

Motivated by Considerations of
Postwar Politics

Actually Applied to
America in the Pacific

Pacific Peripheral to Entire War
SW Pacific Peripheral to Pacific War

Pacific, not Mediterranean, Prevented
Landing in France in 1942 or 1943

~250,000 US Troops in UK July 1943
Pacific had over *five times* as many

US Pacific Strength Doubled
From June to December 1942;
Doubled Again in 1943;
Increased Another 60% in 1944

Product of FDR’s Political Strategy for
Postwar World Order



FDR's "New World Order"

- **Overriding goal: fill the vacuum created by the destruction of the Axis with a postwar world based on US-Soviet partnership**
- In 1942 and 1943, FDR sought to meet Stalin *without Churchill*
- FDR deferred the Second Front because he had not met Stalin
- He sketched out ideas in talks with Eden in March 1943
- He reached a deal with Stalin at Tehran and Yalta – in the process, renegeing on prior deals with Britain and China
- **Roosevelt's vision for the postwar world was diametrically opposed to Churchill's...**



Roosevelt's Postwar Order

- American-Soviet Hegemony
- Soviets Territorially Appeased
- Colonial Empires Eliminated
- Germany Divided
- Weak, Pro-Soviet East Europe
- Weak France
- Japan Divided
- Strong China



Churchill's Postwar Order

- Anglo-American Hegemony
- Soviets Territorially Contained
- Colonial Empires Preserved
- Weak But Integrated Germany
- Strong E. European Federations
- Strong France
- Weak But Integrated Japan
- Weak China



Unconditional Surrender

- War aim enunciated at Casablanca in January 1943
- Obvious importance for the endgame of the Pacific War
 - Invasion planning predicated on the need to inflict it
 - Postwar controversy over whether we should have accepted “conditional surrender” rather than dropping the a-bombs
- One purpose was to avoid repeating the perceived errors of 1918
- Immediate purpose in 1943 was to keep the alliance together
 - Stalin had yet to agree to meet Roosevelt, and Germans and Soviets explored a separate peace in early 1943
- Signaled to Stalin from 1943 to 1945 that USA would not conclude an “anti-Soviet” separate peace with Germany or Japan that permitted the resurgence of their militarism



"All the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as *Manchuria, Formosa, and The Pescadores, shall be restored to the Republic of China.* Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed. The aforesaid three great powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that *in due course Korea shall become free and independent.*"

Cairo Communique, 1 December 1943

First Cairo Conference

- FDR promised to make China a major power
- A major campaign in Burma in 1944 would open the lend-lease route
- US would arm and equip 90 Chinese divisions
- China would play "leading role" in the occupation of Japan
- China would get Japanese industry after the war
- US would guarantee China against postwar "foreign aggression" (obviously meaning USSR, Britain, and France)
- Chiang offered Roosevelt joint use of Port Arthur



Roosevelt's Vision

New World Order:

- Germany and Japan invaded, occupied, and divided
- Friendly states on the Soviet periphery in Europe and Asia
- Soviet access to the sea assured through Kiel Canal, Turkish Straits, Persian Gulf, Dairen
- World organization dominated by Big Four

“Free Zones” in Bremen, Hamburg, Lubeck

Independent Northwest Germany

Ruhr and Saar Internationalized

Independent Western Germany

Independent Southern Germany

Independent Austria

Independent Saxony

Independent Prussia “as small and weak as possible”

Stalin also wanted a piece of East Prussia and Poland’s borders moved westward...

“Free Zones” in Kiel Canal Internationalized

R.C. = Reicht Kommissariate
RSI = Reich Social Republic
NDH = Independent State of Croatia



Tehran: FDR's Promises to Stalin Incompatible With Prior Promises to Chiang

- Stalin promised to enter the Pacific War after Germany's defeat
- FDR proposed giving the Soviets a strong position in Manchuria (in addition to their existing positions in Sinkiang and Mongolia)
 - Dairen a "free port under international guaranty"
 - Soviet goods carried over Manchurian railroad
 - USSR to receive Kuriles and South Sakhalin
- Korea placed under 40-year "tutelage"



Second Cairo Conference: More Broken Promises



- Churchill argued that Soviet entry into the Pacific War made 1944 offensive in Burma unnecessary – and cancelling it would release forces for operations in the Balkans or the Aegean
- FDR relented and canceled Operation Buccaneer – which of course also voided his promise to equip 90 Chinese divisions
- China would end the war facing the Soviets alone – without any American equipment or forces as a counterbalance



“New World Order” Finalized at Yalta

Key Features:

- Germany and Japan divided
- “Friendly” states on the Soviet periphery in Europe and Asia

In the Pacific:

- Soviet “interests” in Manchuria safeguarded (rights to ports and railroads)
- Soviets and Chinese to sign treaty to “legalize” Soviet gains in Manchuria
- Soviet to control Mongolia, and receive Kuriles and South Sakhalin
- Soviets to have effective control over Korea via US-Soviet-Chinese trusteeship (not a formal commitment) – but no American troops would be there



- At Yalta, FDR and Stalin reached an understanding on the joint occupation of Japan
- Not a formal commitment!
- War Department studied two options:
 1. Soviets occupy Hokkaido
 2. Soviets occupy Hokkaido and Tohoku
- Still under consideration in August 1945 as JWPC-385/1
- Soviets, like the Chinese, not necessarily expected to reach Japan under their own power





Soviet Gains in Asia

1943: Planning for Soviet Entry *Not Racing an Enemy, Encouraging a Friend*

- Planners believed Russia would attack Japan six months after German defeat, when Japan was on the ropes
- Nothing US could do to expedite Russian entry
- Could not rely on Russian entry to ensure Japan's defeat
- Knew that Russia wanted weak Japan, control of Sakhalin and the Kuriles, and a dominant influence in Sinkiang, Korea, and Manchuria (Yalta no surprise!)
- Planners recommended urging Russia to intervene, and asking what US could do to facilitate this
- Recommended planning to build up supplies in Soviet Far East, defend Kamchatka, take Kuriles/Sakhalin, and create airbases in the Maritime Province

1944: Planning for Soviet Entry *Not Racing an Enemy, Encouraging a Friend*

- JCS urged making every effort to get Russia to enter the war as soon as possible – but again, don't count on it
- To exploit Russian entry, US should strike at Luzon/Formosa or Kuriles/Sakhalin/Hokkaido
- Planners wanted Soviets to destroy Japanese forces in Manchuria and Korea; noted the Soviet need for 1 million tons of US supplies by sea (TSRR inadequate)
- Americans kept asking about airbases in Siberia; Soviets kept stonewalling and asking for heavy bombers
- Planners recommended asking Soviets to “furnish sizeable occupation forces” for Japan!

1944: Planning for Soviet Entry *Not Racing an Enemy, Encouraging a Friend*

- October 1944: we want the Soviets to attack in August 1945 in order to precede the US invasion of Japan
- Regarded as desirable but not essential; we can influence the timing by providing logistical support
- December 1944: Stalin transmits his *quid pro quo* (Kuriles, Sakhalin, Manchuria) – hardly a surprise – and meanwhile denies request for Siberian airbases
- Before Yalta, Soviets had still told us little about timing, what they planned to do, or what they wanted us to do operationally (i.e., other than give them lots of stuff)

Operation Milepost: Expediting Soviet Intervention

- October 1944 – Soviets requested aid for an attack on Japan
- 37 merchant ships transferred to Soviet flag as carriers
- Soviets wanted 1,056,000 tons of supplies:
 - 120,000 tons of 100 octane gasoline, 70,000 tons of automobile gasoline, collapsible storage tanks
 - Food, clothing and hospital supplies
 - 500 amphibious jeeps, 1,000 DUKW, 30,000 trucks
 - 400 C-47 and 100 C-54 aircraft
 - Escort vessels, frigates and numerous other boats
 - 500 locomotives, 6,000 rail cars, 800 kilometers of rail
- 2M tons sent to Vladivostok in 1945 – 12% of wartime total
- Shipments basically complete by Potsdam in July

Project Hula: Expediting Soviet Intervention

- January 1945 – Admiral King notified USN commander in Alaska that US would transfer 250 ships and craft to the Soviet Union between April and December 1945
- US had trained 12,000 Soviet crew in Alaska by September
- Soviets received 149 vessels by September:
 - 28 patrol frigates
 - 24 minesweepers
 - 30 large infantry landing craft
 - 31 minesweepers
 - 32 submarine chasers
 - 4 four floating workshops



Roosevelt's Global Strategy: Summary

- Roosevelt desired postwar US-Soviet cooperation
- He intended to satisfy Soviet territorial demands and to eliminate military threats to the USSR in Eurasia
- He did not try to limit or contain Soviet expansion
- Soviet intervention in the Pacific War was an essential pillar of his strategy – he encouraged it, facilitated it logistically, and granted Stalin's desires for territory and spheres of influence
- He wanted Soviets to participate in the occupation of Japan
- Truman later – quite correctly – decided that Roosevelt had given Stalin too much, and changed the deal

Balancing Europe and the Pacific



The 15 Percent War?

Casablanca Conference, 14 January 1943:

- “ADMIRAL KING said that according to his estimates **we were at present engaging only 15 percent of our total resources against the Japanese** in the Pacific theater, which for this purpose included the Indian Ocean and Burma...”
- Marshall and King suggested allocating 30 percent to the Pacific theater – in other words, doubling the Pacific allocation.
- It is widely accepted that the war in Europe got 85% of the nation's war output, and the Pacific had to make do with what was left.



U.S. made over 50% of its war effort in the Pacific until early 1944, and the Pacific effort never fell below 45%.

European and Pacific Theater: Manpower Strength

	Pacific (Army)	Pacific (USMC)	Pacific (USN)	Europe (Army)	Europe (USN)	Divisions (Pacific)	Divisions (Europe)	Pacific Effort
Jun 42	315,248	56,783	202,000	54,667	58,000	8	2	85%
Dec 42	463,868	100,000	344,000	346,794	98,000	11	7	67%
July 43	693,298	121,665	549,000	767,862	157,000	13	11	60%
Dec 43	912,942	159,376	750,000	1,365,932	214,000	16	17	54%
Jun 44	1,232,491	218,640	1,000,000	2,358,836	300,000	27	29	48%
Dec 44	1,384,887	230,000	1,300,000	3,198,142	200,000	27	57	46%
May 45	1,533,463	247,558	1,300,000	3,466,856	200,000	27	68	46%

- Pacific totals include CBI, Alaska and Hawaii
- Europe totals include Mediterranean and North Africa
- Army numbers include Army Air Force

Raw numbers understate the Pacific effort, because we could send two men to Europe for every man we sent to the Pacific.

European and Pacific Theater: Number of Combat Aircraft

	Pacific (AAF)	Pacific (USN / MC)	Europe / Med (AAF)	Europe / Med (USN)	Pacific Effort
June 42	1,218	678	26	0	99%
Dec 42	1,749	738	1,780	105	57%
July 43	2,583	1,929	5,403	23	45%
Dec 43	3,488	3,447	7,238	135	48%
June 44	5,363	7,303	12,429	134	50%
Dec 44	5,998	8,548	14,261	182	50%
May 45	7,680	9,828	13,538	170	56%

- Excludes utility, transport, training, and lighter-than-air aircraft
- Excludes aircraft in CONUS, Canada, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa

European and Pacific Theater: Transport Shipping Allocation

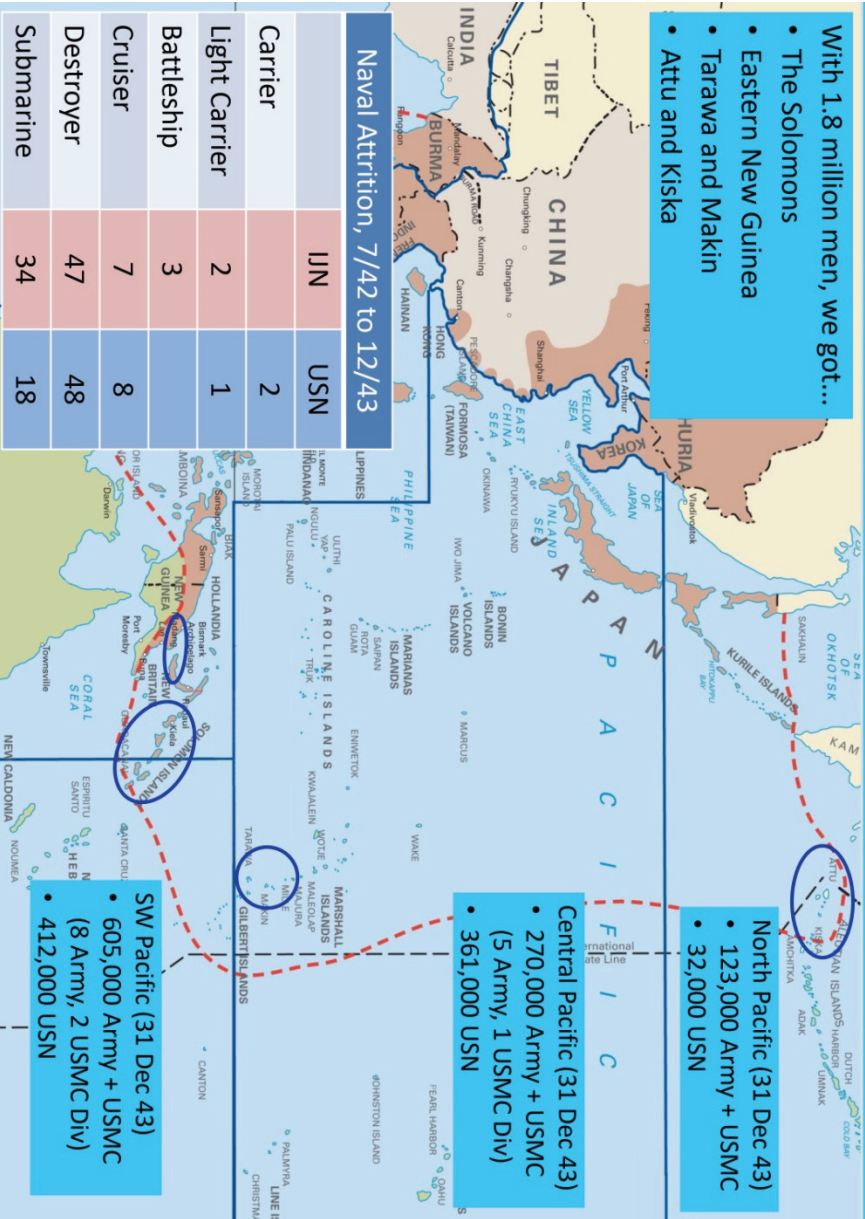
	Army Transports (USAT)		Navy Troopships (AP/APA)		Navy Cargo Ships (AK/AKA)		Pacific Effort
	Average Number of Vessels		Average Number of Vessels		Average Number of Vessels		
	Pacific	Atlantic	Pacific	Atlantic	Pacific	Atlantic	
Jan-Jun 1942	185	115	32	31	20	11	60%
July-Dec 1942	195	291	30	33	20	11	42%
Jan-Jun 1943	211	398	63	28	43	9	42%
July-Dec 1943	357	546	71	21	69	7	46%
Jan-June 1944	533	597	102	22	86	9	53%
July-Dec 1944	719	980	102	22	106	9	48%
Jan-Jun 1945	823	695	135	11	141	4	61%

- Army operated a transport fleet with twice the tonnage of the Navy's transport fleet!

Trivial Strategic Payoff, June 1942 to December 1943

With 1.8 million men, we got...

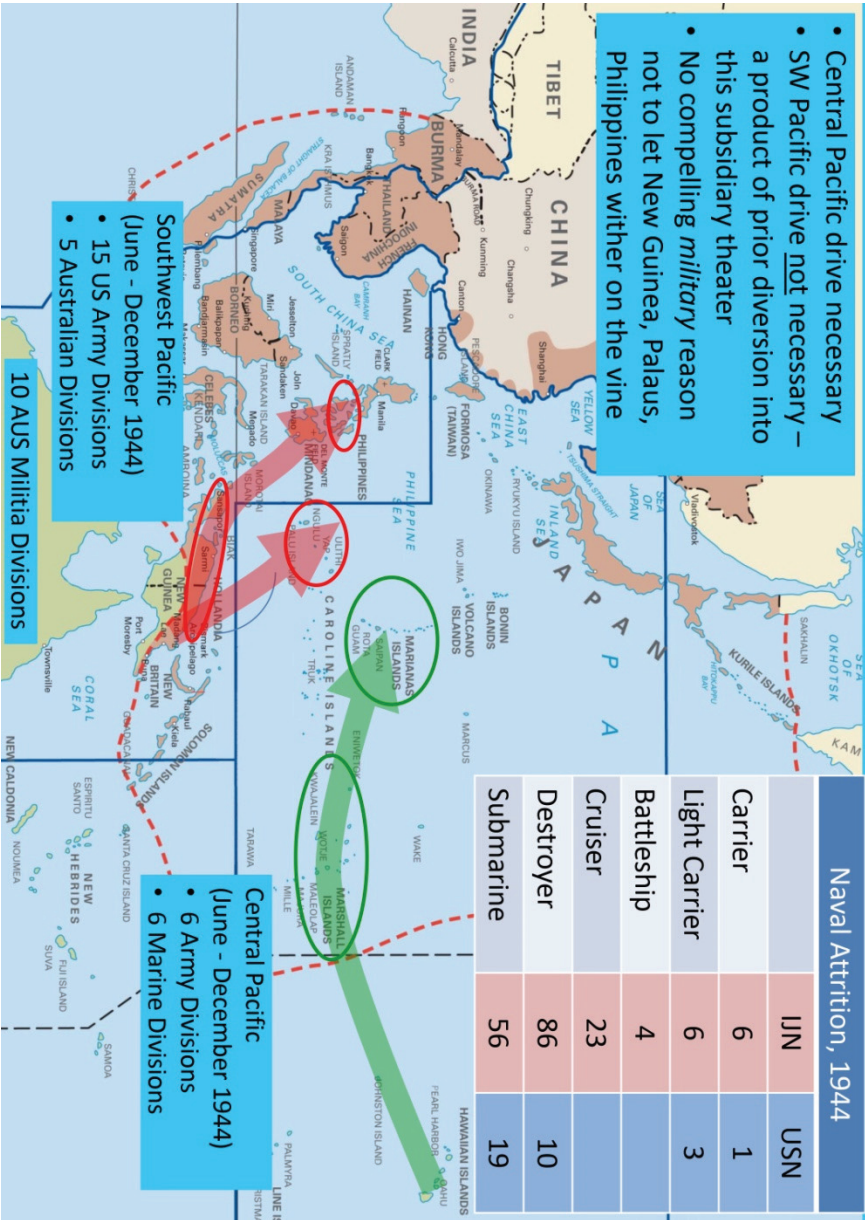
- The Solomons
- Eastern New Guinea
- Tarawa and Makin
- Attu and Kiska



Big Gains in 1944 – but U.S. Still Overinvested

- Central Pacific drive necessary – a product of prior diversion into this subsidiary theater
- No compelling *military* reason not to let New Guinea, Palau, Philippines wither on the vine

		Naval Attrition, 1944	
	JUN	USN	
Carrier	6	1	
Light Carrier	6	3	
Battleship	4		
Cruiser	23		
Destroyer	86	10	
Submarine	56	19	



Opportunity Cost of Pacific Commitments: Weaker Effort in Europe

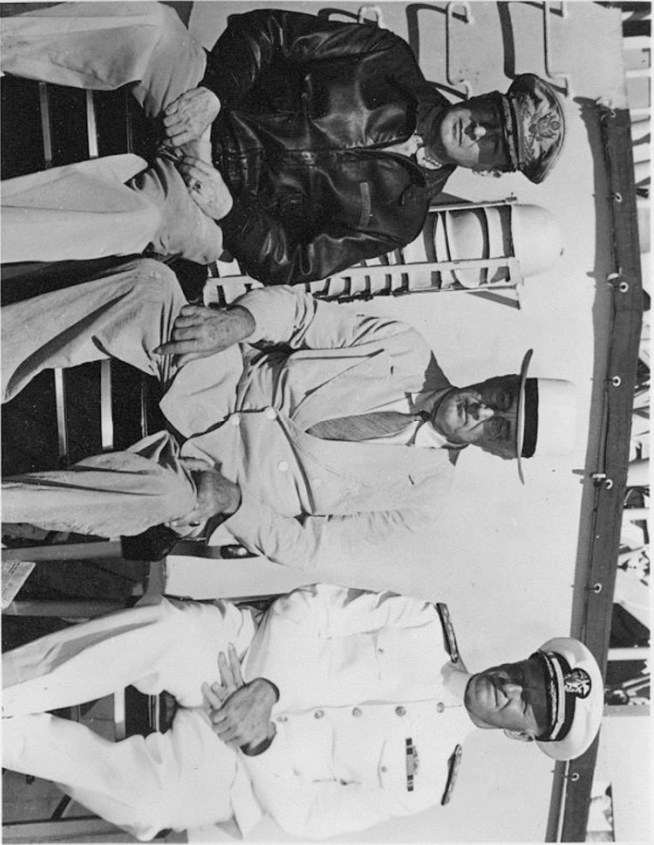
	Pacific (Army)	Pacific (USMC)	Pacific (USN)	Europe (Army)	Europe (USN)	Divisions (Pacific)	Divisions (Europe)	Pacific Effort
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1. No Sledgehammer in 1942
2. Weaker Torch in 1942 (precludes Roundup or rapid attack on Sicily / Italy)
3. No Roundup in 1943
4. Weaker Italian campaign, 1943-45
5. Weaker Anzio invasion, 1944
6. No campaign in the Balkans, 1944-45
7. Weaker campaign in France and Germany, 1944-45

Summary: “A War of Broad Fronts”

- Global broad front – evenly balanced between Europe, Pacific
- European broad front during the campaign in France, 1944, and in Germany, 1945
- Pacific broad front – Central and Southwest Pacific drives
- American military officers *did* understand the importance of concentration of force on the main effort and economy of force on the subsidiary effort
- American planners *did* know where the main effort should be
- Failure to concentrate on the global and theater main efforts slowed down progress in each theater and in the war as a whole
- Reasons for this failure are clearly political

Pacific Planning 1942-1945

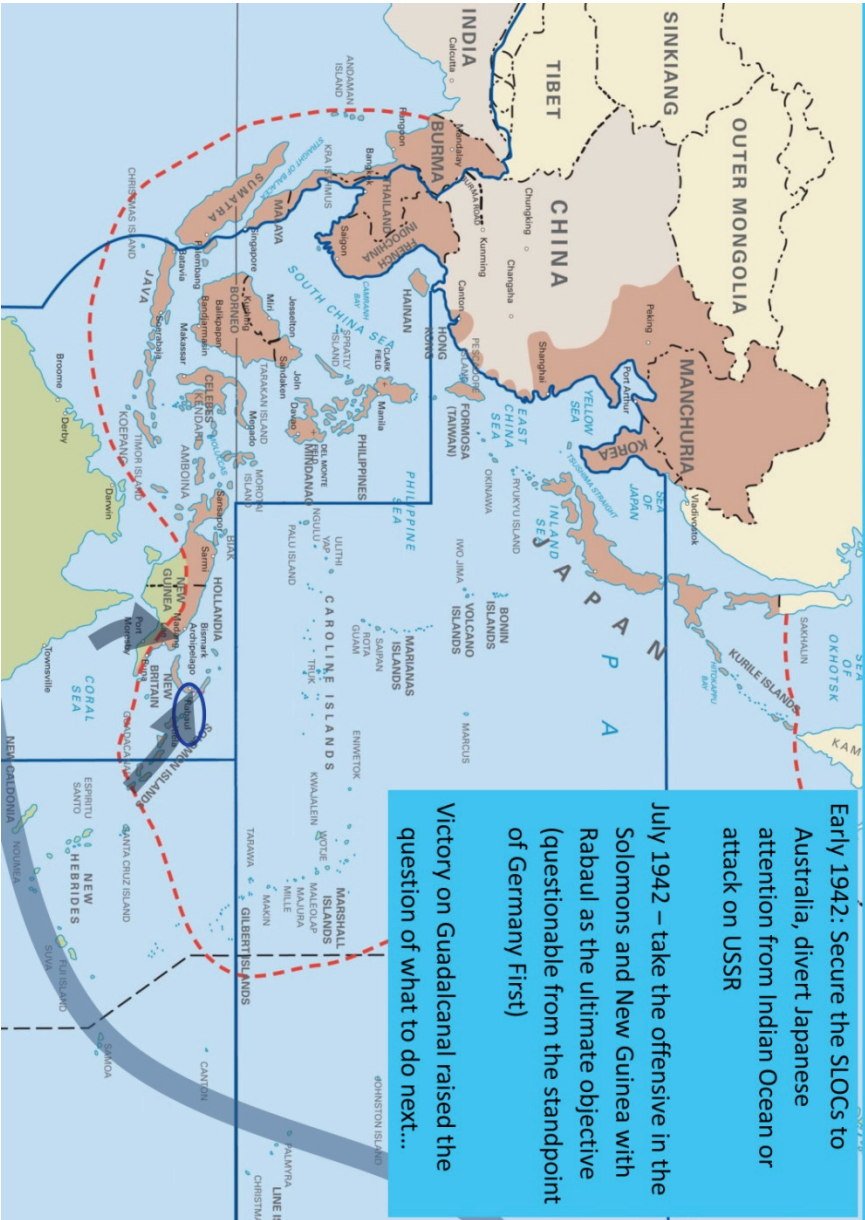


Strategic Planning, 1942

Early 1942: Secure the SLOCs to Australia, divert Japanese attention from Indian Ocean or attack on USSR

July 1942 – take the offensive in the Solomons and New Guinea with Rabaul as the ultimate objective (questionable from the standpoint of Germany First)

Victory on Guadalcanal raised the question of what to do next...

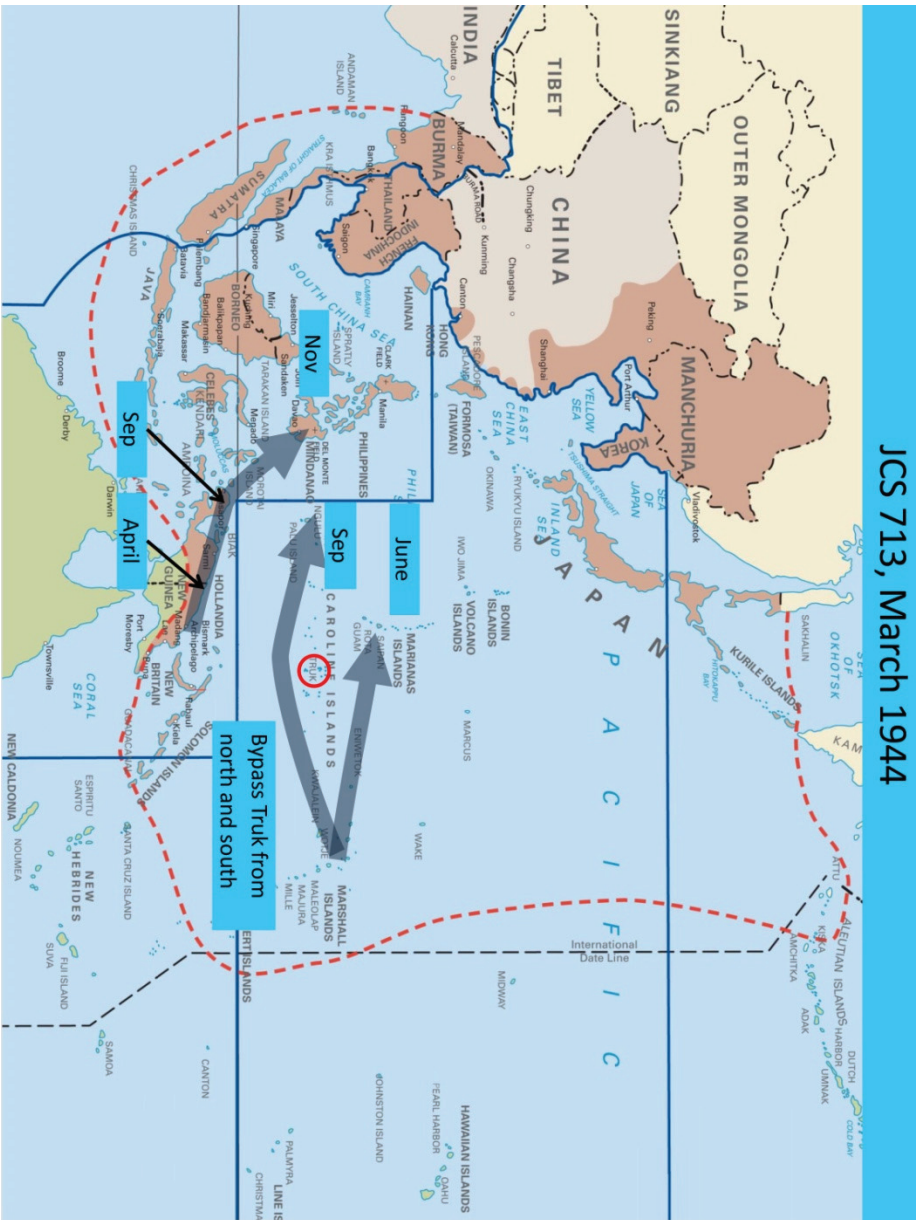


Blockade, Bombardment, and Invasion Considered in 1943

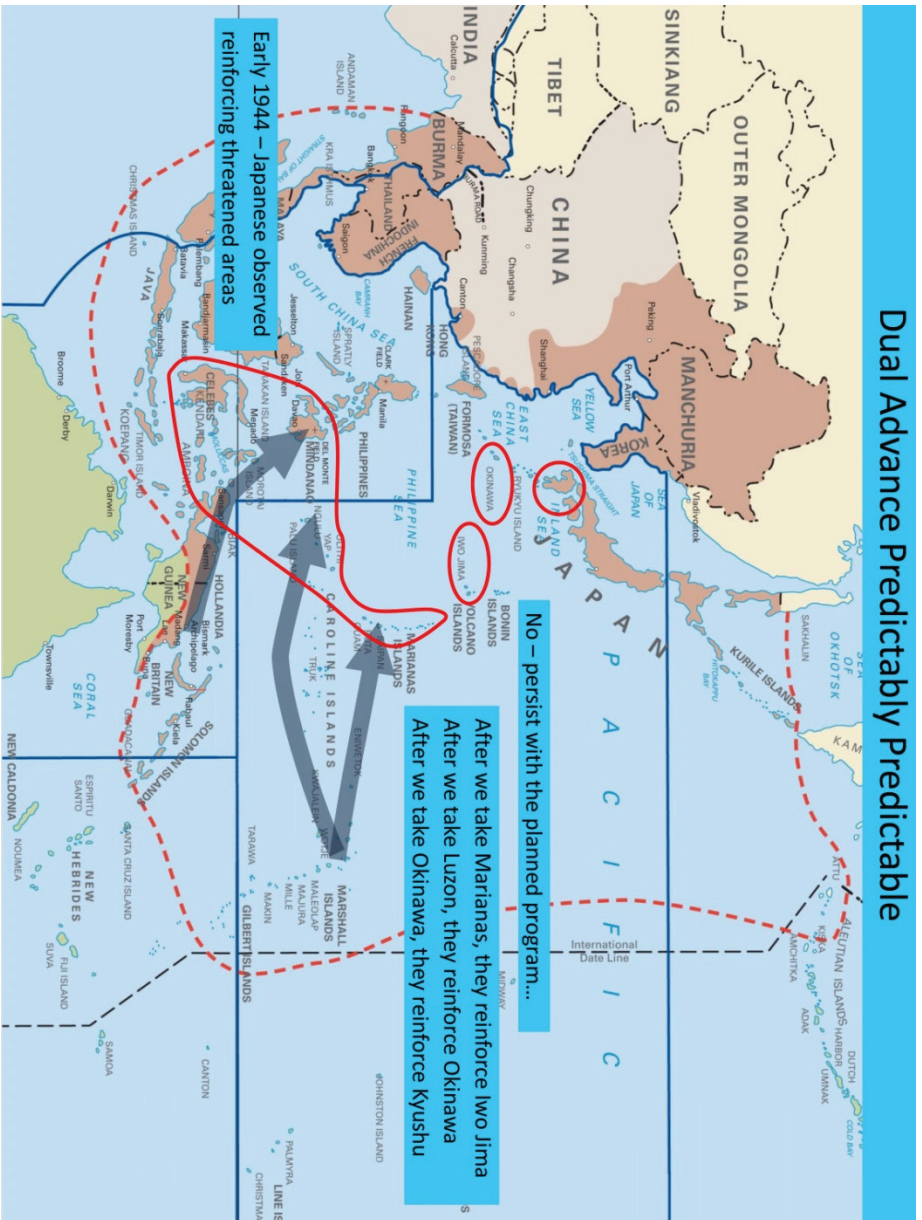
JUSSC 40/2 April 1943	“Strategic plan for the defeat of Japan must extend to the invasion and complete control of the Japanese homeland” “Might” be possible to induce surrender by blockade / bombardment – but they are prerequisites for invasion anyway
CPS 83 August 1943	Ultimate defeat of Japan “may well involve” invasion Main objective is Tokyo-Yokohama (but not until 1947-48!) Bombing “might” cause surrender “but we cannot rely on this” Blockade and bombing are an “essential prelude” China and Formosa needed as bomber bases
CCS 323 August 1943 (Air Plan)	Assumed NO Pacific bases within 1,500 miles of Japan in 1944-45 784 B-29s based near Changsha flying 5 missions/mo for 6 months could destroy Japan’s “capacity for effective armed resistance”
CPS 86/2 October 1943	Directive to defeat Japan within 12 months of defeating Germany “Clearly as the need for speeding up the defeat of Japan is increased, so the prospects of actually having to undertake invasion increase.”

Blockade, Bombardment, and Invasion Considered in 1944

- China no longer a factor in defeating Japan, and Hong Kong no longer a vital objective
- Bombing and blockade not guaranteed to force defeat; must seize “objectives in the industrial heart of Japan”
- Various options studied for direct assault on Kyushu or Hokkaido instead of Luzon or Formosa, and also for bypassing Philippines in favor of Formosa
- Ultimate decision was the incremental “broad front” approach; Central Pacific (Marianas, Iwo Jima), SW Pacific (New Guinea, Philippines), then Okinawa and Kyushu



JCS 713, March 1944



Blockade, Bombardment, and Invasion Considered in 1944 and early 1945

- When will European war end? Late 1944? Late 1945?
- It will release US troops, shipping, aircraft – if too late, could push invasion of Kyushu into 1946
- Also expected to bring the Soviets into the war six months later
- What “intermediate” objectives to take between Okinawa (April) and Kyushu (November)?
- Hokkaido, Korea, China coast, Kuriles examined and rejected



Joint Intelligence Staff Study, April 1945

- Blockade and bombing can break Japan's will – *but when?*
- Estimates vary “from a few months to a great many years”
- Bombing would include “concentrated attacks” on Japan's internal transportation system
- “Probable” that Japan would not unconditionally surrender through blockade/bombing before mid- to late-1946
- Recommended clarifying the meaning of “unconditional surrender” (i.e., it does not mean national extinction)
- If USSR entered the war, “all Japanese will realize that absolute defeat is inevitable”

Marshall, MacArthur, Nimitz April 1945

- Marshall laid out the options – blockade / bombardment, perhaps with lodgments in China or Korea, or invasion as the “quickest and cheapest way to end the war”
- MacArthur examined three options:
 - Encircle Japan prior to attacking Kyushu and Honshu
 - Encircle Japan and attempt to bomb her into submission
 - Attack Kyushu and install air forces prior to an invasion of Honshu
- Course 2 would “prolong the war indefinitely” and assumed airpower could succeed though it failed in Europe
- Course 3 would be decisive and enough forces were on hand for it to succeed – thus, he recommended it
- Nimitz: we should invade Kyushu at the earliest date in order to achieve decisive victory, but expect heavy casualties

JCS Assessments, April 1945

- Blockade and bombardment would still require 28 divisions (versus 36 for invasion), and require “several months to several years” to produce surrender
- “Optimum Strategy” – bombing, blockade, sever communications with Korea, invade Japan at earliest possible date, occupy her vital industrial centers

Atomic bomb was not a factor in the discussion (yet)

Every option had negative implications for civilians in Japan

Battle Experience Through April 1945

Date	Island	Defenders	Prisoners	% KIA	US % KIA+WIA
1943	Attu	2,900	29	99	26
1943	Tarawa	4,819	146	97	18
1944	Kwajalein	5,000	174	97	4
1944	Roi Namur	4,000	87	98	
1944	Eniwetok	3,940	66	98	
1944	Admiralty Is.	4,000	75	98	4
1944	Saipan	29,662	921	97	19
1944	Guam	18,657	1,250	93	13
1944	Tinian	8,039	252	97	5
1944	Peleliu	13,600	202	99	23
1944	Angaur	1,400	50	96	16
1945	Leyte	70,000	828	99	6
1945	Luzon	275,685	9,050 + 61,100	75	
1945	Southern PI	105,865	2,695 + 52,910	47	23
1945	Iwo Jima	22,060	216	99	37
1945	Okinawa	107,199	7,401	94	36

Blockade, Bombardment, Invasion: Summary

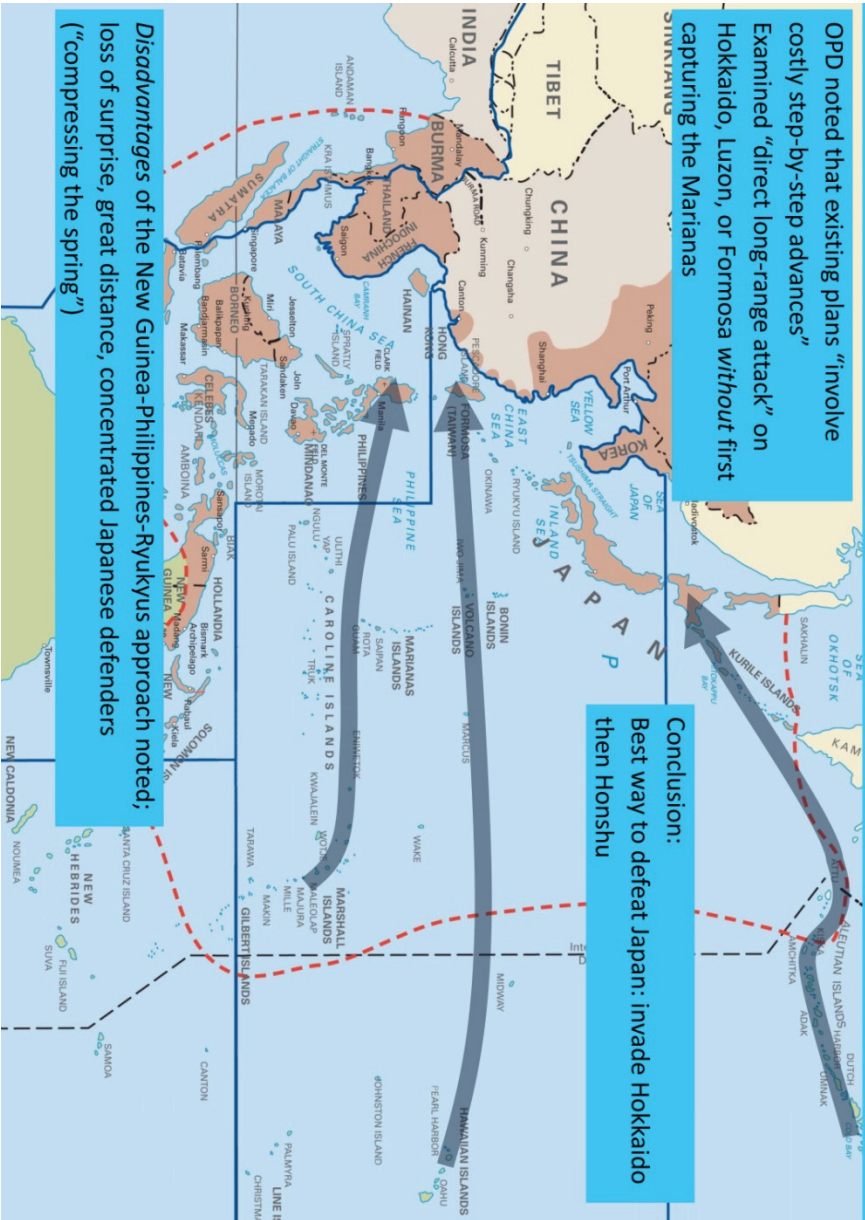
- From early 1943 to April 1945, planning always assumed that blockade/bombardment *might* precipitate surrender
- But, we could not count on this and thus had to prepare for invasion
- Impossible to estimate how much bombing a nation will endure before crying uncle – we *still* don't know how to predict this
- Predictable trans-Pacific drive – Japanese knew where to expect us long before summer 1945
- Every reason to expect a very bloody fight on Kyushu
- Nevertheless, by April 1945, consensus was that invading Kyushu was the quickest way to achieve unconditional surrender

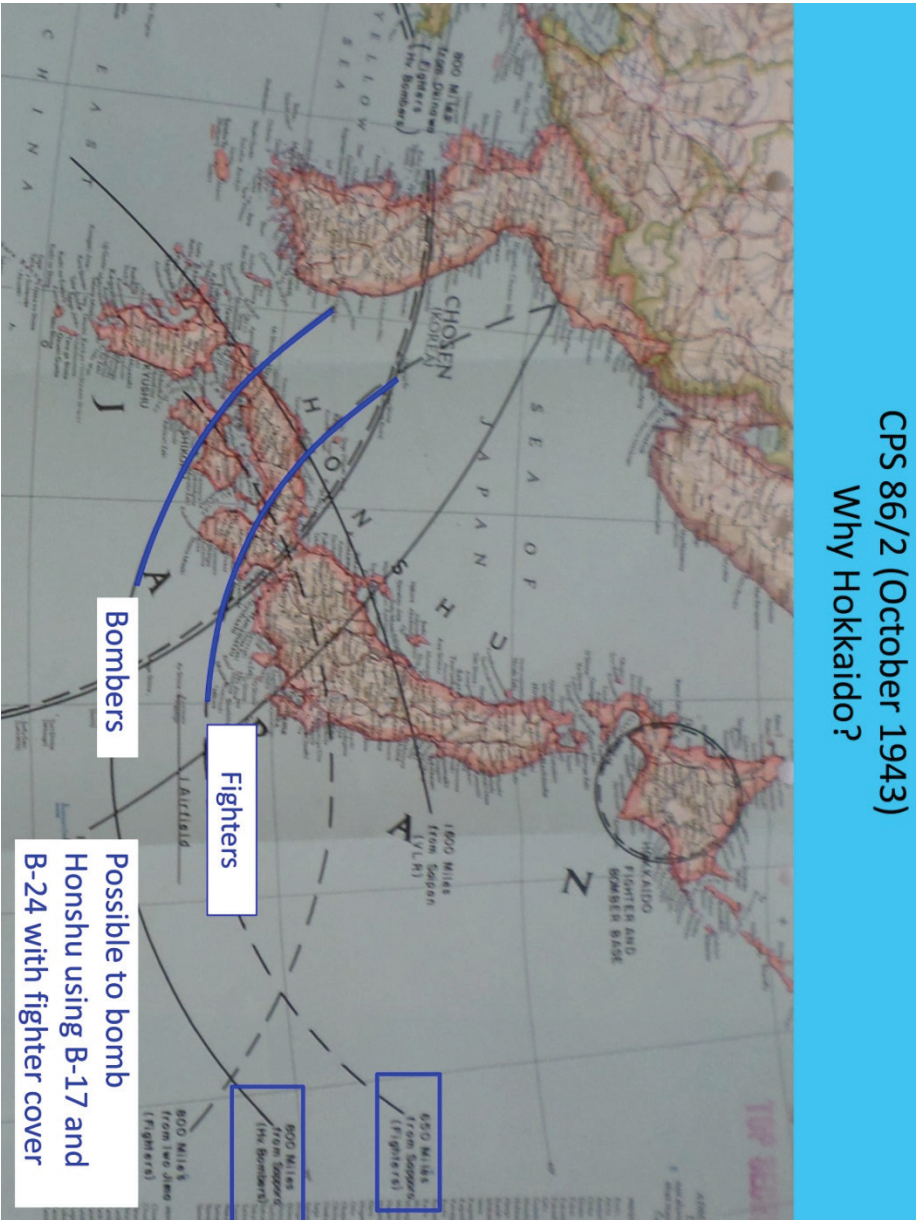
“Bold Action in the War Against Japan” (OPD, July/August 1943)

OPD noted that existing plans “involve costly step-by-step advances”
Examined “direct long-range attack” on Hokkaido, Luzon, or Formosa *without* first capturing the Marianas

Conclusion:
Best way to defeat Japan: invade Hokkaido then Honshu

Disadvantages of the New Guinea-Philippines-Ryukyus approach noted; loss of surprise, great distance, concentrated Japanese defenders (“compressing the spring”)

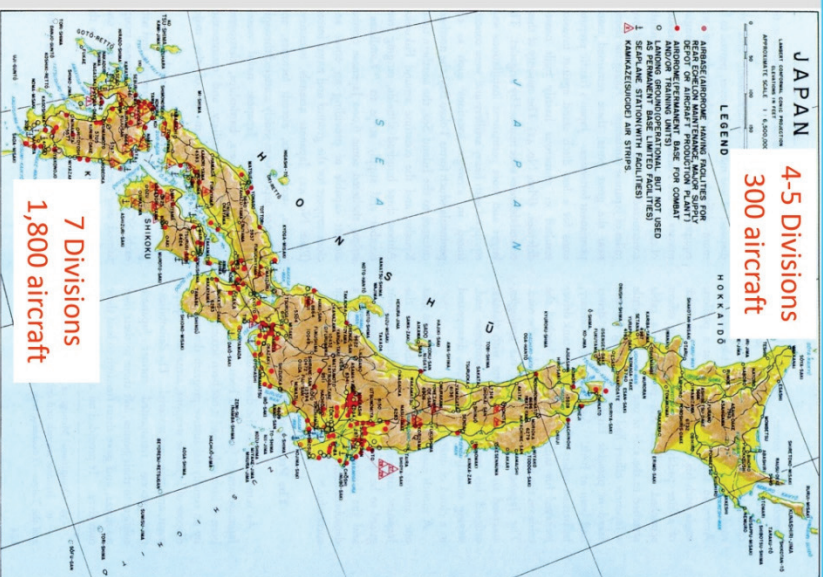




CPS 86/2 (October 1943)
Why Hokkaido?

“Operations Subsequent to the Capture of Luzon” OPD, October 1944

- Kyushu disadvantages:
 - More heavily defended
 - 160 airfields within range, vs. 14
 - Island divided by mountains
 - Few beaches, and only located in the south (predictable for defender)
- “Kyushu may involve us in protracted and heavy fighting” that delays Coronet
- Hokkaido disadvantages:
 - WX poor but not enough to preclude
 - Harder to reinforce by air
- Hokkaido advantages:
 - Surprise, weak defenses, easy to isolate, opens SLOC to Russia
- Troops are available (Armor/ASF issue)
- “It is recommended that Hokkaido be occupied, 1 May 1945” and CINCPOA should prepare plans at once



Reactions to JCS 924: GEN "Hap" Arnold, November 1944

- Final assault on Honshu requires intensive and sustained air preparation
- Bonins, Ryukyus, and China inadequate for this
- Kyushu cannot be seized until fall 1945, whereas Hokkaido can be occupied in May
- Hokkaido "would provide us, at an early date, with the additional air bases necessary to carry out the intensive and sustained air offensive against Honshu"
- **More air could be brought to bear against Honshu in December if we invaded Hokkaido in May than if we invaded Kyushu in September**
- Defeat of IJN means dividing the fleet would not endanger our LOCs
- Hokkaido would assure a LOC to Russia



Reactions to JCS 924: Commanding General, Pacific Ocean Areas

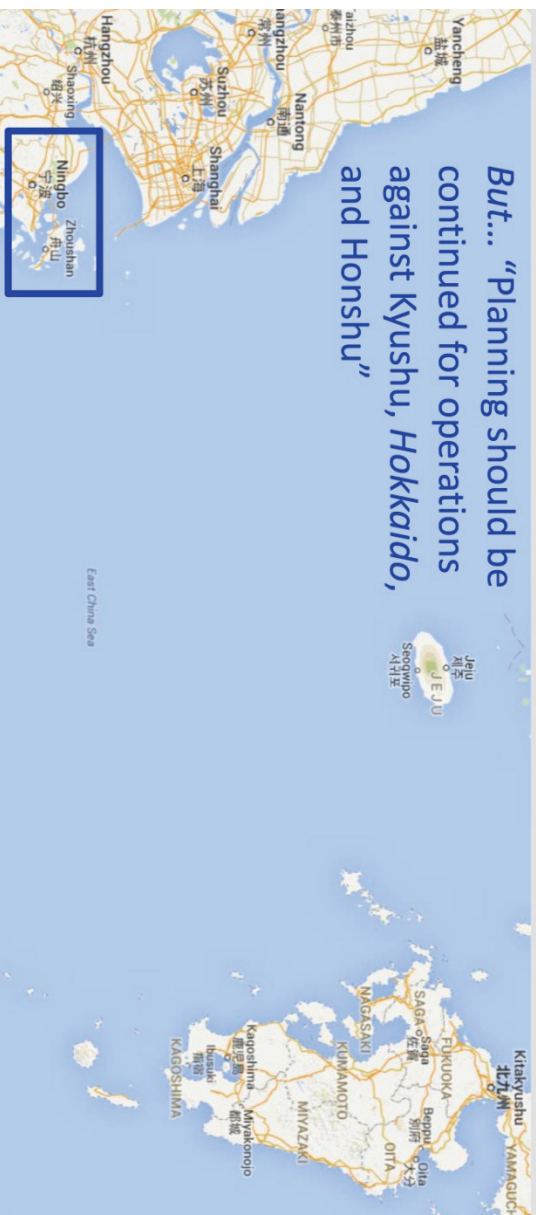
- Japanese have been observed shifting forces from Manchuria to Formosa, Philippines, Ryukyus, Bonins
- **They expect an attack in the south**
- Let's feint towards Kyushu, and then attack Hokkaido instead
- This would surprise and disorient the Japanese
- Once we take Hokkaido, "it would be impossible for the Japanese to shift the center of gravity of their forces which is now oriented towards the south and west."
- **Hokkaido should be primary intermediate objective, and Kyushu secondary**



LTG Robert C. Richardson
ComGenPOA
("Nimitz's General")

**“Alternates to the Campaign for Defeat of Japan”
Joint Staff Planners, January 1945**

- Paper addresses what to do if Kyushu has to be postponed until 1946
- 9 divisions available for “limited operations” after Okinawa
- Recommends Ningpo-Chusan in September 1945 (then Kyushu ASAP)
- Subsequent operations against Hokkaido, Korea, Formosa, Hong Kong not feasible due to lack of forces



Conclusions

- Roosevelt did not “only” want to win the war – he had very definite ideas about the post-war world
- He envisaged partnership with China until Tehran
- At Tehran and Yalta, Roosevelt proposed a vast role for the USSR in post-war Asia – Stalin naturally concurred
- So, the Soviets were “off-stage” in the Far East until August 1945, but nevertheless loomed large in Roosevelt’s thinking
- He did not get to execute his strategy, but he had laid the groundwork by the time he died – and in particular, Operation Milepost meant the Soviets could not be kept out of the war
- Meanwhile, by April 1945 plans and preparations were in place for an invasion of Kyushu in the autumn...

Questions?

Ending the War in the Pacific: Stalin's Strategic Intentions

David M. Glantz

Introduction

Recent research on military operations the Soviet Army conducted during the Soviet-German War (1941–45) and the Soviet-Japanese War (August–September 1945), together with new Russian archival releases, indicate that Josef Stalin, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and Generalissimo of the Soviet Union, sought territorial acquisitions and the expansion of the USSR's foreign influence to a far greater degree than formerly believed. This research demonstrates that, as early as February 1943 and to a vastly increased extent thereafter, Stalin orchestrated Red Army offensive actions designed not only to restore the territorial integrity of the prewar Soviet Union, but also to extend Soviet control or influence over other territories external to its prewar boundaries. In the winter campaign of 1945, Stalin's insistence on accomplishing these goals prompted him to alter existing strategic plans fundamentally in order to exploit unanticipated opportunities afforded by sharply altered diplomatic circumstances. Finally, as a result of diplomatic discussions and agreements with his Western Allies, the Soviet Union joined the Pacific War by invading Japanese-occupied Manchuria in August 1945. In the process of preparing the Manchurian offensive and defeating the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria in dramatic fashion, Stalin identified and sought strategic gains, which, if realized, would have vastly increased Soviet influence in the Far East during the postwar years.

Admittedly, since important Soviet archival materials remain to be released, this study is inherently incomplete. However, the facts and patterns this study identifies leave no doubt about the fundamental premise; that is, for whatever reason, Stalin's program for aggrandizing Soviet power in the postwar world was indeed genuine.

Context: The European War

Understandably, the “center of gravity” [or strategic focal point] of Stalin’s military strategy to defeat the German Wehrmacht during Operations Barbarossa and Blau in 1941 and 1942 was the destruction of German and other Axis forces and the preservation of the Soviet Union. Therefore, during most of the first two years of the war, territorial acquisitions were clearly of secondary consideration to Stalin. However, as recently-released archival documents indicate, in particular directives issued by the *Stavka* (Headquarters, Supreme High Command), beginning in February 1943, the spectacular victories the Soviet Army achieved at Stalingrad and in its ensuing winter offensive of 1942–1943 encouraged Stalin to implement a military strategy with vastly expanded territorial objectives. While this first meant an advance to the Dnepr River, soon it encompassed a return to the Baltic region, the reconquest of Belorussia and the Ukraine, and, ultimately, concerted advances into central Europe, the Balkans, and the Danube Basin. At this early stage, however, German victories in the period from mid-February through March 1943 forced Stalin to postpone further attempts to clear Axis forces from Soviet soil until after the Red Army won its signal victory at Kursk in July and August 1943.

Stalin’s military strategy during the summer–fall campaign of 1943 (July–December 1943), which focused once again on destroying German forces rather than acquiring territory, culminated in major Soviet victories at Kursk in early July, at Orel, Khar’kov, Briansk, and Smolensk in July and August, in a general advance to the Dnepr River in September, and in the piercing of German defenses along the Dnepr River from October through December 1943.

During the latter stages of the ensuing winter campaign of 1943–1944, specifically January through April 1944, Stalin’s military strategy began pursuing both military and political ends. Although his strategic intent remain focused on the defeat of German forces and the liberation of the Leningrad region, Belorussia, and the Ukraine, during

the intervals in between these priority offensives, Stalin orchestrated far weaker offensives with distinctly political aims. Consequently, after launching significant offensives from January through March 1944 to reconquer the Leningrad region and the Ukraine (as well as a failed offensive into Belorussia), Stalin mandated follow-on offensives with significant political implications into the Baltic region from February through April, and into northern Romania in April and May. Although the latter failed to achieve its ambitious aims, it set the pattern for further offensives in the future.

Likewise, during the summer–fall campaign of 1944 (June–December 1944), while Stalin’s strategy focused on destroying German forces in Belorussia, eastern Poland, and Romania (the latter with strong political overtones), it included distinctly politically-motivated advances into Finland and the Baltic region in June and July, and wholesale invasions of the Baltic and Balkan regions in October and November 1944.

During the winter–spring campaign of 1945 (January–May 1945), the Soviet Army conducted its culminating campaign to defeat the Wehrmacht and its Axis allies in eastern and central Europe and end the war. For the first time in the war, Stalin’s military strategy sought not only to achieve victory along the Berlin axis but also to seize Vienna and secure control over the Danube Basin. By skillfully exploiting diplomatic developments, Stalin proved able to shift the center of gravity of his operations to and fro between the central and southern axes in February and April 1945 so as to achieve strategic victory along both.

By virtue of Stalin’s military strategy, when the war ended on 26 May 1945, in addition to the Baltic region, Belorussia, the Ukraine, Moldavia, and those parts of Russia and Karelia the Soviet Union had lost in 1941 and 1942, the Soviet Army physically occupied not only Poland, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and an occupation zone encompassing the roughly one-third of Germany and Berlin granted to him by his Allies, but also roughly half of the city of

Vienna and a dominant position in the western half of the Danube Basin.¹

Based on the military strategy he pursued in the European war, when asked by his Allies to participate in the war against Japan, Stalin characteristically sought similar gains in the Far East.

The Soviet Military Posture towards Japan during the Soviet-German War (1941–1945)

Strategic Defense, 1941–1943

The Soviet-Japanese neutrality pact of 13 April 1941 benefitted the Soviet Union immensely after 22 June 1941 by partially mitigating against the adverse effects of German Operation Barbarossa and permitting the Soviet Union to devote its energies to meeting and defeating the German invasion.² Despite the pact's existence, however, the fragility of the previous Soviet-German non-aggression pact and its violation by Germany prompted Soviet suspicions that the same fate might befall its pact with Japan. Consequently, while the Soviet Union shifted its strategic attention westward, nagging concerns over possible Japanese actions compelled the *Stavka* to maintain a strong defensive posture in the Far East.

¹ See the original research and conclusions on Stalin's military strategy in the Soviet-German war, in David M. Glantz, "Soviet Military Operations during the Soviet-German War 1941–45 as Indicators of the USSR's Postwar Territorial Ambitions and International Influence," in *NIDS Military History Studies Annual, No. 18, March 2015* (Tokyo: National Institute for Defense Studies, 2015), 85–144; and David M. Glantz, "Stalin's Strategic Intentions, 1941–1945: Soviet Military Operations as Indicators of Stalin's Postwar Territorial Ambitions," in *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (October–December 2014), 676–720.

² For details on this pact, see, V. A. Zolotarev, ed., *Russkii arkhiv: Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945 goda: istoriia voenno-politicheskogo protivoborstva dvukh derzhav v 30–40-e gody. Dokumenty i materialy. V 2 t. T. 18 (7-1, 2)* [The Russian archives: The Soviet-Japanese war of 1945: A history of the military-political confrontation of two powers in the 1930s–40s. Documents and materials. In 2 volumes. Vol 18 (7-1, 2) (Moscow: "TERRA," 1997, 2000), Vol. 1, 232–233. Hereafter cited as Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina*, with appropriate volume and pages.

Newly-released archival documents reveal real numerous warnings about an impending Japanese attack that kept the *Stavka* on virtual “red alert” in the Far Eastern region throughout the remainder of 1941. On 15 August, for example, Army General I. R. Apanesenko, the commander of the Far Eastern Front, and his commissar, Division Commissar F. P. Iakovlev, warned Moscow that, “based on information from the General Staff’s Intelligence Directorate (RU), it is well-know that, without a declaration of war, the Japanese will begin military actions against the USSR in the second half of August and supposedly conduct a swift flowing war. While doing so, the Japanese army will deliver their main attack toward Vladivostok in the coastal region.”³ The Front commander went on to inform Moscow of the precautions he was taking. Although this offensive failed to materialize, the same headquarters once again warned its subordinate armies on 26 October that an attack would occur on 26–28 October, a report also supposedly confirmed by an unnamed source in Washington, DC.⁴ This attack, too, never materialized, although a subsequent assessment by the same Front of the balance of forces in the region as of 11 December warned against the further dispatch of troops from the Far East to the West, perhaps unwittingly revealing the reason for General Apanesenko’s previous warnings.⁵

After 7 December 1941, however, Japanese involvement in a Pacific War with the United States largely negated Soviet concerns about the country’s eastern flank. Nevertheless, even as warnings of war diminished, the *Stavka* took measures to increase the defensive readiness of its forces in the Far East. These included:

- *Stavka* VGK directives Nos. 170042 and 170043, dated 24 January 1942 – ordering the Trans-Baikal Front and Far Eastern Front to

³ Ibid, 235.

⁴ Ibid, 236. This warning occurred less than two weeks after the *Stavka* directed the Far Eastern Front to send seven divisions to the West.

⁵ Ibid, 238–240.

send it information by 28 January in regard to how the fronts and Mongolian Peoples' Army planned to operate in the event of a Japanese surprise attack.⁶

- *Stavka* VGK directives Nos. 170149 and 170150, dated 16 March 1942 – instructing the Far Eastern Front (2nd Red Banner, 35th, 1st Red Banner, and 25th Armies) and Trans-Baikal Front (17th and 36th Armies) on their missions and methods of operations in the event of a surprise Japanese invasion. This involved defense in most of the region, but mandated limited offensive operations by:
 - **Far Eastern Front's 15th and 35th Armies** along the Sungari River to “defeat the opposing Japanese and Manchukuoan forces in five days and reach the Fuchin and Paoching front on the 25th day to protect the Khabarovsk and Ussuri sector of the railroad,” as well as air attacks on Japanese bases in Manchuria and Korea and even on Tokyo.
 - **Trans-Baikal Front's 17th and 36th Armies** (two motorized rifle, two rifle, two tank, and one-two cavalry divisions, four tank battalions, and four artillery regiments) will attack by the third day of the war to destroy enemy forces in the Gan'chzhur, Chailainor, and Manchouli regions and reach the Lake Buyr Nuur, Arshang River, Arshand bridge, and Chailainor regions by the tenth day of the operation.
 - **36th Army's 51st Cavalry Division** (with one tank battalion and one artillery regiment) will force the Argun' River in the Staro-Tzurukhaitui and Novo- Tzurukhaitui region, destroy opposing enemy forces, and capture the Trekhrech'e region.⁷

⁶ V. A. Zolotarev, ed, *Russkii arkhiv: Velikaia Otechestvennaia: Stavka VGK. Dokumenty i materialy, T. 16 5 (2)* [The Russian archives: The Great Patriotic: *Stavka* VGK. Documents and materials 1942. Vol. 16 (5 (2) (Moscow: “TERRA,” 1996), 59–60. Hereafter cited as Zolotarev, “*Stavka* 1942,” with appropriate pages.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 127–130.

- *Stavka* VGK directive No. 170191, dated 25 March 1942 – clarifying the wartime missions of the Far Eastern Front in regard to the Pacific Fleet.⁸
- *Stavka* VGK directive No. 170428, dated 2 June 1942 – to the Trans-Baikal Front about the concealed evacuation of military family members from the border region.⁹
- *Stavka* VGK directive No. 170436, dated 3 June 1942 – to the Trans-Baikal Front authorizing the Front to provide additional arms and equipment to the Mongolian Peoples' Army without drawing on stocks from the "Center."¹⁰

Typical of the few "warnings of war" related to the Far East in 1942 was a report issued by the GRU in December, based in part on agent information, about reinforcements sent to the Kwantung Army from Japan. In this instance, since the agents' reports were contradictory, the Red Army General Staff's Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) concluded that these reports were lies disseminated by the Japanese or Germans.¹¹

According to Soviet accounts of the war, from 22 June 1941 to mid-1944, the *Stavka* accorded highest priority, first, to strategic defense in the West to halt the German invasion and, second, to the conduct of strategic offensive operations to defeat Nazi Germany. Whether or not Japan entered the war, the Soviet Union's survival depended on victory over Nazi Germany. Thus, virtually from the first day of the war, Stalin and his military advisers shifted vital military resources westward from the Far East. This process began in June, when Stalin ordered the Far Eastern Front and Trans-Baikal Military District to erect firm defenses along the Manchurian and Korean borders and begin sending westward the bulk of their well-trained and battle-tested divisions.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 230.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 234.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 252–253.

The force the Soviet Union allocated for defense in the Far East was based on the assumption that it was possible to conduct a two-front war successfully only if sufficient forces could be left in the Far East to defend the region. Since the *Stavka* assumed that “Japan could allocate up to 50 divisions, 1,200 tanks, and 3,000 aircraft in a war against the Soviet Union,” defensive sufficiency required “a force of 33–34 divisions and a specific quantity of forces and ships in the Pacific Fleet to guarantee fully a stable situation and for defense of the Far Eastern borders.”¹² All subsequent transfers of forces from the Far East to the West were based on this assumption.

In fact and characteristically, Stalin and his *Stavka* routinely “safe-sided” this assumption by ensuring that Soviet force levels in the Far East always exceeded this benchmark figure for defensive sufficiency. At least in part, he did so by including up to 14 fortified regions [*ukreplennyi raion*] in that force structure. These unique economy-of-force formations, which were strong in firepower but light in manpower, consisted of 8–12 artillery-machine gun battalions each positioned in increasingly well-fortified defensive positions dispersed astride all probable Japanese avenues of approach into the Far East and Trans-Baikal region. Despite sizeable force transfers to the West, the Soviets were careful to maintain a credible force of rifle, cavalry, and other types of divisions and regiments capable of performing defensive and limited offensive missions behind this fortified defensive shield.

The wartime deployment of Red Army forces from the Far East to the West began in June 1941 and accelerated thereafter. From mid-June through November 1941, the Soviets recalled 18 rifle, tank, and motorized divisions from the Far East, together with enough manpower from the Pacific Fleet to raise 12 naval rifle [Marine]

¹² N. V. Eronin, *Strategicheskaya peregruppirovka Sovetskikh vooruzhennykh sil (pri podgotovke Dal'nevostochnoi kampanii 1945 goda)* [The strategic regrouping of the Soviet armed forces (during the preparations for the Far Eastern campaign of 1945)] (Moscow: Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff, 1980), 10. Classified secret but now declassified.

brigades. These forces subsequently played a significant role in halting and defeating German forces at the gates of Leningrad and Moscow. Despite these force transfers, the *Stavka* formed enough new forces in the Far East to maintain force levels of 43–48 division equivalents in the region from June through October 1941 and increase these numbers to 51–53 division equivalents from November 1941 through January 1942.¹³ The *Stavka* dispatched a second wave of Far Eastern forces westward in 1942 to counter the German advance toward Stalingrad and the Caucasus region. This force of 10 rifle divisions and 4 rifle brigades, sent between 1 May and 19 November 1942, contributed significantly to the defeat of German forces at Stalingrad in late November. Once again, these transfers failed to diminish Soviet strength in the Far East, since from 1 July–31 December 1942, Red Army strength in the Far East ranged from 64 to 66 division equivalents, roughly twice that required for reliable defense.¹⁴

Later still in the winter of 1942–43, the Peoples' Commissariat of Defense (NKO) transferred one rifle division, three cavalry divisions, and nine howitzer and mortar regiments to strengthen the Stalingrad counteroffensive. Thereafter, however, the transfers of entire divisions and brigades ended as Soviet fortunes soared in the summer

¹³ Divisional equivalents are calculated on the basis of one rifle, tank, motorized rifle, and division, as well as one fortified region per division; and two rifle brigades, three rifle regiments, two cavalry regiments, three tank, mechanized, or motorized rifle brigades, and eight separate tank battalions per division.

¹⁴ For force transfers from the Far East and Red Army strength in the Far East, see David M. Glantz, "The Impact of Intelligence Provided to the Soviet Union by Richard Sorge on Force Deployments from the Far East to the West in 1941 and 1942," a paper delivered to the Japanese National Institute for Defence Studies (NIDS), in Tokyo, Japan, in October 2103; *Boevoi sostav Sovetskoi armii, Chast' 1 (Iiun'–dekabr' 1941 goda)* [The combat composition of the Soviet Army, Part I (June–December 1942)] (Moscow: Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff, 1963), 62; and *Boevoi sostav Sovetskoi armii, Chast' II (Ianvar'–dekabr' 1942 goda)* [The combat composition of the Soviet Army, Part II (January–December 1942)] (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1966).

of 1943. Instead, the Far East became the training ground for artillery units sent West in the remainder of 1943 and 1944. As a result, Red Army strength in the Far East increased to 65 and 63 divisional equivalents on 1 January and 1 July 1943 to 78 divisional equivalents on 1 January 1944. In terms of manpower, Soviet strength in the region grew from 703,714 men on 22 June 1941 to 1,156,961 million men on 1 July 1943 and 1,162,991 men on 1 January 1944.¹⁵

Transition from Defense to Offense, 1943–1944

Contrary to previous Soviet claims that Stalin devoted all of his attention strategically to operations in the West until mid-1944, strong evidence now indicates that he began thinking of the Far East as early as the summer of 1943. The clearest indicator of this change is the fact that the *Stavka* began strengthening its forces in the Far East during the summer of 1943, apparently in the expectation that offensive operations might be necessary in the future.

If outright warnings of war in the East disappeared after 1942, Soviet concerns about defending the region did not. In fact, to an increasing extent, these defensive plans began including active offensive operations. For example, on 29 June 1943, on behalf of the *Stavka*, General Vasilevsky pressed the Far Eastern Front to improve its defenses, especially in the Lake Khanka and coastal region west of Vladivostok. Apparently in response to a report about the weakness in the defenses in the region, the *Stavka* chided the command for neglecting to heed its warning to create “a stubborn defense along all axes and prevent the enemy from entering our territory.” It went on

¹⁵ D. F. Ustinov, et al., eds., *Istoriia Vtoroi Mirovoi voiny 1939–1945*, T. 11 [History of the Second World War 1939–1945, Vol. 11 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1980), 184. Hereafter cited as *IVMV*, with appropriate page. N. V. Eronin, *Strategicheskaiia peregruppirovka Sovetskykh vooruzhennykh sil (pri podgotovka Dal'nevostochnoi kampanii 1945 goda)* [The strategic regrouping of the Soviet armed forces (during the preparation of the Far Eastern campaign)] (Moscow: Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff, 1980), 128, classified secret but now declassified, provides slightly different figures of 650,700 men on 22 June 1941, 1,131,700 men on 1 January 1943, 1,033,900 men on 1 January 1944, and 1,010,400 men on 1 January 1945.

to demand that the Far Eastern Front recreate the Special Rifle Corps under the headquarters of 16th Army, as well as 56th Rifle Corps, to unify command and control of all forces defending the northern half of Sakhalin Island.¹⁶ Following up on that directive, on 20 July 1943, the *Stavka*, this time in a directive signed by Stalin and Vasilevsky, ordered the Far Eastern Front to form a Coastal Group of Forces, headquartered in Voroshilov and made up of 25th and 1st Red Banner Armies and 9th Air Army, whose mission was to defend the coastal region.¹⁷

More important still, on 27 July 1943, in the wake of the Red Army's victory at Kursk, the *Stavka* moved to ensure that its headquarters in the Far East were fulfilling the demands of its previous directives nos. 170149 and 170150, issued in March 1942, which had assigned the Far East Front and Trans-Baikal Front wartime missions. Entitled "About Precisely Defining Missions in the Event of a Japanese Invasion," these directives specified the missions to be fulfilled by every subordinate command and reiterated that the principal aim was defense of the region. However, unlike the previous directives, which contained provision for conducting limited offensive operations to distract Japanese forces from their likely main objectives, these directives significantly expanded those offensive missions. Specifically, these directives ordered the Far Eastern and Trans-Baikal Fronts to:

- **Far Eastern Front** – distract enemy forces from the main axes and protect rail and road communications in the Khabarovsk

¹⁶ V. A. Zolotarev, ed, *Russkii arkhiv: Velikaia Otechestvennaia: Stavka Verkhovnogo Glavnokomandovaniia. Dokumenty i materialy 1943 god, T. 16 5 (3)* [The Russian archives: The Great Patriotic; *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command. Documents and materials 1943. Vol. 16 (5 (3) (Moscow: "TERRA," 1999), 173–174. Hereafter cited as Zolotarev, "*Stavka 1943*," with appropriate pages.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 180–181. The Coastal Group was commanded by Lieutenant General F. A. Parusinov, the former commander of 1st Red Banner Army. Ultimately, the Coastal Group of Forces provided the basis for the formation of the 1st Far Eastern Front.

region by conducting operations with part of the forces of 15th and 35th Armies and the main body of the Red Banner Amur River Flotilla to capture Tungchiang, Hiaching, Ehtun (Etushan') heights and Wuerhkuli (Dalatsyshan') peak, subsequently, in favorable conditions, reach the Fuchin and Paoching region.

- **Trans-Baikal Front** – the front's main forces, made up of 17th and 36th Armies and VVS (Air Forces), will destroy the opposing enemy in the Gan'chzhur, Hailar, Manchuli regions, capture the Burga plateau (Ploskogor'e Bagra) by the end of the first month of war, and close the exits through the Grand Khingans along the Solun and Hailar axes.
 - **17th and 36th Armies (minus)** – capture the Kerulen salient [south of Manchuli], the Manchouli-Chailainor Fortified Region, and reach the Lake Buyr Nuur, Orchun' River, and Mytnaia River [running northeast into the Argun River east of Manchuli] line no later than the twelfth day of war. Subsequently, defeat the enemy in the Gan'chzhur region and Bain-Tsagan heights, capture the Hailar Fortified Region, and while protecting the Solun axis, reach the foothills of the Grand Khingans on the Dzhindzhin-Sume, Hunghoerhts'un, eastern bank of the Imin Gol [River], Iakeshi, and Hsiehhotzu (Trekhrech'e [Three Rivers]) front and firmly dig in. If conditions permit, secure and firmly hold the passes through the Grand Khingans.
 - **36th Army** (one rifle corps with two rifle divisions, a cavalry division, a tank brigade, and reinforcing means) – destroy Japanese and Manchukoan units on the eastern bank of the Argun' River and capture Hsiehhotzu (Trekhrech'e) by operations from the Staro-Tzurukhaitui and Novo-Tzurukhaitui region, and, while protecting the operations of the front's forces on the main axis, pin down enemy forces in the vicinity of Hailar until the front's main forces enter the region.

- In the remaining sectors firmly defend the borders of the Mongolian Peoples' Republic and the USSR.¹⁸

Finally, these directives required the two main commands in the region to submit detailed defensive plans in multiple variants to the *Stavka* by 1 September 1943. The significance of these directives rests in the fact that, within a defensive context, they sketch out some of the main features of the plan ultimately implemented in August 1945. All that was needed to flesh out this plan were armies transferred from the West that could conduct main attacks into Manchuria's central valley from the west and the east. This clearly indicates Stalin's intent to seize Manchuria in the future and to do so by traversing some of the most forbidding terrain in western, northwestern, and eastern Manchuria. Only the date and precise force and circumstances remained to be determined.

Throughout the summer of 1943, the General Staff also transferred personnel between theaters to improve its expertise on Far Eastern affairs, a process that would accelerate in 1944 and 1945. Initially, the General Staff brought Major General N. A. Lomov, deputy chief of staff of the Far Eastern Front, to Moscow, where he became deputy chief of the General Staff's Operations Directorate under its chief, Lieutenant General S. M. Shtemenko. The *Stavka* replaced Lomov with Major General F. I. Shevchenko from the General Staff to strengthen its representation in the Far East.¹⁹

At the meeting of the "Big Three" Allied leaders at Teheran in November 1943, in response to Anglo-American requests for assistance in the war against Japan, Stalin announced that, in principle, the Soviet government would agree to join the war once Germany had been defeated.²⁰ Consequently, in early 1944, Stalin, his

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 182–184. The directives were numbered 30155 and 30156.

¹⁹ S. M. Shtemenko, *General'nyi shtab v gody voiny*, T. 1 [The General Staff in the year years, Vol. 1 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1981), 399.

²⁰ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina*, Vol. 18 (7-1), 289. In part, Stalin declared, "Our forces in the Far East are more or less sufficient for conducting a defense, but

Stavka, and the General Staff accelerated planning for military operations in the Far East. In the summer of 1944, for example, Stalin designated Marshal of the Soviet Union Vasilevsky, the chief of the General Staff, as future Far Eastern Theater commander.²¹ Throughout 1944 the *Stavka* and General Staff beefed up their force in the Far East with reinforcements from the West that increased Red Army strength in the region to 75 division equivalents on 1 July 1944 and, thereafter, 80 and 82 equivalents on 1 January and 1 April 1945.²² On this basis alone, the Red Army approached the threshold force for conducting offensive operations in the region by early 1944. By the time the war in Western Europe ended on 9 May 1945, Red Army forces in the Far East numbered 1,185,000 men.²³

As Soviet planning for a transition from defense to offense in the Far East accelerated, in late September 1944, Stalin tasked the General Staff's Operations Directorate with drafting estimates for concentrating and logistically supporting forces necessary to conduct offensive operations against Japanese forces in Manchuria. Preliminary estimates based on assessments made by the General Staff's Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) in October placed Japanese ground strength at more than 680,000 men, including 443,000 in the Kwantung Army, 1,215 tanks, 6,700 guns and mortars, and 1,900 aircraft in Manchuria and Korea, plus another 100,000 troops on southern Sakhalin Island and the Kuril Islands. These assessments also noted Japanese efforts to improve their defenses in

for offensive operations we must increase these forces at least threefold. This can have a place when we had forced Germany to capitulate. Then – [there can be] a general front against Japan.

²¹ A. M. Vasilevsky, *Delo vsej zhizhni* (Life's work) (Moscow: Politizdat, 1973), 496.

²² See *Boevoi sostav Sovetskoi Armii (ianvar'–dekabr' 1944 goda) (ianvar'–sentiabr' 1945 goda)*, *Chast IV, V* [The combat composition of the Soviet Army (January–December 1944 and January–September 1945), Parts IV and V (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1988 and 1990)].

²³ *IVMV*, 184.

Manchuria by constructing 17 fortified regions with substantial permanent fortifications.²⁴

During the fall of 1944, the Red Army General Staff focused its attentions on logistical problems, since, in the final analysis, logistics was the overriding constraint that limited the size of the force that the Soviets could commit against the Kwantung Army. To improve its logistical posture, the Soviet government initiated preliminary discussions with representatives of the United States and Great Britain regarding additional Lend-Lease aid to support Soviet preparations for hostilities against Japan. Logistical support for specific Red Army operations in Manchuria figured prominently in these conversations.²⁵

The most important of these discussions took place in Moscow during October 1944, when Stalin and his military planners met with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, his Foreign Minister, Anthony Eden, and US observers, Ambassador Averill Harriman and General John Deane, the head of the US Military Mission to Moscow. On 16 October, Stalin and Antonov responded to questions Harriman and Deane asked regarding how long after Germany's capitulation could the Soviet Union join the war against Japan, how long would it take for the Red Army to begin offensive operations, and to what degree could the Trans-Siberian Railroad support the offensive against Japan? Stalin and Antonov answered by stating that, "The Soviet Union has 30 divisions and 19 rifle brigades stationed in the Far East against 24 Japanese divisions and 42 brigades located in Manchuria and Korea," the transfer of the required 30 additional divisions to the Far East would take 2.5–3 months, and "the Soviet

²⁴ A. A. Grechko, ed. *Osvoboditel'naia missiia sovetskikh vooruzhennykh sil vo Vtoroi Mirovoi voine* [The liberation mission of the Soviet armed forces in the Second World War] (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1974), 414–415.

²⁵ See Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina*, Vol. 18 (7-1), 289–294 for the contents of these notes between the US, Great Britain, and Soviet authorities, including Stalin himself, as well as figures related to the scale of Lend-Lease support.

Union can strike a blow several months after the destruction of Germany.”²⁶

Although his answer was positive, Stalin clearly low-balled the strength figure of his forces in the Far East by more than half since, not counting artillery and engineers, the Trans-Baikal and Far East Fronts fielded 78 division equivalents in October 1944. Furthermore, since Stalin and Antonov claimed the load capacity of the Trans-Siberian was too limited to sustain so large a military operation, “it was necessary to supply our Far Eastern Armies from the United States via Petropavlovsk on Kamchatka Peninsula and Vladivostok.” Subsequent sessions ironed out logistical matters within the Lend-Lease program, prompting Stalin ultimately to declare he could commence operations in Manchuria three months after Germany capitulated.

The “Big Three” heads of state and their representatives next met once again at Yalta in the Crimea from 7–12 February 1945. There, they formalized agreements negotiated in Moscow the previous October. During this conference, in a meeting between Stalin and Roosevelt on 8 February, the former asked about the political conditions associated with the USSR’s entry into the war. According to the Soviet transcript of the discussion, “Roosevelt responded that the southern part of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands would be given to the Soviet Union.”²⁷ The day before the Yalta Conference ended, on 11 February Roosevelt and Stalin signed an agreement announcing the Soviet Union’s intent to enter the war with Japan, which in part, read:

²⁶ Eronin, *Strategicheskaja peregrupirovka*, 11, quoting from the transcript of the conference. Actually, the Trans-Baikal Front fielded 15 divisions (10 rifle, 2 motorized rifle, 2 tank, and 1 cavalry), 3 separate rifle regiments, and 2 fortified regions in October 1944 and the Far East Front, 21 divisions (20 rifle and 1 cavalry), 44 brigades (22 rifle and 20 tank), and 17 Fortified Regions, for a total force of 78 division equivalents. See *Boevoi sostav Sovetskoj Armii*, Part IV, 304–306.

²⁷ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina*, Vol. 18 (7-1,) 295.

The leaders of the three great powers—the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain—agree that the Soviet Union will join the war against Japan on the side of the Allies two–three months after the capitulation of Germany and the end of the war in Europe, under the conditions:

- 1. Maintenance of the status quo in Outer Mongolia (the Mongolian Peoples' Republic);*
- 2. Restoration of the rights belonging to Russia which were disrupted by the treacherous invasion of Japan in 1904, namely:*
 - a) The return to the Soviet Union of the southern part of Sakhalin Island and all adjacent islands;*
 - b) The internationalization of commerce of the port of Darien, with protecting of the preferential interest of the Soviet Union in this port and the restoration of the lease in Port Arthur as a military base of the USSR;*
 - c) The joint exploitation of the Chinese-Eastern Railroad and the Southern Manchurian Railroad which gives access to Dairen...; and*
- 3. Transfer of the Kuril Islands to the Soviet Union....²⁸*

Planning the War in the Far East

In addition to its diplomatic aspects regarding Europe and the Far East, the Yalta Conference marked the beginning of advanced Soviet planning for the Manchurian offensive. Since previous books have detailed operational and logistical planning for subsequent operations in the Far East, this section simply highlights new aspects of this planning revealed by recently-released Soviet archival documents

²⁸ Ibid., 295–296.

(see Appendix 1 for *Stavka* and General Staff directives and reports related to the Manchurian offensive). Beginning in late February, the General Staff approved plans for deploying forces and material to the Far East, in particular self-propelled and antitank guns, which it sent out by month's end. Several weeks later, on 19 March the State Defense Committee (GKO) decided to reinforce air defenses in the Far East and Trans-Baikal region.

Shortly thereafter, Soviet state organs issued a steady stream of orders improving its military posture in the region. For example, on 19 March the *Stavka* created its third strategic grouping in the region by removing the Coastal Group of Forces (with 1st Red Banner and 15th Armies) from the Far East Front's control and subordinating it, plus a new 35th Army, directly to its control.²⁹ Then, on 26 March the *Stavka* issued new orders to the Far Eastern Front and the Coastal Group of Forces concerning the concealment and protection of its force deployments, especially the Trans-Siberian railroad through their sectors. To do so, it authorized offensive operations by the two headquarters to seize the Japanese fortified regions at Fuchin on the Sungari River, at Paoching on the Naoli River, and at Hutou on the Ussuri River.³⁰ Other directives ordered the Trans-Baikal Front to create 12th Air Army (29 March), the Trans-Baikal and Far Eastern Fronts to form PVO (Air Defense) armies (4 April), dispatched 800 new ZIS-3 76-mm antitank guns to all divisions in the Far Eastern Front and Coastal Group of Forces (26 April), and nine new SU-76 self-propelled artillery battalions to the Coastal Group of Forces for each of its divisions (10 May) and nine more to the Trans-Baikal Front for its new 39th Army (11 May). To provide political context for all of these

²⁹ V. A. Zolotarev, ed, *Russkii arkhiv: Velikaia Otechestvennaia: Stavka VGK. Dokumenty i materialy 1944–1945. T. 16 (5-4)* [The Russian archives: The Great Patriotic: *Stavka VGK. Documents and materials 1944–1945. Vol. 16 (5-4)* (Moscow: "TERRA," 1999), .212–213. Hereafter cited as Zolotarev, "*Stavka 1944–1945*," with appropriate pages.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 215–216.

military planning measures, on 5 April the Soviet government renounced its neutrality pact with Japan.³¹

Reinforcements sent to the Far East during this period included:

- **20 April** – The headquarters, Reserve Front, from Iaroslavl' to the Far East.
- **3 May** – The 5th Army (General Krylov) from the Königsberg region to the Coastal Group of Forces in Voroshilov.
- **10-11 May** – The 39th Army (General Luidnikov) from the 3rd Belorussian Front to the Trans-Baikal Front.
- **3 June** – The 53rd Army (General Managarov), 6th Guards Tank Army (General Kravchenko) and 5th Artillery Penetration Corps, with 604 tanks and 195 SU-100 SP guns, to the Trans-Baikal Front.
- **5 June** – 952 T-34 tanks and 162 SU-100 SP guns sent or to be sent to the Coastal Group of Forces for its 10th Mechanized Corps and separate tank brigades.
- **20 June** – The 59th Cavalry Division and 2nd, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Mongolian Cavalry Divisions to the Trans-Baikal Front.
- **22 June** – The 7th Bomber Aviation Corps and 54th Bomber Aviation Division to the Trans-Baikal Front and 19th Bomber Aviation Corps to the Far Eastern Front and Coastal Group of Forces.

Operational planning for the Manchurian offensive peaked on 28 June 1945, the day after Stalin, the *Stavka*, and the Soviet State Defense Committee reportedly approved the General Staff's concept of operations for operations in the Far East. That day the *Stavka* issued directives to its three subordinate headquarters in Manchuria that updated the 26 March 1945 directives by spelling out the aims, missions, and concepts of operations for the armies subordinate to each headquarters:

³¹ Ibid., 272–273.

- **Far Eastern Front** (*Stavka* directive No. 11112) – complete all offensive preparations by 1 August. **Aim** – cooperate actively with the forces of the Trans-Baikal Front and Coastal Group of Forces to defeat the Kwantung Army and capture the Harbin region.
 - **15th Army** and the **Amur Flotilla** will conduct an offensive along the Sungari axis, force the Amur River, capture the Tungchiang Fortified Region, and reach the Chiamussu region by the 23rd day of the operation. Subsequently, advance along the Sungari River toward Harbin.
 - **2nd Red Banner Army** and **5th Rifle Corps** will reliably defend the state border, while 5th Rifle Corps will attack along the Jaoho axis to assist 15th Army's advance to Fuchin and Chiamussu and the advance of the Coastal Group's right wing toward Paoching.
 - **16th Army** will defend Sakhalin Island against ground or sea attack.³²
- **Coastal Group of Forces** (*Stavka* directive No. 11113) – complete all offensive preparations by 25 July. **Aim** – invade central Manchuria, along with the forces of the Trans-Baikal and Far Eastern Front, defeat the Japanese Kwantung Army, and capture Harbin, Changchun, and Chongjin.
 - **1st Red Banner** and **5th Armies** will conduct the main attack (with 6 and 12 divisions, respectively, one mechanized corps, and one cavalry division), penetrate the enemy's defenses along a 12-kilometer-wide front north of Grodekovo and advance toward Muleng and Mutanchiang, with the immediate mission of reaching the Poli, Ninguta, and Sanchaku Station front by the 23rd day of the operation and, subsequently, the main forces will advance toward Harbin and Changchun to reach the Harbin, Changchun, Antu, and Unggi front.

³² Zolotarev, "Stavka 1944-1945," 245.

- **35th Army** will conduct a secondary attack with 3 rifle divisions along the Lesozavod axis toward Mishan to protect the Coastal Group of Forces' right flank, capture the Hutou Fortified Region and, in cooperation with part of 1st Red Banner Army's forces, capture the Mishan region and the Mishan Fortified Region.
- **25th Army** will protect the Coastal Group of Forces' left flank, block enemy reserves from moving through the ports of northern Korea, allocate part of its forces to tie down the enemy opposite its right wing and 5th Army's left wing, and attack with 3 rifle divisions from the Barabash, Kraskino, and Slavianka region toward Hunch'un and Ant'u to capture the northern Korean ports of Unggi, Chongjin, and Nanjin.³³
- **Trans-Baikal Front** (*Stavka* directive No. 11114) – prevent Japanese troops from entering Soviet territory by a reliable defense, protect Mongolia and the regrouping of forces into the region, especially by rail, and without waiting for the full concentration of 53rd Army's forces, complete all preparation for an offensive into Manchuria by 25 July. **Aim** – conduct a decisive offensive into central Manchuria along with the forces of the Far Eastern Front and the Coastal Group of Forces, defeat the Japanese Kwantung Army, and capture Chihfeng, Mukden, Changchun, and Chalantun. Exploit surprise and employ mobile formations, first and foremost 6th Guards Tank Army, to achieve a rapid advance.
 - **39th, 53rd, and 17th Armies** (with 9, 9, and 3 rifle divisions, respectively) and **6th Guards Tank Army** (with 2 mechanized and 1 tank corps) will conduct the main attack on a broad front to envelop the Halung-Arshaan Fortified Region from the south and advance toward Changchun, with the immediate mission to destroy the opposing

³³ Ibid., 246.

enemy, force the Grand Khingan Mountains, and reach the Dabanshan, Lupei, and Solun front by the 15th day of the operation.

- **39th Army** will attack with one rifle corps from the Hamar-Daba region [northward] toward Hailar to link up with 36th Army. Together with 36th Army, it will prevent the enemy from withdrawing to the Grand Khingan Mountains, destroy the Japanese Hailar grouping, and capture the Hailar region.
- **6th Guards Tank Army**, operating in the main attack sector toward Changchun, will force the Grand Khingans by the tenth day of the operation and fortify the passes through the mountains and until the arrival of the main infantry forces, prevent enemy reserves from reaching the area from central and southern Manchuria, and, subsequently, with the front's main forces, reach the Chihfeng, Mukden, Changchun, and Chalantun region.
- The **Mongolian Peoples' Army**, reinforced by two motorized brigades and 59th Cavalry Division, will attack from the Hongor Ula somon, Huduyin-khid, and Shen Dariganga-solon toward Kalgan and Dolonnor to tie down enemy forces, reach the Stavka kniazia, Tsun Sinitvaia, Stavka kniazh, Barui Sunitvan, and Huade region, and subsequently, capture the Dolonnor and Kalgan regions. Begin this attack two to three days after the beginning of the front's offensive.
- **36th Army's** main forces will force the Argun River in the vicinity of Duroi, Starotsuruhaiti, and Novotsuruhaiti and attack Hailar, with the immediate mission, together with 39th Army, to prevent the enemy from withdrawing to the Grand Khingans, destroy the Japanese Hailar grouping, and capture Hailar and the Hailar Fortified Region. The army's remaining forces will defend the state borders and prepare to envelop the Chailanor-Manchuli Fortified Region from

the south in the direction of Dashimak and Hailar and link up with the army's main forces in the Hailar region. Subsequently, the army's main forces will cross the Grand Khingans and capture Chalantun.³⁴

Thereafter, the *Stakva* continued reinforcing its forces in the Far East (see Appendix 1 for specifics) and, more importantly, set about creating a command and control structure capable of orchestrating a complex offensive in a complete theater of military operations. Here, Stalin built upon and improved the system of "Main Commands of Strategic Directions (Axes)," which he had instituted in July 1941 but abolished in late 1942 because it did not function properly. Key to this effort was the arrival of Marshal of the Soviet Union A. M. Vasilevsky, the former chief of the Red Army General Staff, in Chita, Siberia, on 5 July.³⁵ Vasilevsky, who Stalin had already unofficially designated as his future High Commander of Forces in the Far East, then worked with an operational group of the General Staff led by Colonel General of Tank Forces I. D. Vasil'ev, which the *Stavka* had already dispatched to the region to work out the complex details associated with the creation of a new and full-fledged High Command. The work done by this operational group, as well as other internal operations of the General Staff in this and other regions, remains very obscure.

In any event, Stalin appointed Marshal Vasilevsky to his new post as High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East on 30 July, with an effective date of 1 August.³⁶ On the day he accepted his command, Vasilevsky recommended the creation of three fronts in the Far East by transforming the Coastal Group of Forces into a 1st Far Eastern Front and renaming the Far Eastern Front the 2nd Far Eastern Front.³⁷ At the same time, Vasilevsky also asked Stalin to convert Vasil'ev's Operation Group into the headquarters of the new Far East High

³⁴ Ibid., 247–248.

³⁵ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945*, Vol. 18 (7-1), 336.

³⁶ Zolotarev, "Stavka 1944–1945," 248–249.

³⁷ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945*, Vol. 18 (7-1), 336–337.

Command. Stalin approved all three measures 24 hours later.³⁸ On 3 August, as part of his first situation report, Vasilevsky recommended his forces move into concentration areas by the morning of 5 August and commence military operations on the night of 9–10 August and the morning of the 10th, which was later adjusted to the night of 10–11 August and the morning of the 11th.³⁹ The *Stavka* then prescribed new boundary lines between Vasilevsky's three fronts and implemented a variety of necessary measures for coordinating military operations when they actually took place.

Among the final preparatory measures taken by the *Stavka* and Vasilevsky was the decision to accelerate the offensive, probably because of the US's employment of a new atomic bomb to destroy the Japanese city of Hiroshima on 6 August. Accordingly, at 1630 hours on 7 August, the *Stavka* directed Vasilevsky to commence military operations at 2400 hours on 9 August, 48 hours before originally planned.⁴⁰ The next day, 8 August, Vasilevsky issued a declaration of a military posture in the Far East and, in Moscow, V. M. Molotov, Peoples' Commissar for Foreign Affairs, accepted the Japanese Ambassador in his office and handed him a declaration of war, which was to take effect the next day.⁴¹

The War in the Far East, August–September 1945

Since the course of the ensuing war, operationally, is covered by other books in minute detail, this section pertains primarily to diplomatic aspects of the conflict, in particular, the negotiations and maneuvers by Stalin and representatives of the Allied powers as they shaped the form and nature of the ensuing peace. Central to this matter was the question of "to which power were the

³⁸ Zolotarev, "*Stavka* 1944–1945," 249.

³⁹ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945*, Vol. 18 (7-1), 337–338.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 341. See also two other associated directives to the other fronts in the Far Eastern High Command.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 323, and for a copy of the declaration, 345–346.

Japanese to surrender in all of the regions seized by the Allies, in particular, as related to territories seized by Soviet forces.” The deliberations and agreements negotiated by the “Big-Three” Allies at Teheran in November 1943, at Yalta in February 1945, and at Potsdam in July and August 1945, whereby the Soviet Union agreed to invade Japanese-occupied Manchuria in August 1945, provided context for these deliberations and maneuvers. In addition to discussing the surrender and joint occupation of Germany by the three powers, these three conferences, together with meetings held at Moscow in October 1944, addressed surrender procedures to be followed in regard to Japanese forces and the nature and scope of postwar occupations zones in Japan and the territories it conquered in the war.

Otherwise, Stalin’s aim in joining the war against Japan was thoroughly consonant with his war aims in Europe. In short, by joining in the war against Japan, in addition to increased prestige generated by supporting the United States, the Soviet dictator hoped to expand Soviet power and influence in the Far East. He hoped to do this, first, by vanquishing the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria and ultimately turning the region over the Chinese Communist rule; second, to participate in the liberation of Japanese-occupied Korea, as well as Japanese territories on Sakhalin Islands, the Kuril Islands, and elsewhere if opportunities arose; and, third, if possible, to occupy parts of the Japanese Home Islands so as to participate actively in the administration of occupied Japan after war’s end. To this end, in addition to planning operations against Japanese forces in Manchuria, Korea, and on Sakhalin Island (Karafuto) and in the Kuril Islands, Stalin held out hope for an opportunity to participate in the conquest of at least part of Hokkaido Island. However, it appears that Stalin consistently concealed this third intention from his Allies until operations in Manchuria were nearing an end and also kept

operations against Hokkaido planned but only on an “on order” basis.⁴²

Target Hokkaido Revisited

Detailed examination of the directives, orders, and reports issued by the *Stavka*, the High Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East, and headquarters subordinate to the latter, together with correspondence within each of and between the “Big-Three” powers, provides enough information to construct a general timeline in 1945 associated with Soviet planning for operations against the Kuril Islands and Hokkaido (see Appendix 2 for the detailed timeline and sources). As described above, as was the case with plans the *Stavka* advanced on 16 March 1942, 27 July 1943, and 26 March 1945, the final orders it issued to the Far Eastern High Command on 27–28 June 1945, made no mention of any operations against Hokkaido.

Less than a week later, almost certainly in reaction to the US use of an atomic bomb against the city of Hiroshima on 6 August, in accordance with a directive the *Stavka* issued early in the day, on 7

⁴² For details about the Soviet planning and conduct of the Manchurian offensive, see David M. Glantz, *The Soviet Strategic Offensive in Manchuria, 1945 ‘August Storm’* (London: Frank Cass, 2003). This volume contains details about the planning for and postponement of the Soviet invasion of Hokkaido on pp. 301–307. This paper simply elaborates on the materials found in these pages based on Russian archival releases since the year 2000 and US State Department records. What historians do not yet know are what oral arrangements were negotiated by Roosevelt and Stalin but not put on paper. Stalin’s actions in August and September indicate he was clearly piqued in regard to Truman’s proposals concerning the occupation of Japanese territory, especially Truman’s rejection of his occupation of Hokkaido and participation in at least a three-power occupation of Japan. Other recent Russian books on the war in the Far East include: A. Aleksandrov, *Velikaia pobeda na Dal’nem vostoke: Avgust 1945 goda: ot Zabaikal’ia do Koreu* [The great victory in the Far East: August 1945: From Trans-Baikal to Korea] (Moscow: “Veche,” 2004); A. B. Shirokorad, *Dal’nevostochnyi final* [The Far Eastern finale] (Moscow: Tranzitkniga, 2005); and I. N. Ban’kovskaia, et al., eds., *Sovetsko-japonskaia voina 9 avgusta–2 sentiabria 1945 g. Rassekrechennye arkhivy* [The Soviet-Japanese War 9 August–2 September 1945. The declassified archives] (Moscow: BIMPA, 2006).

August Vasilevsky ordered his three fronts and the Pacific Fleet to commence offensive operations at dawn on 9 August, two days earlier than planned. To support this massive offensive, on the 8th the High Commander directed his Air Forces to precede the ground offensive with heavy bombing strikes against the Manchurian cities of Harbin and Changchung (Hsingking). This frenetic activity in early August culminated on the 9th with the full-scale invasion of Manchuria, which began just as the US dropped its second atomic bomb on Nagasaki.

As the Soviet offensive developed at breakneck speed around the entire periphery of Manchuria, in the United States, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC), which was responsible for coordinating diplomatic and military aspects of the war, issued a report (subsequently numbered SWNCC 21/5) on 11 August, which contained the so-called General Order No. 1. Among other things, this order indicated to whom Japanese forces in each and every region were to surrender. Unfortunately, this order inadvertently failed to mention surrender procedures pertaining to the Kuril Islands, a mistake that, by offering Stalin an opening to demand expanded Soviet influence in the Far East, unleashed a spate of disagreements between the United States and the Soviet Union.⁴³

When the US Joint Chiefs of Staff reviewed this document on 14 August, they recommended revising General Order No. 1 to include provisions for the surrender on the Kuril Islands. However, they left this matter up to “the President to inform the Allied Powers of our intentions,” adding, “On the matter of the Kurils, the United States and Russian Chiefs of Staff have agreed to a boundary line between the areas of operations which pass through the Onnekotan Straits, with Admiral Nimitz receiving the surrender of the Kuril Islands south of this line.”⁴⁴ This left the Soviets with only the three northernmost

⁴³ See, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1945, Volume VI, The British Commonwealth, The Far East* (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1969), 634–637.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 657–659.

islands, Shumshir [Shumshu], Paramoshiri [Paramushir], and Onnekotan [Onekotan], while the large islands of Simushir, Urup, Iturup, and Kunishir, together with many smaller islands, remained in the US surrender zone.

Exploiting this obvious opening, on 16 August Stalin dispatched a message to President Truman recommending Order No. 1 be altered to grant the Soviet the rights to accept Japanese surrenders in the Kuril Islands and the northern half of Hokkaido. This message read:

1. To include in the region of surrender of Japanese armed forces to Soviet troops all the Kuril Islands, which, in accordance with the decisions of the three powers in the Crimea, have to come into possession of the Soviet Union.

2. To include in the region of surrender of Japanese armed forces to Soviet troops the Northern part of the Island Hokkaido which adjoins in the north to the La Pérouse Strait, which is between Karafuto and Hokkaido. The demarcation line between the Northern and Southern half of the Hokkaido Island should be on the line leading from the city Kushiro on the Eastern coast of the Island to the city Rumoe on the Western coast of the Island including the named cities into the Northern half of the Island....⁴⁵

The *Stavka* quickly notified Lieutenant General K. N. Derevianko, its representative at General MacArthur's headquarters, about this new development. In a directive it issued to Derevianko at 1615 hours on 17 August, it informed him that the Soviet government had accepted the provisions of General Order 1, but:

[W]ith the proviso that it considers the Liaotung Peninsula with the ports of Darien and Port Arthur to be within the limits of Manchuria, and, in addition, demands the following regions in which all ground, air, and auxiliary Japanese forces must be taken prisoner

⁴⁵ Ibid., 667–668.

*by Soviet forces – the Kuril Islands and the northern half of Hokkaido north of a line running from the city of Kusiro to the city of Rumoe, while including both indicated cities in the Soviet region. You are obliged to insist on the fulfillment of this demand of the Soviet government before General MacArthur.*⁴⁶

Adding fuel to the growing fire, the *Stavka* also insisted that Derevianko “present to General MacArthur the question of the Soviet Union’s government concerning any sort of stationing zone for Soviet troops in Tokyo.”⁴⁷

President Truman responded to Stalin’s note sharply but diplomatically on 17 August. While agreeing to Stalin’s request “to modify General Order No. 1 to include all the Kuril Islands to the area to be surrendered to the Commander in Chief of the Soviet Forces in the Far East,” he added forcefully and categorically, “Regarding your suggestion as to the surrender of Japanese forces on the Island Hokkaido to Soviet forces, it is my intention and arrangements have been made for the surrender of Japanese forces on all of the islands of Japan proper, Hokkaido, Honshu, Shekoku, and Kyushu, to General MacArthur.”⁴⁸

Within the context of these exchanges of messages between Stalin and Truman, with Stalin’s obvious encouragement, the *Stavka* and Vasilevsky’s High Command set the wheels in motion for not only operations against the Kurils but also efforts to seize at least part of Hokkaido Island. Within the brief span of four days (18–21 August), Vasilevsky and the commander of the Pacific Fleet made arrangements to capture the northern half of Hokkaido Island with an amphibious operation conducted by the 87th Rifle Corps (ultimately three rifle divisions and one rifle brigade) and with strong air

⁴⁶ See, Zolotarev, “*Stavka* 1944–45,” 251–252.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 252.

⁴⁸ See, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1945, Volume VI*, 670.

support.⁴⁹ Once these preparations were nearing completion, Vasilevsky notified the *Stavka* at 0800 hours on 20 August, "With your approval, we can begin the naval operation here immediately after occupying the southern part of Sakhalin Island, on approximately 22 August 1945." Then, taking care that he did not exceed his mandate, at 1115 hours on the 21st, Vasilevsky informed his subordinate headquarters that the Hokkaido operation, together with operations against the southern Kurils, could begin "only after the *Stavka* designates the time."⁵⁰

However, these bold military preparations came to an abrupt halt on 22 August, when diplomacy trumped military action. In the

⁴⁹ On 9 August 1945, 87th Rifle Corps consisted of Major General A. O. Muratov's 342nd and Colonel V. V. P'iankov's 345th Rifle Divisions. By 20 August, however, it was restructured to include Muratov's 342nd, Major General B. L. Vinogradov's 264th, and Colonel S. G. Abbakumov's 355th Rifle Divisions and 113th Separate Rifle Brigade. Fighting under 1st Far Eastern Front's 35th Army, Vinogradov's 264th Rifle had distinguished itself by capturing the Japanese Hutou Fortified Region with one of its regiments and advancing to seize Hulin and the Mishan Fortified Region. Abbakumov's 355th Rifle had helped seize the Korean port of Chongjin on 16 August and later participated in 87th Rifle Corps' operations to clear Japanese forces from southern Sakhalin, a process that lasted until 25 August, three days longer than planned. Because Abbakumov failed to display "commander's exactingness toward his unit commanders and required control," he was removed from his command in November 1945. See *Velikaia Otechestvennaia. Voennyi bibliograficheskii slovar'. Tom III. Komandiry strelkovykh, gornostrelkovykh divizii, krymskikh, poliarnykh, petrozavodskikh divizii, divizii rebol'skogo napravleniia, istrebitel'nykh divizii* [The Great Patriotic. A military-biographical dictionary. Volume III. The commanders of rifle and mountain rifle divisions, Crimean, Polar, and Petrozavodsk divisions, divisions of the Rebol' axis, and destroyer divisions] (Moscow: Kuchovo pole, 2014), 16. Finally, 113th Separate Rifle Brigade took part in capturing the ports of Toro and Maoka on southern Sakhalin Island on 20 August and then joined General Ksenofontov's 87th Rifle Corps in clearing Japanese from southern Sakhalin Island.

⁵⁰ See, Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina*, Vol. 18 (7-1), 355–356, 363–365; Vol. 18 (7-2), 36–40, and 42. However, it took until 25 August for 87th Rifle Corps to clear Japanese forces from southern Sakhalin, a fact that certainly influenced Stalin's decision to cancel the invasion of Hokkaido.

diplomatic sphere, Stalin responded to President Truman's letter of 18 August on the 22nd by expressing "understanding ... in the sense that you refuse to satisfy the request of the Soviet Union for the inclusion of the Northern part of the Island Hokkaido in the region of surrender of the Japanese armed forces to the Soviet troops." However, Stalin qualified his apparent "surrender" by adding, "I have to say that I and my colleagues did not expect such an answer from you" and quickly but spitefully refused Truman's request for an air base in the Kurils, first, because it contravened agreements reached in the Crimea (Yalta) and, second, because "demands of such a nature are usually laid before either a conquered state, or such an allied state which is in no position to defend with its own means certain part of its territory." Since Stalin did "not believe that the Soviet Union could be included among such states," he implied such a request was humiliating and not understandable.⁵¹

Despite Stalin's petulant diplomatic response, the military actions he took seem conciliatory. At 1455 hours on the 22nd, at Stalin's direction, Vasilevsky issued a directive order to the High Commander of the Pacific Fleet postponing (*otsrochka*) the amphibious operation against Hokkaido Island and the southern islands of the Kuril chain.⁵² However, although the Russian source revealing this directive terms the action a "postponement," the directive's actual wording was less definitive:

It is necessary to refrain [vozhderzhat'sia] from the amphibious operation from Sakhalin Island to Hokkaido Island until receipt of a special Stavka order. The transfer of 87th Rifle Corps to Sakhalin Island will continue.

In connection with the declarations of the Japanese about readiness to capitulate in the Kuril Islands, I request you think over the matter of the possibilities of transferring the lead

⁵¹ See, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1945, Volume VI*, 687–688.

⁵² See, Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina*, Vol. 18 (7-2), 43.

*divisions of 87th Rifle Corps from Sakhalin Island to the southern Kuril Islands (Kunashir and Ituroop), while passing Hokkaido Island. I request you report your views on this matter to me no later than the morning of 23 August 1945.*⁵³

In short, this wording implies that Vasilevsky, thinking that this “postponement” was distinctly temporary, was actually willing to “expand the envelope” of Soviet demands.

Although we do not know how the commander of the Pacific Fleet responded to Vasilevsky's directive, on 23 August an obviously pleased Vasilevsky was able to inform the *Stavka*, “the massive capitulation of Japanese forces in the northern part of the Kuril Islands had begun,” with all of Shumshu and the northern part of Paramushir due to be occupied on 23 August, the southern half of Paramushir on 24 August, and the group of small islands south of Paramushir on 25 August. Indicating that the Hokkaido matter was still “on hold,” Vasilevsky added, “The operation on Hokkaido will be begun only after [receipt] of your additional order, and until then not a single boat will be sent there.”⁵⁴

By this time Stalin's messages to Truman were clearly generating uncertainty in US ranks concerning Soviet intentions. Attesting to this growing concern, at 1125 hours on 23 August, W. Averell Harriman, the US Ambassador in the Soviet Union, notified the US Secretary of State “I believe I should stay on [in Moscow] until the control machinery for Japan has been agreed upon” because “I have a feeling that we may have some trouble with the Soviets over the setup which I understand we intend to establish particularly in regard to Soviet forces used for occupation of Japan under General MacArthur as Supreme Commander.” Citing his own objection to having MacArthur share such responsibilities with Vasilevsky, which ultimately prompted the Soviets to withdraw the proposal, Harriman evidenced his suspicions, stating:

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 45.

“I feel that the Soviets will come up again with further proposals that the Soviets have a zone of occupation with independent command or in some other way obtain for themselves a position where they can block our program if it does not meet with their approval. I sincerely hope that we will stand firm on what I understand is our plan and if we do, I am confident the Soviets will accept it.”

Tellingly, Harriman added:

“The Russian pattern set in Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania is a good precedent, although I assume we would always consult them in advance on any questions of policy.... I expect also that we will have some difficulty in Korea as it is my impression the Russians want to dominate the country in spite of Stalin’s agreement that it should develop its independence through a four-power trusteeship. I believe the Russians are feeling their way out with us to see how far they can go with their unilateral objectives in the Far East.”⁵⁵

However, a message the *Stavka* sent to General Derevianko on 25 August clearly indicated that Stalin’s decision in regard to the Hokkaido invasion was irrevocable.

In a change to the instruction sent to you in [Directive] No. 11125 of 17 August 1945, do the following:

- 1. You must not raise the question about the Japanese armed forces surrendering to Soviet forces in the northern half of Hokkaido as you were instructed because President Truman denied us on this [matter].*

⁵⁵ See, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1945, Volume VI*, 689–690.

2. *You must also not raise the question about the granting to the Soviet Union of any sort of stationing zone for Soviet forces in Tokyo.*

3. *As concerns the stationing of Soviet forces on all of the Kuril Islands, you are obliged to insist before General MacArthur on the fulfillment of this demand of the Soviet government, since, according to the agreements in the Crimea (Yalta), the Kuril Islands will be turned over to our ownership.*

*[signed] Stalin, Antonov*⁵⁶

Beginning on 27 August, Vasilevsky's High Command took measures that, at the same time, ameliorated and justified Harriman's concerns. On the one hand, at 2300 hours on the 27th, Vasilevsky's chief of staff warned the commander of the Pacific Fleet, "In order to avoid creating conflicts and misunderstandings in relation to the Allies, the High Command orders: 1. Categorically forbids the dispatch of any ships and aircraft whatsoever to Hokkaido Island."⁵⁷ On the other hand, on 28 August General Meretskov, the commander of the 1st Far Eastern Front, asked the commander of the Pacific Fleet to provide transports in the port of Otomari on Sakhalin Island by 3 September to carry 355th Rifle Division of Guards Lieutenant General A. S. Ksenofontov's 87th Rifle Corps to Iturup (two regiments) and Kunashir (one regiment), and the next day directed Ksenofontov to speed up loading 113th Rifle Brigade and 355th Rifle Division at Otomari so that the former could occupy Kunashir and Shikotan Islands by 31 August and the latter Iturup and Urup Islands on 3 September.⁵⁸

In a series of reports on 30 August, the commanders of the 2nd Far Eastern Front and the Pacific Fleet informed Vasilevsky that their forces had completed occupying the northern and central Kuril

⁵⁶ *TsAMO RF*. F. 148, Op. 3763, D. 216, L. 7.

⁵⁷ See, Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945*, Vol. 18 (7-2), 245.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

Islands, from Shumshu southward to Urup by 1200 hours, Iturup by 1430 hours, and the islands of Urup, Simushir, and Ketoi by day's end.⁵⁹ Completing this process, on 1 September 1945, the Pacific Fleet's chief of staff reported to the High Command's chief of staff that its 113th Rifle Brigade had landed on Kunashir Island at 0600 hours on 1 September against no resistance.⁶⁰ Four days later, the commander of the 2nd Far Eastern Front instructed the commander of the Kamchatka Defensive Region precisely how to dispose his forces throughout the Kuril Island chain.⁶¹

Thus, President Truman's strong rejoinders compelled Stalin to abandon his hopes to gain territory on Hokkaido, by doing so also ending the Generalissimo's ardent desire to participate in the joint occupation of Japan. However, despite Truman's actions, by 1 September the Soviet Union firmly controlled the entire Kuril Island chain, including the islands of Iturup (Etorofu To), Kunashir (Kunashiri To), and Shikotan (Shikotan To), as well as the five small piles of rocks named the Habomai (Khaboman) Islands. This contradicted the comments the US Joint Chiefs of Staff made on 14 August regarding responsibilities for accepting Japanese surrenders in the southern Kurils and, then and now, Japanese sensibilities regarding who should possess the southern Kurils and Habomai Shoto, both of which they believed were not subject to Soviet seizure.

Regardless of the surrender and occupation policies that ultimately prevailed in the Far East and Japan, the discussion associated with this timeline, together with other studies of the military and diplomatic facets, the Soviet Union's Manchurian campaign highlight near-constant Soviet demands for participation in the occupation of Japan and Japanese-dominated territory.⁶² In this

⁵⁹ Ibid., 47–48.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 48.

⁶¹ Ibid., 50.

⁶² In addition to the sources cited above, the most important study concerning the situation in the Far East in 1945 is Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press

sense, like Harriman's 23 August remarks, they also reveal the close resemblance between Stalin's strategy for waging war in Europe and his strategy for doing so in the Far East. Simply stated, when Stalin perceived opportunities for expanding Soviet influence in the Far East, he exploited them to the hilt. In this case, the failure of the US SWNCC's General Order No. 1 to mention the surrender of and occupation zones in the Kuril Islands provided the "opening" Stalin willingly exploited. Although history records that President Truman succeeded in closing that "opening" in regard to Hokkaido, far fewer acknowledge Stalin's victory in the Kurils.

Conclusions and Summary Judgments

The thrust of this study is twofold. First and foremost, it argues that in war, the planning, conduct, and outcome of military operations serve as an important indicators of the motivations and

of Harvard University Press, 2005), with whose conclusions I generally agree. See also Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's War: From World War to Cold War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 294, who concludes, "Stalin evidently decided to back away from confrontation with the US over Hokkaido ..." because "operations on Sakhalin and the Kurils had shown the Japanese could put up a hard fight and might do so again to stop the Red flag being planted on Hokkaido," but "the priority of maintaining good relations with the United States is likely to have been more important in Stalin's calculation...." Dmitrii Volkogonov, in his famous work, *Trumf i trageiia. I. V. Stalin. Politicheskii portret* [Triumph and tragedy. I. V. Stalin: A political portrait] (Moscow: Agentsva pechati Novosti, 1989), agrees, writing that, "Stalin reflected: what could this step produce? It appeared to the Generalissimo, and not without basis, that this "assault attack" could lead to further exacerbation of already noticeably damaged relations with the Allies." While both Roberts and Volkogonov are generally correct, given the violation of General Order 1, Stalin had already won a bit more than merely a symbolic victory. Finally, see also V. A. Zolotarev, et al, eds., *Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina. 1941–1945. Voennistoricheskie ocherki. Kniga tret'ia. Osvobozhdenie* [The Great Patriotic war. 1941–1945. A military-historical summary. Book three. Liberation] (Moscow: "Nauka," 1999), 389–399, which cited the problems 87th Rifle Corps faced when trying to disengage from combat on Sakhalin Island but also highlights the importance of Truman's message to Stalin.

aims—be they political, economic, social, or otherwise—of each country waging war. Second, and more germane to this investigation, whether successes or failures, the military operations the Soviet (Red) Army carried out during the Soviet-German War (1941–1945) and the short Soviet–Japanese War (August–September 1945) were critically important indicators of the military strategy Josef Stalin pursued as he waged war. As a result, from the perspective of Soviet strategic and operational military planning, to varying degrees and at differing times, Stalin’s military and political aims significantly influenced the course of combat operations.

Massive amounts of recently-released Soviet archival materials, together with existing US, German, and Japanese documentation related to the Soviet Army’s conduct of combat operations now make it possible to measure relatively accurately the degree to which political aims governed Stalin’s wartime strategy. Based on examination of this material, this study has investigated the extent to which the military operations the Soviet Army conducted during the Soviet-German and Soviet-Japanese Wars were indicative of Stalin’s and the Soviet Union’s postwar territorial ambitions and international influence.

This study concludes that as early as February 1943, when he planned strategic operations, Stalin and his *Stavka* began giving serious consideration to political factors in Europe, and by July 1943 began doing so in the Far East as well. In the case of the Far East, this study concludes with several important **summary judgments** that contradict previous assessments regarding Stalin’s actions and strategic intentions in the Far East.

- **First**, beginning as early as March 1942, but far more obviously in July 1943, Stalin modified Soviet defensive plans in the Far East to include increasingly ambitious offensive missions. Collectively, by mid-1943 these plans represented a necessary framework for the grand strategic plan that fully emerged in July 1945. All that was needed to bring this plan to

fruition were the armies that Stalin dispatched eastward from May through July 1945.

- **Second**, beginning in the fall of 1942 and accelerating throughout 1943 and 1944, Stalin consciously but covertly increased the strength of Soviet forces in the Far East to levels commensurate with his evolving plans. This involved increasing the number of division-equivalents in the region from 48 in October 1941, to 53 in January 1942, 64 in July 1942, 66 on 1 January 1943, and 78 in October 1944.
- **Third**, as a corollary to his force buildup in the Far East, beginning at Teheran in 1943 but most obviously at Moscow in October 1944, and at Yalta in February 1945 as well, the dictator routinely “low-balled” his Allies in regard to the strength of his forces in the Far East—that is, understated the strength of his forces in the region. Thus, at Moscow in October 1944, Stalin informed his Allies he had 30 divisions and 19 brigades in the region at a time when the Red Army’s actual strength there was 78 division equivalents.
- **Fourth**, to a far greater extent than has been known, the *Stavka* tailored its command cadre and force structure to satisfy the specific needs of its offensive plan. For example, Front commanders Meretskov, Purkaev, and Malinovsky and army commanders such as Krylov, Beloborodov, Liudnikov, Luchinsky, and others were specifically chosen for command because of their past military experiences, as were the armies dispatched to the region from the West (5th, 39th, and 53rd Combined-Arms Armies and 6th Guards Tank Army). The most interesting of these were the senior officers Stalin appointed to command 87th Rifle Corps, the force designated to seize a foothold on Hokkaido. The corps’ commander from September 1943 to July 1945 was Major General F. Z. Borisov. However, because he lacked of combat experience, in early July he was replaced by **Lieutenant General G. I. Khetagurov**, an experienced corps commander who directed the corps’

training and preparation in July and August. Borisov then served as deputy corps commander throughout the duration of the war. Khetagurov, in turn, was replaced by **Guards Lieutenant General A. S. Ksenofontov** on 20 August. This former corps and army commander, who was a Hero of the Soviet Union and clearly had Stalin's trust, took over his politically-sensitive command at a critical point just after Stalin directed Vasilevsky to postpone the attack on Hokkaido.

So also were senior and mid-level officers, many of them General Staff, selected to perform critical functions or conduct specific operations. These included **Colonel General of Tank Forces Ivan Dmitrievich Vasil'ev**, an experienced armor officer who headed the special operational group sent to the Far East and later the key 10th Mechanized Corps; **Lieutenant General Kuz'ma Nikolaevich Derevianko**, a former intelligence officer in Northwestern Front and chief of staff of 53rd, 57th, and 4th Guards Army who led the special mission to MacArthur's headquarter; **Lieutenant General Fedor Aleksandovich Fedenko**, a key figure in the General Staff's Intelligence Department who headed intelligence operations in the Far Eastern Command and later served as liaison with Mao Tse Tung's Chinese Red Army; and Captain V. N. Leonov, who had distinguished himself in the Petsamo-Kirkenes offensive and was chosen to lead the assault on the ports of Unggi and Chongjin.

- **Fifth** and finally, Stalin's decision to enter the war against Japan in the Far East, as well as the manner in which Stalin conducted the war, militarily and diplomatically, were thoroughly consistent with the means and ends associated with his conduct of war in Europe. By entering the war against Japan in response to Allied requests, Stalin was able not only to defeat Japanese forces in Manchuria and on Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands, but also significantly expand Soviet territories and influence in the Far East. Although he failed to gain a

foothold on the main islands of Japan (Hokkaido), he extended Soviet control and influence over Manchuria and Sakhalin Island and, contrary to Allies hopes, also the northern half of Korea, the entire Kuril Island chain, and Japan's so-called "northern islands."

In short, despite the immeasurably terrible damage done to the Soviet Union economically as well as demographically by its participation in World War II, a country viewed by many as a colossal pariah before 1941 emerged from the war as one of the world's two dominant world powers.

Appendix 1 – *Stavka* Directives and Reports Related to Japan, January–September 1945

- **18 January 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 12242 – ordered the commander of the Far Eastern Front to construct a communications line for the Front to use via Iakutsk, Aian, Chumikan, and Komsomol'sk to Khabarovsk by 15 April 1945.⁶³
- **27 February 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 1143/org – directed the commander of the Far Eastern Front to form 345th and 396th Rifle Divisions using other separate rifle, artillery, and training battalions by 10 April 1945. These divisions were formed from 1408th Separate Rifle Regiment, 3rd Reserve Rifle Regiment, a regiment with a battalion of convalescents, 8th, 11th, and 20th Separate Rifle Battalions, 117th, 192nd, and 323rd Artillery Battalions, and the 22nd and 23rd Sniper Training Schools and after being filled with replacements, had a strength of 9,531 men and 1,350 horses, whereas most divisions dispatched to the Far East fielded 7,000 men.⁶⁴
- **28 February 1945**—*Stavka* directive no. 1142/2/org – notified the commander of the Far Eastern Front about the dispatch of 16 SU-76 self-propelled artillery battalions for assignment to all of his rifle divisions, plus three to the three divisions of 35th Army.⁶⁵
- **19 March 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 11046 – ordered the commander of the Far Eastern Front to allocate forces to the

⁶³ V. A. Zolotarev, ed, *Russkii arkhiv: Velikaia Otechestvennaia: General'nyi shtab v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny: Dokumenty i materialy. 1944–1945 gg. T. 23 (12-4)* [The Russian archives: The Great Patriotic: The General Staff in the Great Patriotic War: Documents and materials. 1944–1945. Vol. 23 (12-4) (Moscow: "TERRA," 2001), 598. Hereafter cited as Zolotarev, "General Staff 1944–1945," with appropriate pages.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 643.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 645.

Coastal Group of Forces to reinforce 1st Red Banner and 25th Armies and create 35th Army by 20 April, appointed General Maksimov to command the Coastal Group of Forces, and established a boundary between the Far Eastern Front and Coastal Group of Forces.⁶⁶

- **21 March 1945**—*Stavka* directives Nos. 13018 and 13019 – ordered the Far Eastern and Trans-Baikal Fronts to form the Coastal PVO, Amur PVO, and Trans-Baikal PVO Armies from resources within the Far Eastern and Trans-Baikal Fronts and formations and units sent from the West.⁶⁷
- **26 March 1945**—*Stavka* directives Nos. 11047 and 11048 – informed the Coastal Group of Forces and the Far Eastern Front about defensive actions they must take in the event of a Japanese incursion into the Far East. These measures involved both defensive and offensive operations to secure rail communications to the Far East and seize the Hutou, Fuchin (Fugdin), and Paoching (Baotsin) regions.⁶⁸
- **29 March 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 102874 – informed the Far Eastern Front about procedures for the dispatch and receipt of PVO units from the West.⁶⁹
- **29 March 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 13681/10/org – ordered the Trans-Baikal Front to form and equip the 12th Air Army by 30 June 1945.⁷⁰
- **4 April 1945**—*Stavka* directives No. 2642/3/org and 2643/3/org – ordered the Trans-Baikal Front to form the Trans-Baikal PVO Army from the Trans-Baikal PVO Zone and the Far Eastern Front to form the Coastal and Amur PVO Armies by 1 May.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Zolotarev, “*Stavka* 1944–1945,” 212–213.

⁶⁷ Zolotarev, “General Staff 1944–1945,” 662–664.

⁶⁸ Zolotarev, “*Stavka* 1944–1945,” 215–216.

⁶⁹ Zolotarev, “General Staff 1944–1945,” 667–668.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 668–669.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 675–677.

- **20 April 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 103322 – ordered the Reserve Front’s headquarters and supporting units, and rear service elements to move by rail from Iaroslavl’ to the Far East.⁷²
- **26 April 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 1194/2/org – directed the Far Eastern Front to distribute 800 new ZIS-3 76-mm model 42 antitank guns to all divisions in the Far Eastern Front and Coastal Group of Forces.⁷³
- **3 May 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 103532 – informed the Coastal Group of Forces of the dispatch to it by rail of General Krylov’s 5th Army with all of its subordinate formations, which was to arrive in Voroshilov from 19 May through 2 June. The Front was to fill out each rifle division with up to 7,000 men.⁷⁴
- **10 May 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 103614 – informed the Coastal Group of Forces about the dispatch to it of nine newly-formed SU-76-mm self-propelled artillery battalions (numbered 498th to 506th) to be assigned to each of its rifle divisions.⁷⁵
- **10 May 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 103622 – ordered the 3rd Belorussian Front’s 39th Army into the *Stavka* reserve for future transport to the Far East.⁷⁶
- **11 May 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 103632 – directed the commander of Armored and mechanized forces to dispatch nine newly-formed SU-76-mm self-propelled artillery battalions (507th through 515th) to the Trans-Baikal Front for assignment to 39th Army.⁷⁷
- **11 May 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 103633 – notified the Trans-Baikal Front about dispatch of 39th Army and 35,260

⁷² Ibid., 694–695.

⁷³ Ibid., 697.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 700–701.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 703–704.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 704–705.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 705–706.

enlisted replacement and 1,660 officers to its region from 2–29 June and to fill out rifle divisions up to 7,000 men each.⁷⁸

- **3 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 103905 – notified the Trans-Baikal Front about the dispatch to it by rail of General Managarov's 53rd Army (with 4,000 men and 163 vehicles per division), General Kravchenko's 6th Guards Tank Army (with 170 T-34 tanks), 5th Artillery Penetration Corps, 30,000 replacements, 245 T-34 tanks from factories, 186 foreign tanks (MCh-A2), and 195 SU-100 SP guns. Rifle divisions were to be filled out to 7,000 men each and the tank army to 600 tanks and 195 SP guns. Arrival times were between 20 June and 1 August.⁷⁹
- **4 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 13937 – ordered the Trans-Baikal Front to increase security for the arrival of reinforcements.⁸⁰
- **5 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 103939 – notified the Coastal Group of Forces of the dispatch to it by rail of artillery, tanks (already 264 and 516 T-34 and 63 SU-100 now, and 152 T-34 from factories and 100 T-34 from repair facilities), and motorcycle units necessary to fill out the 10th Mechanized Corps and tank brigades (with two battalions each).⁸¹
- **5 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 103940 – notified the Far Eastern Front about the arrival by rail of antitank and antiaircraft artillery from 7 July to 9 September.⁸²
- **11 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 13982 – established reporting procedures for all headquarters in the Far East.⁸³
- **20 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive no. 140045 – notified the Trans-Baikal Front of the dispatch to it of 59th Cavalry Division

⁷⁸ Ibid., 706–707.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 707–708.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 708.

⁸¹ Ibid., 708–709.

⁸² Ibid., 709–710.

⁸³ Ibid., 710–711.

and 2nd, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Mongolian Cavalry Divisions by 25 June.⁸⁴

- **22 June 1945**—*Stavka* directives Nos. 13824/10/org and 13826/10/org – notified the Trans-Baikal Front of the dispatch to it by air and rail of 54th Bomber Aviation Division, with six support detachments and companies, and 7th Bomber Aviation Corps.⁸⁵
- **22 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 13829/10/org—notified the Far Eastern Front and Coastal Group of Forces of the dispatch to it by air and rail of 19th Bomber Aviation Corps (33rd and 55th BADs).⁸⁶
- **22 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 104212 – altered rail shipping schemes to speed up movement of forces and material eastward.⁸⁷
- **27 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 14093 – ordered the Trans-Baikal Front to assign the Amur Flotilla’s Sretensk Separate River Ship Battalion to the Far Eastern Front.⁸⁸
- **28 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 11112 – updated Directive No. 11048 of 26 March by ordering the Far Eastern Front to complete all offensive preparations by 1 August for the so-called offensive along the Sungari River axis. **Aim** – achieve active cooperation with the forces of the Trans-Baikal Front and the Coastal Group of Forces to defeat the Kwantung Army and capture the Harbin region. **Mission** – conduct an offensive operation along the Sungari axis with the 15th Army in cooperation with the Amur Flotilla by forcing the Amur River, capturing the Tungchiang (Tuntszian) Fortified Region, and reach the Chiamussu region by the 23rd day of the operation. Subsequently envision operations along the Sungari River

⁸⁴ Ibid., 711–712.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 712–713.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 713.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 714.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

toward Harbin. The 2nd Red Banner Army and 5th Rifle Corps will firmly defend the state border, but envision an attack by 5th Rifle Corps along the Jaoho (Zhaokhei) axis to assist 15th Army's advance to Fuchin (Fugdin) and Chiamussu or by the right wing of the Coastal Group toward Paoching (Baotsin). The 16th Army will defend Sakhalin Island against ground or sea attack.⁸⁹

- **28 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 11113 – updated directive No. 11047 of 26 March by ordering the Coastal Group of Forces to complete all offensive preparations by 25 July for offensive operations. **Aim** – invade central Manchuria, together with the forces of the Trans-Baikal and Far Eastern Front, defeat the Japanese Kwantung Army, and capture Harbin, Changchun (Hsinking), and Chongjin (Seisin). **Mission** – deliver the main attack with the forces of two combined-arms armies (1st Red Banner and 5th Armies with 6 and 12 rifle divisions, respectively), one mechanized corps, and one cavalry division; penetrate the enemy's defenses along a 12-kilometer-wide front north of Godekovo; and attack in the general direction of Muleng (Mulin) and Mutanchiang, with the immediate mission of reaching the Poli, Ninguta, and Sanchagu Station front by the 23rd day of the operation. Subsequently operate toward Harbin and Changchun, with the aim of reaching the Harbin, Changchun, Antu, and Unggi (Ranin) front with the main forces. To secure the Coastal Group of Forces' right flank, deliver a secondary blow with the forces of 35th Army (3 rifle divisions) along the Lesozavod axis in the general direction of Mishan with the mission of capturing the Hutou Fortified Region and in, cooperation with part of the forces of 1st Red Banner Army, capture the Mishan region and subsequently, the Mishan Fortified Region. To secure the Coastal Group of Forces' left flank and block the

⁸⁹ Zolotarev, "Stavka 1944–1945," 245.

movement of enemy reserves through the ports of northern Korea, allocate part of the forces to tie down the enemy opposite 5th Army's left wing and 25th Army's right wing, and deliver a blow with 25th Army (3 rifle divisions) from the Barabash, Kraskino, and Slavianka region toward Hunch'un (Hunchun) and Ant'u with the aim of subsequently capturing the northern Korean ports of Unggi (Ranin), Chongjin (Seisin), and Nanjin (Rasin).⁹⁰

- **28 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 11114 – ordered the Trans-Baikal Front, in case of a Japanese incursion, “to prevent Japanese troops from entering Soviet territory by a reliable defense and protect Mongolia and the regrouping of forces into the region, especially by ensuring rail communications to the region. Also before the full concentration of 53rd Army's forces, complete all preparation for an offensive into Manchuria by 25 July. **Aim** – a decisive offensive into central Manchuria, together with the forces of the Far Eastern Front and the Coastal Group of Forces, the defeat of the Japanese Kwantung Army, and the capture of Chihfeng (Chifyn), Mukden, Changchun, and Chalantun (Putehachi). Base the operation on a surprise strike and the use of the front's mobile formations, first and foremost 6th Guards Tank Army, for a rapid advance forward. Deliver the main attack with the forces of three combined-arms armies (39th Army with 9 rifle divisions, 53rd Army with 9 rifle divisions, and 17th Army with 3 rifle divisions) and one tank army (6th Guards Tank Army with 2 mechanized and 1 tank corps) to envelop the Halung-Arshaan Fortified Region from the south in the general direction of Changchun. Commit the armies on a broad front with the immediate mission of destroying the opposing enemy, forcing the Grand Khingan Mountains, and reaching the Dabanshan (Balin'iutsi), Lupei, and Solun front by the 15th

⁹⁰ Ibid., 246.

day of the operation. Attack from the Hamar-Daba region with one rifle corps of 39th Army toward Hailar to link up with 36th Army with the mission, together with 36th Army, to prevent the enemy from withdrawing to the Grand Khingan Mountains, destroy the Japanese Hailar grouping, and capture the Hailar region. The 6th Guards Tank Army, while operating in the main attack sector in the general direction of Changchun, will force the Grand Khingans by the 10th day of the operation and fortify the passes through the mountains and, until the arrival of the main infantry forces, prevent enemy reserves from reaching the area from central and southern Manchuria. Subsequently, envision reaching the Chihfeng (Chyfin), Mukden, Changchun, and Chalantun region with the front's main forces. **Deliver secondary attacks** – The Mongolian Peoples' Army, reinforced by two motorized brigades and 59th Cavalry Division, will attack from the Hongor Ula somon, Huduyin-khid, and Shen Dariganga-solon toward Kalgan (Changchia'kou) and Dolon Nor (Dolonnor), with the mission of tying down enemy forces on those axes and reaching the Stavka kniazia, Tsun Sinitvaia, Stavka kniazh, Barui Sunitvan, and Huade region. Subsequently capture the Dolonnor and Kalgan regions. Begin this attack 2–3 days after the beginning of the front's offensive. The main forces of 36th Army will force the Argun River in the vicinity of Duroi, Starotsuruhaiti, and Novotsuruhaiti and attack Hailar with the immediate missions, together with 39th Army, of preventing the enemy from withdrawing to the Grand Khingans, destroying the Japanese Hailar grouping, and capturing Hailar and the Hailar Fortified Region. The remaining force will defend the state borders and be prepared to envelop the Chailanor-Manchuli Fortified Region from the south in the direction of Dashimak and Hailar and link up with the army's main forces in the Hailar region. Subsequently, force the

Grand Khingans with the army's main forces and capture Chalantun.⁹¹

- **30 June 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 4152/4/org – ordered the Coastal Group of Forces to form seven tank brigades (with 1,354 men and 65 tanks each, with two battalions of T-34 and one of older models) from local resources.⁹²
- **2 July 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 14150 – ordered the Far Eastern Front and Coastal Group of Forces to transfer three rifle divisions from 2nd Red Banner Army to the Coastal Group of Forces.⁹³
- **5 July 1945**—report by Marshal Vasilevsky (code-named Vasil'ev) that he arrived in the town of Chita at 0100 hours and was assuming his responsibilities. He also reported that Marshal Malinovsky (code-named Morozov) arrived the day before.⁹⁴
- **7 July 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 14204 – directed the Trans-Baikal Front to provide one tank brigade with T-34 tanks to the Mongolian Group of Forces.⁹⁵
- **12 July 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 13863/10/org – informed the Trans-Baikal Front of the assignment to it of 190th Fighter Aviation Division.⁹⁶
- **12 July 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 113317 – established procedures for the Trans-Baikal Front to provide logistical support to the Mongolian Group of Forces.⁹⁷
- **30 July 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 11120 – appointed Marshal of the Soviet Union A. M. Vasilevsky as High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East, effective 1 August

⁹¹ Ibid., 247–248.

⁹² Zolotarev, “General Staff 1944–1945,” 715.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945*, Vol. 18 (7-1), 336.

⁹⁵ Zolotarev, “General Staff 1944–1945,” 716.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 717.

with the Trans-Baikal and Far Eastern Fronts and the Coastal Group of Forces subordinate to him.⁹⁸

- **1 August 1945**—Telegram dated from Marshal A. M. Vasilevsky, High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East, to the *Stavka* recommending the formation of 1st Far Eastern Front from the Coastal Group of Forces, 2nd Far Eastern Front from the Far Eastern Front, and the headquarters of the High Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East from the Operational Group of Colonel General Vasil'ev.⁹⁹
- **2 August 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 11121 – renamed the Coastal Group of Forces the 1st Far Eastern Front under the command of Marshal of the Soviet Union K. A. Meretskov; the Far Eastern Front, the 2nd Far Eastern Front under Army General M. A. Purkaev, and the Operational Group of Colonel General Vasil'ev as the headquarters of the High (Main) Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East.¹⁰⁰
- **3 August 1945**—Report dated of the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East concerning the situation of Soviet forces in the Far East and proposals in regard to the period for beginning combat operations against Japan – recommended times for the three fronts to move their forces to concentration areas (the morning of 5 August) and for the offensive to begin (3–5 days later or 9–10 August).¹⁰¹
- **4 August 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 14468 – established boundary lines for operational zones of aviation and naval forces subordinate to the US and USSR, with Korea, Sakhalin Island, and the Kuril Islands under Soviet jurisdiction.¹⁰²
- **5 August 1945**—excerpt from a report on the presence and condition of tanks in the Far East– by type and condition

⁹⁸ Zolotarev, “*Stavka 1944–1945*,” 248–249.

⁹⁹ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945*, Vol. 18 (7-1), 336–337.

¹⁰⁰ Zolotarev, “*Stavka 1944–1945*,” 249

¹⁰¹ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945*, Vol. 18 (7-1), 337–38.

¹⁰² Zolotarev, “*General Staff 1944-1945*,” 717–718.

(5,548 tanks, with 4,841 operable and 1,422 SP guns, with 1,393 operable, for a total of 6,980 with 6,234 operable).¹⁰³

- **7 August 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 11122 – established the timing of the offensive at 9 August 1945, with the Trans-Baikal and the 1st Far Eastern Front attacking on the morning of 9 August, and the 2nd Far Eastern Front on Marshal Vasilevsky's specific order, and the Pacific Fleet coming to operational readiness level number one and preparing for operations on the morning of 9 August (all in accordance with Trans-Baikal time).¹⁰⁴
- **7 August 1945** (2300 hour Trans-Baikal time)—*Stavka* directive No. 80/NSh of the High (Main) Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East to the commander-in-chief of the forces of the Trans-Baikal Front about the beginning of combat operations – accelerated the attack time from 1800 hours 10 August to 1800 hours 8 August Moscow time (2400 hours on 10 August to 2400 hours on 8 August 1945 Trans-Baikal time). The main forces of 6th Guards Tank Army and Pliiev's Cav-Mech Group were to occupy jumping-off positions by the evening of 8 August, send out forward detachments at 2400 hours on 8 August, and begin the main force advance no later than 0430 hours on 9 August. The 39th and 17th Armies were to occupy jumping-off positions no later than the morning of 9 August, with forward detachments moving forward at 0430 hours and the main forces no later than 1200 hours on 9 August. The 36th Army was to begin forcing the Amur River at 2400 hours on 8 August, and air forces were to begin operations on the morning of 9 August.¹⁰⁵
- **7 August 1945** (2235 hours)—*Stavka* directive No. 81/NSh of the High (Main) Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East to

¹⁰³ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945*, Vol. 18 (7-1), 339.

¹⁰⁴ Zolotarev, "Stavka 1944–1945," 249–250.

¹⁰⁵ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945*, Vol. 18 (7-1), 341.

the commander-in-chief of the forces of the 1st Far Eastern Front about the beginning of combat operations – accelerated the attack time from 0100 hours on 11 August to 0100 hours on 9 August 1945 (Khabarovsk time).¹⁰⁶

- **7 August 1945** (2240 hours)—*Stavka* directive No. 82/NSh of the High (Main) Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East to the commander of the Pacific Fleet about the beginning of combat operations – accelerated the attack time to 0100 hours on 9 August 1945 (Khabarovsk time).¹⁰⁷
- **7 August 1945** (2310 hours)—*Stavka* directive No. 83/NSh of the High (Main) Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East to the commander-in-chief of the forces of the 2nd Far Eastern Front about the beginning of combat operations – accelerated the attack time to 0100 hours on 9 August 1945 (Khabarovsk time).¹⁰⁸
- **8 August 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 84/NSh of the High (Main) Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East to the commander-in-chief of the VVS (Air Force) about the delivery of bombing strikes against the cities of Harbin and Changchun – scheduled the attacks overnight on 8–9 August by no fewer than 50 Il-4 aircraft flying across the front lines at 0100 hours and conducting the strikes from 0230–0250 hours (Khabarovsk time), with repeat strikes on the night of 9–10 August.¹⁰⁹
- **8 August 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 14500 – assigned codenames to key Soviet military leaders in the 2nd Far Eastern Front, with General Purkaev as Pavlov.¹¹⁰
- **8 August**—order of the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East concerning the declaration of a military posture (situation) – read:

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 342.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 343.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Zolotarev, “General Staff 1944–1945,” 718.

Declare a military posture (situation) in all cities and villages in the entire Far East.

Demand calm, discipline, and order from the entire population.

Conduct strict blackouts in all populated points. All of the organs of local authorities will aim at rendering assistance to and cooperation with military commands in the exploitation (use) of local forces and means for the needs of defense and securing social order and security.

Pursuant to a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR about a military posture of 22 June 1941.

[signed] Vasilevsky, Ivanov¹¹¹

- **9 August 1945**—Combat report by the commander-in-chief of the Trans-Baikal Front to the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East about crossing the state borders – Malinovsky informed Vasilevsky that the reconnaissance detachments of his armies crossed the state borders at 0010 hours on 9 August 1945, with the armies’ main forces beginning their crossings at 0430 hours on 9 August (Trans-Baikal time).¹¹²
- **9 August 1945**—Order No. 1 of the commander-in-chief of the forces of the 1st Far Eastern Front about the introduction of a military posture in the Coastal *Krai* – established specific requirements for the local population and civil authorities.¹¹³
- **9 August 1945**—Appeal by the Military Council of the 1st Far Eastern Front to all Red Army personnel in connection with the declaration of war on Japan – addressed to “Comrade Red Army men, sergeants, officers, and generals of the 1st Far

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 344.

¹¹² Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945*, Vol. 18 (7-1), 343–344.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 344–345.

Eastern Front” informed them that “On 8 August 1945, the Peoples’ Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Comrade Molotov, summoned the Japanese ambassador and gave him a declaration on behalf of the Soviet government for transmission to the Japanese government.” The declaration sketched out the reasons for declaring war and ended with the words, “Forward to victory! Death to the Japanese usurpers!”¹¹⁴

- **9 August 1945** (0940 hours)—Report by the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East to the Supreme High Command about the beginning of military operations against Japanese forces – Vasilevsky’s first report about combat operations by all three of his subordinate fronts.¹¹⁵
- **10 August 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 11123 – named Army General I. I. Maslennikov as Deputy High Commander of Soviet forces in the Far East and Lieutenant General I. V. Shikin as Member of the Military Council (commissar) of Soviet forces in the Far East.¹¹⁶
- **10 August 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 14520– warned all commands in the Far East to strengthen intelligence collection and reconnaissance.¹¹⁷
- **10 August 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 14529 – renamed the Chuguev Operational Group the Coastal Operational Group.¹¹⁸
- **11 August 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 14536 – Directed the Far Eastern High Command to speed up the advance of the 1st Far Eastern Front to the Shrin region and the ports of Rosin and Seisin.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 345–346.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 347–348.

¹¹⁶ Zolotarev, “*Stavka* 1944–1945,” 250.

¹¹⁷ Zolotarev, “General Staff 1944–1945,” 719.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 720–721.

Appendix 2—A Detailed Timeline Regarding Soviet Planning for Operations against Hokkaido

- **18 June 1945**—Marshal Malinovsky’s report to the General Staff on the Trans-Baikal Front’s operations called for defeating the Japanese in six to eight weeks or possibly earlier, and recommended an attack date between 20 and 25 August 1945.¹²⁰
- **26-27 June 1945**—Stalin, the *Stavka*, and the Soviet State Defense Committee approve the General Staff’s concept for operations in the Far East but left the question of Hokkaido open. See, Glantz, *The Soviet Strategic Offensive in Manchuria*, 301. Although no decisions are reached about attempting to capture Hokkaido, reportedly, when asked by Stalin “How many divisions would be required to seize Hokkaido? Zhukov said four rifle divisions, but Stalin said nothing more.”¹²¹
- **28 July 1945**—*Stavka* Directives Nos. 11112, 11113, and 11114 to the Far Eastern Front, the Coastal Group of Forces, and the Trans-Baikal Fronts, respectively, order them to prepare offensive operations along the Sungari River axis and into central Manchuria, with no mention made of Hokkaido.¹²²
- **11 August 1945**—Revised General Order No. 1 issued by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC 21/5), among other things, indicates to whom Japanese forces in

¹²⁰ S. M. Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff at War 1941–1945* in two volumes (New York: Progress Publishers, 1985), Vol. 1, 422–423. A translation of the same author’s *Sovetskii General’nyi shtab v gody voiny* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1981), 415–416.

¹²¹ Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 115. Some sources erroneously state that Zhukov said “four armies” were required to capture Hokkaido, which, by all Soviet standards, was clearly excessive. The force ultimately assembled for the amphibious operation matched Zhukov’s recommendations.

¹²² Zolotarev, “*Stavka* 1944–1945,” 245–248.

each and every region are to surrender, but inadvertently leaves out mention of the Kuril Islands. The pertinent paragraph reads:

*c. The senior Japanese commanders and all ground, air, and auxiliary forces within Manchuria, Korea north of 38° north latitude, and Karafuto [Sakhalin Island] shall surrender to the Commander-in-Chief of Soviet Forces in the Far East.*¹²³

- **14 August 1945**—The US Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend revising General Order No. 1 to include provisions for Japanese surrenders on the Kuril Islands but leaves it up to “the President to inform the Allied Powers of our intentions,” adding:

On the matter of the Kurils, the United States and Russian Chiefs of Staff have agreed to a boundary line between the areas of operations which pass through the Onnekotan Straits,” with Admiral Nimitz receiving the surrender of the Kuril Islands south of this line.

This would leave the Soviets with only the three northernmost islands—Shumshir [Shumshu], Paramoshiri [Paramushir], and Onnekotan [Onekotan]—while the large islands of Simushir, Urup, Iturup, and Kunishir, together with many smaller islands, would remain in the US surrender zone.¹²⁴

- **15 August 1945**—Information of the chief of the Intelligence Directorate of the RKKA’s General Staff to the High Commander of Forces in the Far East about the composition of the Group of Generals K. N. Derevianko, I. V. Smirnov, and F. A. Fedenko states:

¹²³ *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1945, Volume VI, 634–637.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 657–659.

I am reporting: the generals and officers flew from Moscow to Khabarovsk at 1030 hours 14 August on two aircraft.

- a) *The group of Derevianko [consists of]: Major General of Aviation Voronov; Vice Admiral Stetsenko; Guards Lieutenant Colonel Tonkikh, Major Borovsky, Lieutenant Meleznev; Engineer Major Chernyshev; Lieutenant Karamyshev; Senior Lieutenant Petrukho; Lieutenant Tulinov; Senior Lieutenant Mal'tsev; Senior Lieutenant Potapenko; Senior Technical Lieutenant Sokolov; Junior Technical Lieutenant Tikhomirov; Technical Lieutenant Kashtonov; and Lieutenant Zvaigin.*

The group has been provided with radios and cyphers.

- b) *The group of communications with the representatives of MacArthur in Khabarovsk: Major General Smirnov; Colonel Dubrovin; and Senior Lieutenant Mitskevich.*
- c) *The group of the Main Intelligence Directorate [GRU] consisting of 6 men headed by Lieutenant General Fedenko for fulfilling special missions. [signed] Kuznetsov¹²⁵*

- **15 August 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 11124— appointed Lieutenant General K. N. Derevianko as representative of the High Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East to the High Command of American Forces in the Pacific Ocean TVD. Derevianko was directly subordinate to Marshal Vasilevsky and was required to inform the Red Army General Staff of all

¹²⁵ TsAMO RF. F. 66, Op. 17899, D. 3, L. 121.

correspondence and reports related to cooperation with Allied authorities and report on all regroupings by Japanese forces. Both he [Derevianko] and Vasilevsky were to inform the General Staff of any and all discussions regarding Japanese surrender and were categorically forbidden to sign any document concerning surrender.¹²⁶

- **17 August 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 11125 – to the representative of the High Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East to the High Command of American Forces in the Pacific Ocean TVD concerning additional regions of occupation and the dislocation of Soviet forces in Manchuria and Korea, states:

1. *The American government proposed the following regions to the Soviet government in which all ground, naval, air, and auxiliary Japanese forces must surrender to Soviet forces—Manchuria, Sakhalin (Karafuto), and Korea north of the 38th parallel.*

2. *The Soviet government accepted the proposal above with the proviso that it consider the Liaotung Peninsula with the ports of Dairen and Port Arthur within the limits of Manchuria and additionally demanded the following regions in which also all ground, naval, air, and auxiliary Japanese forces must surrender to Soviet forces – the Kuril Islands and the northern half of Hokkaido north of a line running from the town of Kusiro to the town of Rumoe, including both of these towns in the Soviet region.*

3. *Beside the above, place before General MacArthur the question about the granting to the Soviet Union any sort of zone of stationing of Soviet forces in Tokyo.*

¹²⁶ Zolotarev, "Stavka 1944-1945," 250–251.

4. You, together with your group, are required to fly to MacArthur in Manila as quickly as possible. Report about the time of the flight and about your arrival at the place.

[signed] I. Stalin, A. Antonov¹²⁷

- **16 August 1945**—Message from the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union (Stalin) to President Truman concerning "General Order No. 1" in regard to the surrender of Japan and occupation zones in Japan. This message suggests that Order No. 1 contain the following provisions:

- 1. To include in the region of surrender of Japanese armed forces to Soviet troops all the Kuril Islands, which, in accordance with the decisions of the three powers in the Crimea, have to come into possession of the Soviet Union.*
- 2. To include in the region of surrender of Japanese armed forces to Soviet troops the Northern part of the Island Hokkaido which adjoins in the north to the La Pérouse Strait, which is between Karafuto and Hokkaido. The demarcation line between the Northern and Southern half of the Hokkaido Island should be on the line leading from the city of Kushiro on the Eastern coast of the Island to the city Rumoe on the Western coast of the Island including the named cities into the Northern half of the Island....¹²⁸*

¹²⁷ Ibid., 251–252.

¹²⁸ *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 667–668

- **17 August 1945** (1615 hours)—*Stavka* Directive No. 11125 to the representative of the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East at the High Command of American Forces in the Pacific Ocean TVD (Lieutenant General K. N. Derevianko) concerning additional occupation regions and the stationing of Soviet forces in Manchuria and Japan. This instructs Derevianko that:

In addition to the instruction given to you on 15.8.45 in Directive No. 11124, you are subject to the guidance of the following instructions:

1. The American government has offered the Soviet government the following region in which all ground, naval, air and auxiliary Japanese forces must surrender to Soviet forces – Manchuria, Sakhalin (Karafuto), and Korea north of the 38th parallel.

2. The Soviet government accepts the above proposal [General Order 1], but with the proviso that it considers the Liaotung Peninsula with the ports of Darien and Port Arthur to be within the limits of Manchuria, and, in addition, demands the following regions in which all ground, air, and auxiliary Japanese forces must be taken prisoner by Soviet forces – the Kuril Islands and the northern half of Hokkaido north of a line running from the city of Kushiro to the city of Rumai, while including both indicated cities in the Soviet region. You are obliged to insist on the fulfillment of this demand of the Soviet government before General MacArthur.

3. Beside the above, present to General MacArthur the question of the Soviet Union's government concerning any sort of stationing zone for Soviet troops in Tokyo.

4. *You, together with your group, must fly out to MacArthur in Manila as quickly as possible.*¹²⁹

- **17 August 1945**—Message from President Truman to the Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Soviet Union (Stalin) concerning Stalin’s message of 16 August, in which Truman agrees to Stalin’s request “to modify General Order No. 1 to include all the Kuril Islands to the area to be surrendered the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Forces in the Far East,” but Truman adds:

*Regarding your suggestion as to the surrender of Japanese forces on the Island Hokkaido to Soviet forces, it is my intention and arrangements have been made for the surrender of Japanese forces on all of the islands of Japan proper, Hokkaido, Honshu, Shekoku, and Kyushu, to General MacArthur.*¹³⁰

- **17 August 1945** (2330 hours)—*Stavka* Directive No. 11126 to the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East to cease combat operations in those sectors of the front where Japanese forces had surrendered to raise the Chinese flag designated by the administration of Chang-Kai-Shek in cities and cooperate with his administration, but to consider all captured Japanese arms and equipment as Soviet trophies not to be transferred to Chinese hands.¹³¹
- **18 August 1945**—Report by Lieutenant General F. A. Fedenko to the chief of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the RKKA’s General Staff about the preparation of Lieutenant General K. N. Derevianko’s group read:

¹²⁹ Zolotarev, “*Stavka* 1944–1945,” 251–252.

¹³⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1945, Volume VI, 670*

¹³¹ Zolotarev, “*Stavka* 1944–1945,” 252.

I arrived in Khabarovsk on 17 August. Derevianko arrived in Khabarovsk on 16 August. We had a forced landing in Takhtamyga on 16 August because of the weather. There, Comrade Vasil'ev had a landing, where I met with him, introduced myself, and reported about the aims of our trip. I received from him all instructions in regard to the dispatch of Derevianko's group. Comrade Vasil'ev informed me that the Americans, supposedly, should fly into Khabarovsk on 18 August, and we expect to send the aircraft of Derevianko's group to them on 19 August. All of your instructions and the program of action for Derevianko from our higher masters are well-known to me. We will occupy ourselves with preparation of the group in accordance with your instructions.

1. I will check the readiness of the group in the sense of communications with the "center," materiel support, and the detection of existing shortcomings. During the course of 17 and 18 August, we will occupy ourselves with accelerated elimination of shortcomings through the chief of communications of the High Command and the commissariat. We will adjust, clean, and launder uniforms. We will equip and check radio stations. The radio operators are poorly trained. If it is possible, we will give them one more "Dzhek" radio station from the intelligence section. We will make every effort so that the group will depart in readiness and order.

It cannot be excluded that the Americans could delay their arrival in Khabarovsk, and, if it occurs, what then happens to the dispatch of Derevianko's group? Do we need to dispatch him, while not waiting for the Americans, and by what transport? The TOF possesses "Catalina" aircraft, which, apparently, will be the best

to dispatch if they are needed. I request your instructions on this question.

2. I have informed Ivanov about his mission. According to your instructions, I gave him additional instructions today, 18 August, and I will dispatch him to the 1st Far Eastern Front's Intelligence Department and send Senior Lieutenant Markelov from Sheliganov with him.

3. I received your [Directive] No. 11568 about my role in the High Command's headquarters and will fulfill it completely.

4. Vasil'ev has reported that his headquarters is moving to Khabarovsk.

[signed] Lieutenant General Fedenko¹³²

- **18 August 1945** (2200 hours)—Report by A. M. Vasilevsky, High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East, about the situation at day's end on 17 August, with a request for the *Stavka* to approve the seizure of the northern half of Hokkaido by two divisions of 87th Rifle Corps during the period from 19 August to 1 September 1945 and the establishment of the corps' headquarters on Hokkaido.¹³³
- **19 August 1945** (1300 hours)—Combat order issued by the commander of the Pacific Fleet on the conduct of an offensive operation to seize the northern part of Hokkaido Island with two rifle divisions of the 1st Far Eastern Front's 87th Rifle Corps in the period from 20 August to 1 September 1945.¹³⁴

¹³² *TsAMO RF*. F. 66, Op. 178499, D. 2, L. 188–191. On 20 August, Lieutenant General F. A. Fedenko received the certification as representative of the High Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East at the High Command of the Japanese Kwantung Army.

¹³³ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945*, Vol. 18 (7-1). 355–356.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 18 (7-2), 36–37.

- **19 August 1945** (1400 hours)—Organizational order issued by the commander of the Pacific Fleet on the conduct of an offensive operation to seize the northern part of Hokkaido Island.¹³⁵
- **19 August 1945**—Report by the commander of the Pacific Fleet to the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East with an account of the operational plan for transporting 87th Rifle Corps to Hokkaido Island and the southern islands of the Kuril chain.¹³⁶
- **19 August 1945**—Order of the commander of the Air Forces (VVS) of the High Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East to the commander of 9th Air Army concerning the protection of the amphibious assault operation against Hokkaido Island and the southern islands of the Kuril chain.¹³⁷
- **20 August** (0800 hours)—Report by A. M. Vasilevsky, High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East, about the situation at day's end on 19 August, informs Stalin:

*I and the commander of the 1st Far Eastern Front are seriously occupied with preparing the amphibious operation on Hokkaido Island. We are now conducting naval reconnaissance and preparing air, artillery, infantry, and transport means. With your approval, we can begin the naval operation here immediately after occupying the southern part of Sakhalin Island on approximately 22 August 1945.*¹³⁸

- **21 August 1945** (0115 hours)—Operational directive of the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East on preparing

¹³⁵ Ibid., 37–38.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 39.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 40.

¹³⁸ Ibid., Vol. 18 (7-1), 363–365. It would take until 25 August for Soviet forces to seize all of Sakhalin Island.

an amphibious assault operation against Hokkaido Island and the southern islands of the Kuril chain, which directs the operation be conducted only after the *Stavka* designates the time.¹³⁹

- **22 August 1945**—Stalin’s response to President Truman’s letter on 18 August expresses “understanding ... in the sense that you refuse to satisfy the request of the Soviet Union for the inclusion of the Northern part of the Island Hokkaido in the region of surrender of the Japanese armed forces to the Soviet troops” but qualifies this by adding, “I have to say that I and my colleagues did not expect such an answer from you.” Stalin then refuses Truman’s request for an air base in the Kurils, first, because it contravenes agreements reached in the Crimea (Yalta) and, second, because “demands of such a nature are usually laid before either a conquered state, or such an allied state which is in no position to defend with its own means certain part of its territory.” Since Stalin does “not believe that the Soviet Union could be included among such states,” he implies such a request is “humiliating and not understandable.”¹⁴⁰
- **22 August 1945** (1455 hours)—Directive order of the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East to the High Commander of the Naval Fleet and the commander of the Pacific Fleet concerning the postponement of the amphibious operation against Hokkaido Island and the southern islands of the Kuril chain.¹⁴¹
- **23 August 1945**—Report of the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East to the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command about the situation in the zone of the Kuril Islands and on Sakhalin Island, which states in regard to Hokkaido,

¹³⁹ Ibid., Vol. 18 (7-2), 42.

¹⁴⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1945, Volume VI*, 687–688.

¹⁴¹ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina*, Vol. 18 (7-2), 43.

“The operation on Hokkaido will be begun only after [receipt] of your additional order, and until then not a single boat will be sent there.” Otherwise Vasilevsky’s report notes that “the massive capitulation of Japanese forces in the northern part of the Kuril Islands has begun,” with all of Shumshu and the northern part of Paramushir due to be occupied on 23 August, the southern half of Paramushir on 24 August, and the group of small islands south of Paramushir on 25 August.¹⁴²

- **23 August 1945** (received at 1225 hours)—The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Harriman) notifies the US Secretary of State: “I believe I should stay on [in Moscow] until the control machinery for Japan has been agreed upon” because “I have a feeling that we may have some trouble with the Soviets over the setup which I understand we intend to establish particularly in regard to Soviet forces used for occupation of Japan under General MacArthur as Supreme Commander.” Harriman cites his objection to having MacArthur share such responsibilities with Vasilevsky, which leads to a Soviet withdrawal of that proposal and adds tellingly:

I feel that the Soviets will come up again with further proposals that the Soviets have a zone of occupation with independent command or in some other way obtain for themselves a position where they can block our program if it does not meet with their approval. I sincerely hope that we will stand firm on what I understand is our plan, and, if we do, I am confident the Soviets will accept it. The Russian pattern set in Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania is a good precedent although I assume we would always consult them in advance on any questions of policy.

¹⁴² Ibid., 45.

Harriman adds:

I expect also that we will have some difficulty in Korea as it is my impression the Russians want to dominate the country in spite of Stalin's agreement that it should develop its independence through a four-power trusteeship. I believe the Russians are feeling their way out with us to see how far they can go with their unilateral objectives in the Far East.¹⁴³

- **25 August 1945**—Directive Order No. 12512 of the *Stavka* VGK to the representative of the High Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East at the High Command of Allied Forces (General Derevianko) about clarification of the zones of responsibility of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Far East states:

In a change to the instruction sent to you in [Directive] No. 11125 of 17 August 1945, do the following:

1. You must not raise the question about the Japanese armed forces surrendering to Soviet forces in the northern half of Hokkaido as you were instructed because President Truman denied us on this [matter].

2. You must also not raise the question about the granting to the Soviet Union of any sort of stationing zone for Soviet forces in Tokyo.

3. As concerns the stationing of Soviet forces on all of the Kuril Islands, you are obliged to insist before General MacArthur on the fulfillment of this demand of the Soviet government, since, according to the agreements in the Crimea (Yalta), the Kuril Islands will be turned over to our ownership.

[signed] Stalin, Antonov¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1945, Volume VI, 689–690.*

¹⁴⁴ *TsAMO RF. F. 148, Op. 3763, D. 216, L. 7.*

- **27 August 1945** (2300 hours)—Instructions from the chief of staff of the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East to the commander of the Pacific Fleet concerning the forbidden ships and aircraft from landing on Hokkaido state:

*In order to avoid the creation of conflicts and misunderstandings in relation to the Allies, the High Command orders: 1. Categorically forbids the dispatch of any ships and aircraft whatsoever to Hokkaido Island and 2. Report fulfillment.*¹⁴⁵

- **28 August 1945**—Telegram from the commander of the 1st Far Eastern Front (General Meretskov) to the commander of the Pacific Fleet asks the Fleet to provide transports in the port of Otomari on Sakhalin Island by 3 September to carry 87th Rifle Corps' 355th Rifle Division to Iturup (two regiments) and Kunashir (one regiment).¹⁴⁶
- **29 August 1945** (2230 hours)—Order of the commander of the 1st Far Eastern Front to the commander of 87th Rifle Corps directs the latter to speed up the loading of 113th Rifle Brigade and 355th Rifle Division at Otomari so that the former can occupy Kunashir and Shikotan Islands by 31 August and the latter, Iturup and Urup Islands, on 3 September.¹⁴⁷
- **30 August 1945**—Report of the commander of the 2nd Far Eastern Front (Purkaev) to the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East that the 2nd Far Eastern Front's forces had completed the occupation of the northern and central Kuril Islands from Shumshu southward to Urup by 1200 hours on 30 August.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina*, Vol. 18 (7-2), 245

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 47

- **30 August 1945**—Report of the commander of the Pacific Fleet to the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East that its forces occupied Iturup by 1430 hours on 30 August.¹⁴⁹
- **30 August 1945**—Combat report of the 2nd Far Eastern Front's Military Council to the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East that its forces (the Kuril Operational Group's 255th Rifle Division) finished landing on the islands of Urup, Simushir, and Ketoi against no resistance on 30 August 1945, capturing 608 Japanese officers and men with a loss of 1 killed and 4 wounded. Therefore, the front's forces had completed their operations to capture the Kuril Islands.¹⁵⁰
- **30 August 1945**—Report by the representative of the High Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East at the High Command of Allied Forces (General Derevianko) to the *Stavka* VGK about the procedure [order or sequence] of the occupation of Japanese territory by US forces states:
 1. *On 29 August of this year, in MacArthur's headquarters (in Manila), a map with drawn demarcation lines of zones occupied or liable to occupation by the forces of the Soviet government has been received. Manchuria, including the Liaotung Peninsula with the ports of Dairen and Port Arthur, the northern part of Korea up to the 38th parallel, and Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands are included in the zone of the Soviet armed forces.*

Therefore, the allocation of zones, in particular, those concerning the Soviet Union, is in accord with your instructions in [Directive] No. 11125, with changes given in [Directive] No. 12512 of 25 August.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 47–48.

2. *On the basis of information received from General MacArthur, General Uilloibi, and a series of officers, it has been established:*

- a) *The territory of Hokkaido and the northeastern half of Honshu up to the Takama and Yokohama line will be occupied by US 8th Army, consisting of 9th, 10th, and 14th Corps, which include seven divisions and two separate regiments; the occupation of Hokkaido must be completed on the 30th, and Honshu – on the 15th day after the beginning of the landings;*
- b) *The southwestern half of Honshu, Kyushu, and the Ryukyu Islands will be occupied by US 6th Army, consisting of 1st, 5th, and 11th Corps, which include eight divisions, including three naval assault (Marine) divisions. The occupation of this territory by 6th Army must be completed in 23 days;*
- c) *The southern part of Korea south of the 38th parallel will be occupied by US 10th Army's 24th Corps, consisting of three division; [the occupation] to be completed in 27 days;*

While not having information from the conversations with the officers and according to newspaper reports, the landing of US forces in Japan will begin on 27 August of this year. The units of 8th Army will be the first to begin landing under the protection of 188 combat naval ships of which 14 are battleships, including 12 of the American "Missouri" type.

The order of occupation – only the main political and economic centers and military objectives will be occupied.

3. *The dispatch of forces from Manila is going on continuously. From a meeting with officers and soldiers of the American army, it is well known that ships with soldiers from the 32nd and 43rd Divisions were directed into Japanese waters on 27 and 28 August. There is great animation around-the-clock in the port, airfield, and city of Manila.*

*[signed] Derevianko*¹⁵¹

- **30 August 1945**—Report by the representative of the High Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East at the High Command of Allied Forces (General Derevianko) to the chief of the RKKA's General Staff about the flight to Tokyo for the ceremony of signing act of capitulation of Japan states:

I am flying to Japan at 2400 hours on 30 August with seven officers, including: Major General Voronov, Vice Admiral Stetsenko, translators Karamyshev and Tulinov, cyphers officer Potapenko, radiomen Tikhomirov, and driver Kashtanov. Arrival at the airfield of Atsugi [will be] at 1600 hours 31 August.

I am leaving 8 men headed by Major Borovsky and a radio station and cyphers, in Manila for work with my radio transmitters in Tokyo and Khabarovsk.

*[signed] Deriavenko*¹⁵²

- **1 September 1945**—Report of the Pacific Fleet's chief of staff to the chief of staff of the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East that 113th Rifle Brigade had landed on Kunashir Island at 0600 hours on 1 September against no resistance.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ TsAMO RF. F. 66, Op. 178499, D. 4, L. 42.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Zolotarev, *Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina*, Vol. 18 (7-2), 48.

- **5 September 1945**—Instructions of the commander of the 2nd Far Eastern Front to the commander of the Kamchatka Defensive Region concerning the dispositions of Soviet forces on the Kuril Islands, which is to be as follows:
 - a) *The 302nd Rifle Regiment (less 2nd Battalion), with 2nd Battalion, 279th Artillery Regiment – Matsuba [Matua] Island.*
 - b) *A rifle company, 2nd Battalion, 302nd Rifle Regiment – Siasikotan [Shiashkotan] Island.*
 - c) *A rifle platoon, 302nd Rifle Regiment – Kharumukotan [Kharimkotan] Island.*
 - d) *The 2nd Battalion, 302nd Rifle Regiment (less one RCo), with one battery, 279th Artillery Regiment – Onekotan Island.*
 - e) *The 373rd Rifle Regiment and 279th Artillery Regiment (less 2nd Battalion) – the southwestern part of Paramushir Island.*
 - f) *The 968th Rifle Regiment, 367th Separate Artillery Battalion, and 183rd Separate Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion – the northeastern part of Paramushir Island.*
 - g) *The headquarters, 101st Rifle Division, with training and specialized units – Kasivabara [on Paramushir Island].*
 - h) *The 133rd Rifle Regiment, 32nd Tank Brigade, 428th Gun Artillery Regiment, 169th Tank Destroyer Artillery Battalion, 123rd Separate Artillery Battalion, and 1589th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion – Siumisiu [Shumshu] Island.*
 - i) *The 7th Separate Rifle Battalion – Cape Loptaka [on Kamchatka].*

- j) *The 5th Separate Rifle Battalion and 362nd Separate Artillery Battalion – Ust'-Kamchatsk [on Kamchatka].*
- k) *The 198th Separate Rifle Regiment – Ust'-Bol'sheretsk [on Kamchatka].*¹⁵⁴

- **10 September 1945**—*Stavka* Directive No. 11128 to the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East orders the transformation of the 2nd and 1st Far Eastern and Trans-Baikal Fronts into the Far Eastern, Coastal, and Trans-Baikal Military Districts, effective 30 September for the Trans-Baikal and 1st Far Eastern Front and 15 October for 2nd Far Eastern Front.¹⁵⁵
- **11 September 1945**—Report by the representative of the High Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East at the High Command of Allied Forces (General Derevianko) to the chief of the RKKA's General Staff about the course of the occupation of Japan states:

According to information from the local army newspaper of 8 and 9 September, the accuracy of which is often beyond the limits of what is often forbidden:

- a) *MacArthur's headquarters reports that the occupation forces in Japan will consist of 18 divisions with an overall strength (together with specialized and service units) of 300,000–400,000 men;*
- b) *The occupation of Kyushu by 6th Army under the command of General Kruger has gone on without incident. On the other islands of Japan proper (I indicate only those formations which*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁵⁵ Zolotarev, "Stavka 1944–1945," 252–254.

are not in the intelligence summary): 27th Division landed on Honshu on 20 September and occupied Niigata; 11th Airborne Division and 15th and 9th Divisions are being restationed from Yokohama to Sendai; 81st Division is occupying Aomori; and 77th Division will occupy Hokkaido in the beginning of October.

- c) In southern Korea (38th parallel), up to 185,000 Japanese (in my opinion, the figure is genuine if you take into account the Japanese civilian population who succeed in escaping from northern China) must capitulate to American forces;*
 - d) British forces occupied Malaya, having disarmed 85,000 Japanese;*
 - e) The Canadian Prime Minister declared that Canadian forces will not take part in the occupation of Japan and will be returned to their homeland.*
 - f) In Australia during the next six months it has been proposed: to reduce the Air Force by half; retain the strength of the Navy; and have an army of 80,000 men;*
 - g) On a daily basis, 1,200 former American prisoners-of-war arrive by air from the Philippines.*
- [signed] Irtysh [a pseudonym for Major I. I. Borovsky]¹⁵⁶*

- **22 September 1945**—*Stavka* directive No. 2700 – to the High Commander of Soviet Forces in the Far East about turning

¹⁵⁶ *TsAMO RF. F. 66, Op. 178499, D. 4, L. 337.*

away from contact with the High Command of American Forces in the Pacific Ocean TDV, states:

Through Derevianko, General MacArthur turned with a request to authorize him to organize direct radio communications with you [Vasilevsky] and grant the possibility to communicate with you directly.

MacArthur at first endeavored to ignore our interests and did not seek communication with us.

According to information we have, MacArthur, instead of captivity, dismissed personnel of the Japanese Armed Forces to their homes, that is, made the same mistakes which were made in 1918 in regard to Germany.

At that, MacArthur did not take into consideration our opinions and ignored the interests of general matters.

MacArthur, whose conscience is not clear, now seeks the establishment of direct communications with you and, by this path, wants to make you an accomplice of his measures and responsible for them together with the Americans.

Considering these circumstances, at this stage, you must avoid establishing direct communications with MacArthur and not postpone your trip to Moscow.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Zolotarev, "Stavka 1944–1945," 254.

The Hokkaido Myth

D. M. Giangreco



Hokkaido

“The US Navy mined the waters off northern Japan to keep the Russians from invading first.”

“Stalin was prepared to seize the northern end of Honshu. From there his armored divisions would sweep down the island to Tokyo, leaving postwar Japan a divided nation like Germany.”

“There was nothing to stop the Soviets from invading before the Americans and seizing all of northern Japan.”

Much like fantasy football, alternate history can be an enjoyable diversion from treading and retreading the same old ground, and can sometimes provide a fruitful path to perceiving some new wrinkle in a past war or campaign. What is interesting about these overheard quotes, though, is that they were all uttered as statements of fact by educators and serious historians. And while they and similar ideas have bubbled up for decades, virtually all of these comments were made within the last year during the countdown to the seventieth anniversary of the war’s end.

It is clear that both the Soviet Army’s intent and capabilities are increasingly being blown well out of proportion by breathless individuals who have not bothered to closely read either the works of the US and Russian scholars who have written on this subject or the belligerents’ relevant wartime planning documents and operational summaries. Complicating matters somewhat is the fact that the two powers eyeing northern Japan each conceived, or at least considered, a variety of options that differed in both scale and objectives yet are regularly mashed together as if they were single proposed operations. This afternoon I’ll be giving you a brief overview of the plans of the United States, the Soviet Union, and Imperial Japan for the seizure and, alternately, the defense of the northernmost Japanese island of Hokkaido, but first I’ll explain where these plans fit within the context of the endgame against Japan.

On October 3rd of 1944, the US Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, rejected a proposal to adopt an attrition strategy in the Pacific and slow down operations while awaiting Russian entry into the war. Marshall believed this would arouse Stalin's suspicions that "we are maneuvering to get them into the fight in such a manner that they will suffer the major losses." Early plans had been for the US forces to invade Japan sometime in 1947 or 1948 but this had since been pushed up to the fall of 1945, and what Marshall desired was a one-two punch, a Soviet invasion of Manchuria to tie up the massive Japanese armies on the Asian mainland, followed by the beginning of US operations in the Home Islands in the fall.



Major General John R. Deane

Two weeks later, during an October 16, 1944, meeting in Moscow with Ambassador Avril Harriman and the chief of the US Military Mission, Major General John R. Deane, Stalin renewed his Tehran Conference pledge to join the war against Japan and added for the

first time that offensive operations could begin within two-and-a-half to three months after the defeat of Germany. This fit perfectly with the strategic thinking of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and though it would not be formally codified until the Yalta Conference the following year, this timetable would serve as the basis for all military-to-military coordination between the two powers and an immediate jump in Lend-Lease deliveries to the Soviet Union.

To launch an offensive so quickly while forces were still battling in Europe—and not tip off the Japanese, thus prompting a preemptive strike against the highly vulnerable Trans-Siberian Railroad—the Red Army would have to depend on the Americans to secretly supply much of the food, fuel, war supplies, and even the trucks to move them both before and *during* the offensive. Two days later on October 18, Stalin presented a breathtakingly large wish list of supplies which the United States moved immediately to fill under a secret expansion of the Lend-Lease program that received the codename “Milepost.” Soviet participation in the war was now linked to our vision of the end game’s attrition phase and the first ships with Milepost cargos arrived at Soviet Far East ports before the end of 1944.

Military-to-military coordination was conducted in Moscow and both sides agreed that if the campaign in Manchuria was not quickly won, the Japanese would make every effort to disrupt the flow of supplies. At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, the Soviet Navy’s Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Nikolay Kuznetsov, asked his American counterpart, Admiral Ernest J. King, if we would provide convoy protection once hostilities began. King’s response was that US naval forces were already fully committed to supporting our own operations to the south and that no escorts could be provided. He maintained that the Soviets themselves would need to do the anti-air, anti-mine, and anti-submarine effort in the La Pérouse Strait between Sakhalin and Hokkaido, the only route that remained ice-free throughout the winter.



Project HULA: The US Navy transfers a minesweeper to Soviet control, May 1945

The US alternative was to help the Soviets establish a modest amphibious capability before they entered the war by setting up a base at Cold Bay, Alaska, where their sailors could quickly learn to operate the hundreds of US ships coming to them under Milepost. Admiral Kuznetsov readily agreed, and “Project Hula” ultimately trained some 12,000 Soviet naval personnel who manned the 149 Made-In-USA minesweepers, subchasers, frigates, LCI assault craft, and large floating workshops turned over by the end of August 1945.

With this as background, we can now discuss the individual proposals and plans of the Soviet Union, the United States, and Imperial Japan.

First the Americans

US planning for the 1945–1946 invasion of Japan began in 1944. An early scheme of operations was released for comment on the very day the Allied forces fought their way ashore in Normandy and was

approved for submission to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on June 30, 1944. It offered four possible areas that might be seized and subsequently serve as a stepping stone that would bring ground-based fighter aircraft within striking distance of “the industrial heart of Japan”—Tokyo and the Kanto Plain. A 12-division assault on Kyushu, Operation Olympic, was quickly chosen as the best option since it was in line with both the Central Pacific drive of Admiral Chester Nimitz and General Douglas MacArthur’s swing up from New Guinea into the Philippines.

One of the areas briefly considered as a stepping stone to Tokyo was the northernmost Japanese Home Island of Hokkaido, even though it was recognized early on by planners that its remote location “not favorably located with respect to logistical supporting bases” offered numerous liabilities. Control of Hokkaido, its proponents maintained, would be of major importance when the Soviet Union, in accordance with agreements made at the previous year’s Big Three conference at Teheran, entered the war as its seizure would simplify and protect sea communications with our new Pacific ally.

Pentagon planners originally believed that the 10-division operation in the southeast portion of the mountainous island would provide “excellent potentialities for large-scale instillation of land-based aircraft.” By early 1945, however, a fuller examination of the region’s weather had convinced them otherwise. The invasion timetable had been refined and now called for the Tokyo area to be invaded in March 1946, which meant that the new supporting airbases in the initial invasion operation had to be constructed and made fully operational throughout the worst of the winter months. The annual snowfall on Hokkaido not only averaged 25 feet, but its high winter mean temperature, hovering at the freezing mark, results in a continual process of partial melting and refreezing.

With this rather fundamental problem now well understood, Hokkaido was switched from a preliminary operation that would support the invasion of the Tokyo area, Operation Coronet, to one that might be launched if Japanese resistance continued after the

capital had fallen. Planners in the spring of 1945 envisioned scenarios calling for landings as early as July 1946 that would involve, depending on objectives, either four infantry and one armored division, or eight infantry divisions and no armored division if the northern tip of Honshu was included. Naval forces requirements for whichever—if either—operation was chosen centered around support and bombardment groups totaling 18 mostly Essex-class carriers, both of the new Midway class carriers that would have deployed to the western Pacific by that time, 7 light carriers, 19 battleships/battlecruisers, 61 cruisers of all types, 63 escort carriers (18 for direct air support), 315 destroyer-type ships, as well as the normal armada of mine sweepers, support, and assault vessels.

The eight-division operation would see five of the formations employed on the Honshu side of the Tsugaru Strait and three against “heavily mined” and “strongly fortified” areas across the way on Hokkaido. The five-division strike against just Hokkaido would include the same coastal positions but also target the Sapporo Plain to their northwest (which was why one of the two armored divisions that had earlier fought on Tokyo’s Kanto Plain was slated to take part in the operation). Yet even this larger commitment would result in only the southern third of the West Virginia-sized island being captured. After “a difficult operation involving numerous amphibious assaults and the reduction of fortified areas” as well as the seizure of “narrow corridors” between the lowland areas, a defensive line would be formed in the narrow neck beyond the industrial city of Sapporo.

Thus, before the winter of 1946, Imperial forces making a last ditch fight of it on Honshu would be cut off from one more resource area, and the remaining troops in Hokkaido’s forbidding north would be left to their own devices. It was envisioned that a corps of three divisions would hold the captured territory.

The Soviets



Stalin and Zhukov

No invasion of Hokkaido, let alone Honshu, was part of Soviet war planning until the high-level meetings ahead of the Potsdam Conference, when Premier Joseph Stalin expressed interest in seizing the island. Stalin asked his most senior field marshal, Georgy Zhukov, how much force he would need to accomplish such a task. His reply of four field armies (formations then fielding from three to as many as five divisions) meant that so many troops would have to be syphoned off for such an “adventurist” move that the long-planned invasion of Manchuria could itself be put at risk. There was also the question of how the men and equipment would actually get there since the US effort to help the Soviets develop an amphibious capability, Project Hula, had only recently gotten under way and the naval side of an operation of such magnitude was not possible for at least a year if ever.

Zhukov, however, didn’t need to go into detail. Marshal Aleksandr Vasilevsky, chief of the general staff, immediately stated that an invasion of mainland Japan was utterly impractical and Vyacheslav Molotov, who served as both deputy premier and minister of foreign affairs, made it plain that the US and Britain would see it as a flagrant

violation of the still-secret agreement made at the Yalta Conference. The following day, June 28, 1945, Stalin approved only the existing plans for operations in Manchuria, southern Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands. Hokkaido, at least as the target of a *full scale* invasion, was off the table.

After Japan announced its acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration's terms on August 15, 1945, it was immediately apparent to the Soviets, who had invaded Manchuria almost a week earlier, that much of the Imperial Army was indeed following Emperor Hirohito's orders to lay down its arms. For the first time in history, many Japanese formations were agreeing to surrender, and the Soviets were harvesting unprecedentedly large numbers of prisoners instead of having to fight them literally to the death. This unique situation opened the possibility of a largely administrative landing of a light occupation force to create a "presence" on Hokkaido that might be used as a bargaining tool in negotiations to obtain an occupation zone in the Home Islands and perhaps even a sector in Tokyo itself.

On August 18, orders were issued for the piecemeal insertion of the 87th Rifle Corps' 342th and 345th Rifle Divisions, supported by a naval infantry battalion and as many as two construction battalions. Their target was the small, remote port of Rumoi far up the island's west coast and well removed from Hokkaido's heavily defended population centers in the south. A third division laboriously mopping up the Kuril Islands would eventually be made available for the lodgment. The operation was to take place by September 1, 1945, so that troops would be on the ground ahead of the scheduled surrender of all Imperial forces in Tokyo Bay, an event in which the Soviets would be a signatory.

Why Rumoi? The Soviets had to secure immediate control of an adequate port that was as far as possible from the base areas of the island's two Imperial divisions, because of (1) their almost nonexistent assault shipping, (2) their landing force was limited to a small amount of artillery and supplies that could be offloaded only on

a dock by crane, (3) they had no way to load and offload armor in the time allowed, (4) would have woefully inadequate naval gunfire support at their disposal, and (5) no ability to receive fighter support directly from established bases on Soviet territory. None of these shortcomings would be a problem if the Japanese put up no resistance. But it was a fact that a large number of Imperial troops were—against orders from Tokyo—still engaging in the fanatical combat that they were well known for. In light of this, the Soviets wisely planned to play it safe at far-off Rumoi. Yet even this modest operation had to be called off for reasons that were both military and political.



Soviet-requested occupation zone north
of the line Rumoi-Kushiro

In an August 15 message to President Harry S. Truman, Stalin called for the establishment of a Soviet occupation zone in northern Hokkaido above a demarcation line running from Rumoi to Kushiro on the northeast coast and stated that “Russian public opinion would be seriously offended” if he didn’t get his way. Through other channels Stalin also prepared the groundwork for demanding a slice of Tokyo as had already been achieved in both Berlin and Vienna. Truman flatly

rejected the proposal since it was contrary to what his predecessor had agreed to at Yalta. The clincher, however, likely boiled down some very basic tactical and operational realities.

On the same day that the 87th Rifle Corps' landing at Rumoi was ordered, Soviet forces conducted a long-planned amphibious assault against the Japanese base on the Kurile island of Shumshu. Located near the southern tip of the Soviet's Kamchatka Peninsula, its garrison of a brigade of 91st Division troops put up a fierce resistance until ordered to cease fire by higher headquarters in Hokkaido. So fierce, in fact, that the Japanese inflicted far more casualties than they received—1,018 versus the Soviets' 1,567 (some sources state higher) a third of whom were killed. Worse yet, when 16 of the 30 Made-In-America LCI assault ships and their US-trained crews from Project Hula tried to bring in the second wave, five of them were sunk by Japanese artillery.

Losing essentially a third of the second wave in one stroke had a sobering effect. Amphibious operations weren't so easy after all. And then there was the shock that the Japanese troops, whom it was believed would be disheartened by their government's decision to surrender, instead put up a murderous defense. This occurred at the farthest reaches of the Japanese Empire. What might happen on Japan itself? Since the whole idea behind what was to be basically an administrative landing at Rumoi was the creation of conditions favorable to expanding Soviet prestige and interests in postwar Japan, any military setback to the operation would have political ramifications far out of proportion to the small number of troops committed. Stalin pulled the plug on preparations for the Hokkaido escapade on August 22, 1945.

The Japanese

Had the war continued into 1946, the two Imperial divisions that US intelligence was monitoring on Hokkaido in mid-1945, the 7th and 42nd, would have been long gone before the Americans

stormed ashore the following summer. Both formations had benefitted greatly from the manpower drafts of recent mobilizations and if the Tokyo area was invaded, as the US planned to do in March 1946, Imperial Japanese Headquarters intended to spirit them across the Tsugaru Strait in wooden craft immune to the magnetic mines likely to be used to cut off Hokkaido. Once on Honshu, these formations would move at night to the Kanto Plain as fast as the infantrymen's feet could carry them. They would leave behind the 101st Independent Brigade not subject to the transfer and a new division that the Japanese would raise locally in the winter of 1945–1946 from the best Peoples Volunteer Corps elements organized the previous summer and fall. It is important to remember, though, that both divisions would be on hand and prepared for battle during any Soviet effort in 1945.

The Peoples Volunteer Corps on Hokkaido, as throughout Japan, was made up of males aged fifteen to sixty and females aged seventeen to forty—essentially all but the children or aged of the island's 3,800,000 population. Also known as the Volunteer Combat Corps, they received training in the use of spears, swords, firearms, and explosives from retired officers and were to be at the disposal, literally, of the Imperial Army when called to duty for any needed task, be it digging tunnels, acting as porters, or serving as cannon fodder. Whether it was Americans coming ashore in the summer of 1946 or Russians in August of 1945, these willing—and heavily indoctrinated—masses would be a significant factor during any invasion.

And then there was the extensive Imperial Navy infrastructure and personnel commitment on Hokkaido. It was tasked for far more than maintenance and defense of the island's two major ports. Naval personnel and Imperial Marines were responsible for virtually all of the very extensive shore defenses covering nearly 200 miles of coastline in the critical southern region. They manned not only all the shore batteries lining the various narrows of the Tsugaru Strait in the south but also those along the Soya (or La Pérouse) Strait separating

the island from Sakhalin. Thus, these strong, well-manned positional forces, invisible in virtually all historical accounts, freed up the Army formations for mobile operations and would also become a source of trained personnel against a Soviet incursion now that pre-surrender agreements had been made with the Americans.

Yet this was not all the military manpower that could be drawn upon. An expansion of the air force commitment to Hokkaido, both by the Navy and the Army, was initiated after US forces invaded the Mariana Islands in 1944, and there was a very large assortment of combat and logistical support elements from all services on hand (nondivisional antiaircraft, artillery, supply, etc.). The number of military personnel ultimately demobilized by the US IX Corps and 77th Infantry Division on the island totaled a stunning 291,947 men at arms, a figure that was roughly triple that of Japanese military personnel killed on Okinawa and which did not include the paramilitary Peoples Volunteer Corps and 4,916 police.

What If . . . ?

Events in progress were proving the worth of Marshal Zhukov's June warning, and any move against Japan itself would not take place in a political and diplomatic void. But what might have happened if Stalin, in a fit of bullheadedness or bravado, went ahead with the Hokkaido operation and the Japanese refused to be cowed? The Imperial government had not actually surrendered yet, and although a truce and successful military-to-military negotiations had been carried out with the Americans, many of its troops continued to try to fight their way to safety and protect the roughly 1,500,000 Japanese civilians in Manchuria and the northern islands. Could the Japanese military, whatever orders might come from Tokyo, be expected to do any less if the Home Islands themselves were suddenly subject to what it would be perceived as a sneak attack after they'd already agreed to surrender? If Imperial forces subsequently put up even modest opposition—and it was likely to have been somewhat more than

“modest”—the Soviets would have had almost no ability to force and then exploit, either politically or militarily, an incursion on Hokkaido.

A look at Soviet air and naval plans is instructive. It was intended that air elements sufficient to support the hastily conceived operation be equally hastily deployed forward to Vladimir-Olyginsk and thence to captured Japanese airfields on Sakhalin Island. From there, air operations could be conducted with little difficulty, unless the situation suddenly boiled up into something more than a “show of force.” The Soviet Navy’s requirements were considerably larger, yet the operation’s naval component was, by necessity, so small that the second rifle division to land would have had to wait until the six available Project Hula LCIs and a variety of slow-moving, under-armed vessels used in place of assault shipping (trawlers, torpedo cutters, subchasers, and American-made mine sweepers) plodded more than *300 miles back* to the recently secured Sakhalin port of Maoka (today Kholmok) just to pick them up.

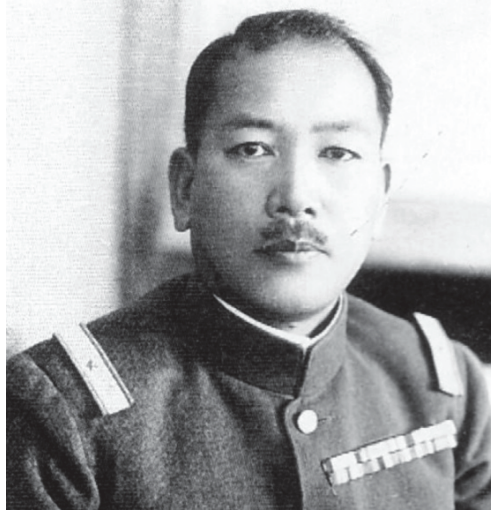
Unfortunately for the young Russian soldiers, sailors, and marines, the Kurile and Sakhalin fighting had put forces in northern Japan on full alert. Worse yet, Japanese air activity had increased along the very route that the ponderously moving invasion force would have to sail, and the area was also alive with civilian vessels of all sizes and types crammed with refugees fleeing the “bestial Russians.” Of largely wooden construction, they did not set off the magnetic mines heavily sowed by American bombers near Sakhalin ports, and the stout defense put up by Imperial troops enabled more than a quarter of the 370,000 Japanese on the island to Dunkirk their way south. The bottom line is that the Japanese would have known early on that the Soviets were coming and the movement would not go unmolested.

When the articles of surrender were signed on the battleship *Missouri*, there was just 80 to 90 operational aircraft (38 on Hokkaido) in the northern region, with most belonging to reconnaissance units. This, however, is no indication of the amount of aerial combat power that the Imperial Army and Navy could almost immediately hurl from the massive concentration of Kamikaze and

conventional aircraft based just to the south in central Honshu. After the 1944 invasion of the Marianas (and accelerated when MacArthur returned to the Philippines), the Japanese initiated an expansion of the air base infrastructure in Hokkaido and northern Honshu with the objective of using it to create an “aerial pincers” from the north on a US invasion of the Tokyo or Sendai areas. Obviously they were never used for this purpose, but these bases and dispersal fields pointed like a dagger at any Soviet landing on Hokkaido.

Air cover for the gaggle of Soviet boats was to consist of 60 DB-3 medium bombers and 56 Yak-9 fighters, an utterly insufficient—and vulnerable—force that would have to spend much of its time defending itself and its captured Sakhalin airfields instead the “fleet” off Rumoi. The Soviets could push additional Yak-9s, P-39 Super Cobras, and Sturmovik IL-2s into the fight but the first of these reinforcements could not make their appearance over Japan for as much as a week after the crisis erupted. In the meantime, the Imperial air forces would be the ‘furthest with the mostest’ from a well-established base system.

At Rumoi itself, the only site along the northwest coast that offered a prospect of moving inland, a division of the Soviet 87th Rifle Corps plus the 354th Separate Naval Infantry Battalion would initially face only a single—but ready for battle—Japanese battalion which, though it had no coastal defense guns, would make appropriate use of its generic light artillery against the invader’s boats. It seems likely that the Russians who made it to shore would succeed in seizing the small port but they would have no tanks, no trucks other than what they could commandeer, and little, if any, artillery. The 87th’s newly appointed commander, Lieutenant General A. S. Ksenofontov, would immediately find that the road inland as well as the one skirting the coast were, as US intelligence analysts had dryly noted, “subject to blocking” by even the People’s Volunteer Corps.



General Higuchi Kiichiro

The Imperial Fifth Area Army under LTG Higuchi Kiichiro contained 32–33 infantry battalions and 37–38 artillery batteries. It would detach and send to Rumoi whatever elements it deemed prudent from LTG Koito Gyoicho's 7th Division covering the north-northeastern area and LTG Mineki Juichiro's 42nd whose westernmost elements were in the Sapporo Plain. At least five infantry battalions from these divisions were less than one day's rail and road march from Rumoi.

Stalin's understrength and bloodied infantry force would quickly come under direct siege, a situation that would not provide a useful basis for Soviet occupation demands. And instead of having Stalingrad's wide, if sometimes broken, frontage along a river that men and supplies could be ferried across, they would be confined to a Dien Bien Phu or Gallipoli-like enclave surrounded by hostile hills and with several hundred miles of open ocean separating them from support. That is, if Stalin hadn't heeded the warnings of Zhukov, Molotov, Vasilevsky, and Truman against an escapade on mainland Japan.

References:

Those interested in this subject should consult the works of Colonel David M. Glantz (US Army, ret); the late Boris N. Slavinsky, deputy director of the Far East Science Center, Academy of Sciences, Vladivostok; and Richard A. Russell, of the US Naval Institute, Annapolis. To gain a fuller understanding of the matter as it fit into the ongoing military situation, one should also study the relevant US planning documents as well as the *Reports of General MacArthur*; Volume II Part II and Volume I Supplement; US Eighth Army G-2's translations of Japanese Demobilization Bureau documents such as the *Homeland Operations Record*; and finally, the G-2 translation of Colonel Hattori Takushiro's *Complete History of the Greater East Asian War*, Vol 4, produced while he was in its employ.

A Succession of Miracles

John T. Kuehn





Emperor Hirohito reads the surrender speech.

At noon local time August 15, 1945, the radios crackled in Japan and the alien voice of the *Showa* (meaning “Bright Harmony” or “Peace”) Emperor Hirohito came forth—a voice that most Japanese had never heard. Famous photographs of the event show many of the Japanese kneeling in reverence before their radios as the “Son of Heaven” asked them to “endure the unendurable” and surrender their sacred soil to the triumphant *gaijin*. In John Dower’s eloquent account, some of the Japanese could not even understand Hirohito’s thin, reedy voice speaking its highly formal court dialect of Japanese. But they understood enough to know that they had lost. Only a week earlier, the first atomic bombs had been dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States Army Air Force.

Japan decided to surrender:

- After US submarines and then aircraft had all but eliminated her merchant fleet upon which her transoceanic-Asian empire relied for operational and strategic movements.
- After the United States Navy had practically annihilated her Imperial Navy and cut her strategic sea lines of communication to

her resources and armies in Southeast Asia, the East Indies, and China.

- After Allied airpower had gained the ability to dominate the skies and littorals of the Western Pacific Rim.
- After Allied forces had defeated and liberated much of her post-December 1941 conquests.
- After Allied forces, principally American, had landed on and secured “sacred” Japanese territory in the Marianas, Iwo Jima, and the Ryukyus (Okinawa—ICEBERG).
- After B-29s and other forms of Allied airpower had set her cities afire and “made the rubble bounce.”
- After B-29s had dropped two atomic bombs and incinerated two cities, this time vaporizing the rubble.
- After the USSR declared war on Japan.
- As Soviet mechanized armies defeated the once-vaunted Kwantung Army in Manchuria.
- After a military coup failed to depose the Emperor, Hirohito.

I consider that Japan’s decision to surrender required a succession of miracles. But these, with the possible exception of the failed coup, are *not* the miracles to which this paper refers.

The classic historians’ contextual dilemma is—*how far back should we go?*

First, we can dispose of what we might think of as the *shaping* components of the necessary context for the miracles. The above events are not so much “miracles” as the result of much hard fighting, some serendipity, and quite a bit of innovation and willpower. With the exception of the failed coup—they should be regarded as *disasters* from the Japanese perspective, not as miracles.

A miracle is an event that we have trouble explaining logically—often we simply shrug such events off as luck or coincidence, or rather extreme serendipity. I will choose to instead characterize such applications of Murphy’s Law as miracles.

All of the miracles to which I refer have to do with the confluence of timing and how they interacted to effect the process—yes, the process—that resulted in the decision to accept the terms announced at Potsdam by the victorious Allied Powers after the defeat of Germany.

The miracles have to do with who controlled Grand Strategy and policy in the Japanese Imperial-Polity slash *Kokutai*.

It is those decision makers we must focus on.

But first, a sidebar. In his essay, “Chasing a Decisive Victory,” historian Edward J. Drea notes,

None was more powerful than kokutai, the notion of Imperial Japan as a unique nation by virtue of its sacred emperor. Kokutai remains difficult to define precisely in a few words, because the concept meant different things to different groups in Japan. Two examples: for Hirohito it meant the responsibility to his imperial ancestors to preserve the unbroken imperial line; for his imperial army it meant the preservation of the imperial system (tenno-sei), which became the repository for the values and virtues of the imperial army.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Drea, Edward J. *In the Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1998.



Hideki Tojo



Kokutai in fact, is the critical component to the miracles. After the disasters of the spring and summer of 1944, Japan's war aim, held by the groups discussed, changed to preservation of the *Kokutai*. However, because conceptions of the *Kokutai* were different, these amounted to different war aims *inside* the complex, consensus-driven Japanese polity.

For my purposes there are two generalized groups we must discuss.



Kantaro Suzuki

First, and most important, there is the polity in Japan, as represented by the Supreme Council for the Direction of War and the Cabinet¹⁵⁹. I will also sometimes call the Supreme Council the Imperial Council. The **second group** consists of those senior officers overseas who controlled the bulk of Japan's armies in China and elsewhere. There is a real need for *more* scholarship on this second group. At least in English.

Finally, not discussed but perhaps very relevant given “rational actor theory” is the fact that the faction of the Japanese Army led by Tojo was the more *moderate* and rational group in the Imperial Army—the Control Faction—who based their actions on reason and analysis. It may seem odd to say this, but the Allies were very fortunate that the key holdouts in the Japanese polity were from the more reasonable faction of the Japanese Army. For the Navy, the

¹⁵⁹ Sometimes known as the Supreme Military Council for the Direction of the War—it was not a permanent body.

more reasonable faction was already in place and had been since Admiral Yonai, a “Treaty Faction” admiral, had been made Navy Minister in the summer of 1944.

Let us take a look the composition of this Supreme Council during that fateful long “week of fire” from August 6 to August 15. First, the reconstitution of this council itself was something of a minor miracle, a result of the “black June” when the Marianas were successfully invaded and Japanese naval aviation obliterated during the so-called “Marianas Turkey Shoot,” never mind the continuing quagmires in China and Burma, the latter where a Japanese army had disintegrated and starved in a desperate, hopeless gambit to unhinge Great Britain in India and cut off China once and for all from its Allies.

- Emperor Hirohito: the final decision maker. He might only get to make one decision, and that decision might be his last. He was the figure to whom the Council gave “advice.”
- The Premier: after Tojo, Koiso Kuniaki, then, in April 1945, Admiral Suzuki.
- The Foreign Minister: Togo Shigenori
- The Navy Minister and Chief of Imperial Navy General Staff: Admirals Yonai and Toyoda
- The War Minister and Chief of Imperial Army General Staff: Generals Anami and Umezu
- Keeper of the Privy Seal: Marquis Kido. An unofficial member, always present with the Emperor



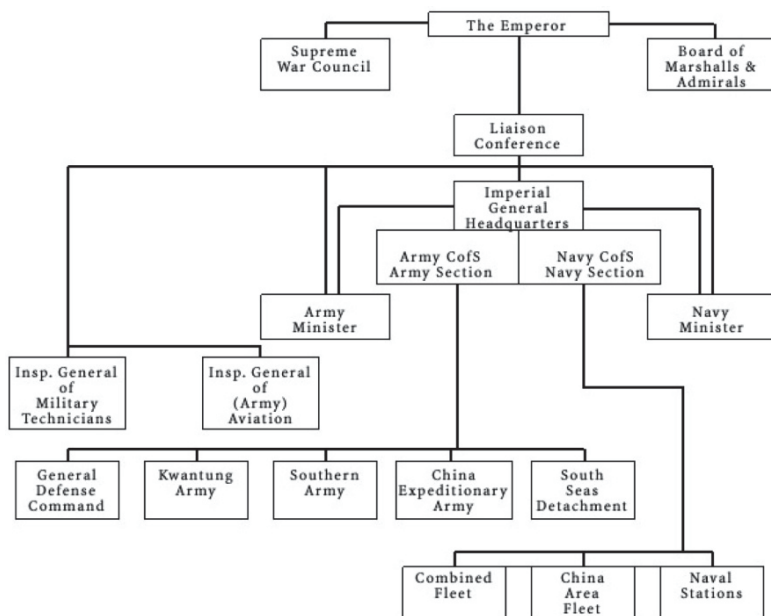
The Suzuki Cabinet.

By the time the defeat at Okinawa—an inevitable disaster, not a miracle—became known, three key holdouts to surrender remained.

The Army and Navy Chiefs—Umezu and Toyoda—plus War Minister General Anami, held out for ending the war *after* achieving a decisive victory, despite the evidence of Okinawa that such a result was probably not in the cards. Their strategy for this decisive victory was to administer a bloody repulse of the Allied invasion of Kyushu, Operation OLYMPIC.

In opposition, Kido, Yonai, Togo, and, eventually, the Premier, Admiral Suzuki, were ready to accept a negotiated surrender brokered by USSR.

Hirohito essentially straddled the fence, working through both groups to end the war either with a decisive victory in Kyushu *or* via the good offices of the USSR (in spite of the Potsdam declaration). Eventually, without the Emperor's or Kido's knowledge, the Supreme Council agreed to give the USSR initiative precedence as the preferred course of action.



The Japanese High Command.

(Source: Louis Morton, *Strategy and Command: The First Two Years* (Washington: GPO, 1962) 238.

Again recall, these were the *moderates* in the military side of the civil-military structure. Suzuki was almost murdered in the Young Officer's Revolt by the Radicals in 1936 because of his supposed pacifist tendencies!

In mid-June, Hirohito finally learned, from Umezu and Yonai no less, that Army and Navy did not think they could properly defend the homeland. Umezu also decided to concede Manchuria to the Soviets if they invaded. Hirohito's hope for decisive victory was gone and he should now properly be considered in the camp of the moderates who wished to end the war via a negotiated settlement that retained—above all else—the *kokutai* (which they understood to include no occupation of Japan, and Japanese discretion to try war criminals).

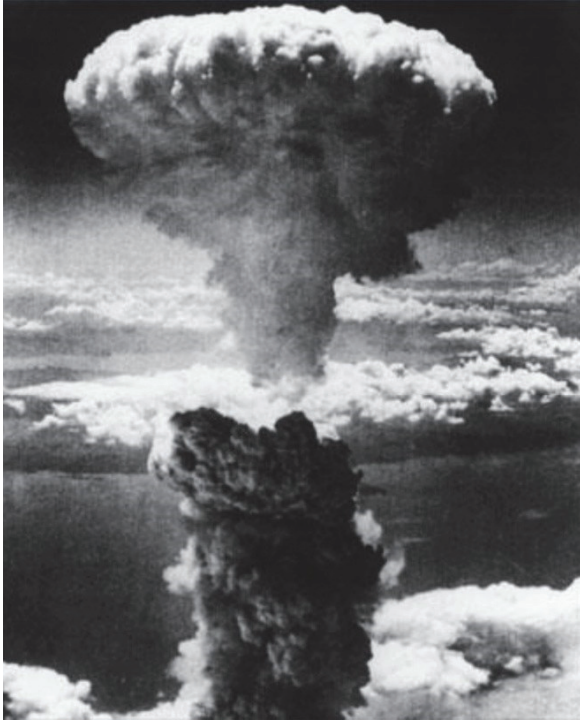
By end of June, evidence suggests Hirohito would have accepted Potsdam if Soviet mediation did not work as long as a narrow view of *kokutai* (retention of him as Emperor) could be achieved. But he kept this attitude very close to his vest. In July, although earlier fire bombings caused fear for Hirohito's life as well as for Imperial relics, Hirohito refused to take an armored train to a now-completed bomb-proof command center in the mountains at Matsushiro. This demonstrated Hirohito's key understanding that *he was the prize* and might lose his freedom of action if isolated by the Army. Maybe this can be regarded as the first of the minor miracles.

On July 26, the Allies issued the Potsdam Declaration as the basis for Japanese surrender.

To review the bidding, the Japanese at beginning of August were still relying on Soviet mediation—despite Soviet participation in the Potsdam demarche—to ensure they can achieve their basic war aim, as differently understood by all the parties, the retention of the *kokutai*. The Army was still planning on improving Japan's negotiating position by fighting a bloody “last stand” on Kyushu. The United States was completely aware of Japan's “secret” diplomatic initiative to the USSR via broken diplomatic code and worked actively to defeat it, for example, at Potsdam. The Americans were equally well informed via other codebreaking about Japanese plans and preparations for a final stand on Kyushu.

The Miracles—A Matter of Timing—The Iron Blows and Their Temporal Spacing

August 6: First Atomic Bombing at Hiroshima



The Bombing of Hiroshima

The effect of this attack was confusion, and realization that “utter destruction” rhetoric by the Americans was *not* hyperbole.

August 8, 2300 local in Moscow: the Soviet Union broke diplomatic relations with Japan and declared war based on Japan’s rejection of the Potsdam declaration.

The effect of this was cumulative with the effects of Hiroshima and news coming in nearly simultaneously (because of time zone differences) of the Soviet offensive in Manchuria.

August 9: Ten minutes after midnight (Khabarovsk time) on a new day, Soviet forces crossed the frontiers of Inner Mongolia and

Manchuria, initiating combat operations with the Empire of Japan. This was Operation AUGUST STORM.



“August Storm” – Soviet forces invade Manchuria

This had continued cumulative effect on Japanese diplomacy. It foreclosed the Soviet mediation option and undermined Army estimates and influence given operational surprise achieved by the Red Army.

August 9: At 1102 local time, a B-29 dropped the “Fat Man” plutonium bomb on Nagasaki.

This prompted a call for meeting of the Imperial Council that night to discuss ending the war.

August 9: At 2350, the Imperial Council (Supreme Council plus the Emperor and Kido) met. Despite protests by the trio of holdouts led by Anami, who wanted to avoid occupation, it was decided to accept the Potsdam Declaration. The Soviet attack and the atomic bombings foreclosed all options, although some in Army were still ready to test American resolve by fighting on a tactical nuclear battlefield.

August 10: The Allies were notified via neutral embassies that that Emperor had decided to accept the Potsdam Declaration. Unspoken

was the determination by Emperor and the “holdouts” *to retain the kokutai as understood by each of the parties, and this understanding was **different**.*

It could all have still gone wrong. Even Suzuki still had doubts, and Kido and the Emperor were concerned about the Army, especially Anami, remaining loyal.

On this day, Hirohito consolidated his position, first with royal princes and later with the generals and admirals, that the only way to save the *kokutai* was to rely on the goodwill of the Allies. He had no idea that American State Department specialists had recommended retention of the Emperor.

11/12 August: The Americans responded, basically affirming that Japan had accepted the Potsdam Declaration *in toto*.

The effect of this in Japan was confusion. The cabinet and the Supreme Council were ineffective in bringing discipline. This caused Hirohito to take more and more positive personal action to control events.

14 August: American planes dropped leaflets announcing Japan’s acceptance of Potsdam. Hirohito met with Army leaders who recommended continuing the war. He rejected their recommendation and convened the Supreme War Council in order to execute acceptance of Potsdam. In order to preempt a coup by officers, Hirohito recorded his famous surrender broadcast.

Why are we still arguing about this today? Ed Drea says Hirohito was simply trying to save the *kokutai* and his legacy with his ancestors. Rich Frank offers a vision of Japan in chaos, with a breakdown in imperial authority and no one in charge, like during the Sengoku Period four hundred years earlier. Others, including Hirohito himself, attributed the decision to his humanity. Others attributed the decision to cowardice. Are all of the above correct?

That night and the next morning, members of Imperial Guard Division revolted. Junior officers under Major Hatanaka attempted to seize the Emperor's recording. Anami made the key decision not to support the mutineers. Loyal Army troops of the Eastern District Headquarters suppressed the coup. The ringleaders, and later Anami, committed suicide. Another attempt to "rescue" the Emperor was made by radical officers on 16 August and it, too, failed, this time thanks to the now-loyal Guards Division.



War Minister General Korechika Anami

August 15: Shortly before noon, the Emperor broadcast his "endure the unendurable" message. Imperial Headquarters sent orders to the various armies to surrender to Allied forces.

Two "miracles" occurred after this broadcast.



The Japanese people listen to Hirohito's surrender broadcast.

First, the Japanese people and the armed forces listened to the Emperor and believed the broadcast. That this was widely accepted as the legitimate will of the direct descendant of the Gods is itself a miracle, especially given that no one had ever heard his voice and, up to this point, the radio had repeatedly misled all the Japanese people about the course of the war. This topic deserves more attention by scholars. Some explanations spring readily to mind, principally that the Japanese people knew in their hearts that they were defeated and were, in any case, tired of war and bellicose rhetoric, to say nothing of such attitudes in the officer corps of the armed forces.

The effect of the Emperor's message was that resistance to surrender collapsed inside Japan proper. The Japanese prepared to allow the Allies to occupy Japan. Nonetheless, the Army moved the sacred imperial sword into hiding on August 20.

The second miracle was the surrender of all the major Japanese forces, domino style, in East Asia.

August 9 to 20: Japanese withdrawal in the face of the Soviet offensive turned into a rout in Manchuria.

The Kwantung Army's defeat in Manchuria allowed other "undefeated" armies and forces to surrender elsewhere. Even so, members of Imperial family had to be dispatched to China to confirm that the Emperor had ordered the surrender. The reality is that Japanese *gekokujo*, field initiative or "principled disobedience," which had started the war in China, for some miraculous reason—perhaps eight years of hard-fought war—was stymied. The Army's institutional impulse to disobey yet again in this final climactic moment did not materialize. This was another miracle, and one requiring more scholarship.

On Peleliu in 1947, a Japanese officer and thirty-seven men emerged from caves and attacked the US garrison (including their families!) with small arms and grenades. A Japanese admiral was brought out to coax them to surrender. This is one instance of what *might* have happened had *gekokujo* reigned instead of obedience.

Bottom Line: The pacing and occurrence of these events (the bomb on August 6, the Soviet declaration of war, and the bomb on August 9) combined in a fortuitous, almost miraculous fashion with the actions of individuals such as Hirohito, Anami, and all those Japanese generals yet undefeated, to bring a sudden and unexpected end to the war in the Pacific. And yet, there was no real synchronization of these events that forced them to have the effect that they did.

I close with a quotation by Sadao Asada from a book review on Hasegawa's *Racing with the Enemy*:

"Soviet entry was important for implementing the surrender order; the atomic bomb was the crucial factor in the decision to surrender."

Was Japan's surrender simple luck? Or was it a succession of miracles?



Japanese troops surrender to the Chinese, 1945





Truman and the End Game Of the Pacific War

Richard C. Thornton



President Harry S Truman

Although there are many books on Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb, there are but two overarching interpretations. One is the official view that it was done to shorten the war and save lives, and the other, the so-called "revisionist" view, that it was done to intimidate the Russians, especially in Europe.¹⁶⁰ The official view eschews any discussion of geopolitics, especially the emerging conflict with the Russians, while the revisionist view is a disguised ideological lament about the lost possibility of détente with them. Curiously, however, both views share the same assumption that the United States pursued no long-term strategy in the war beyond winning it.

The truth is if one doesn't understand strategy, one cannot understand why any of the leaders acted the way they did, except in a most superficial way. From a longer-term perspective WWII was the culminating stage in a century-long struggle among Japan, Russia, and China for control of Northeast Asia. Japan had dominated the region for half a century; the United States had not played a major role, but in the summer of 1945 it was the United States that was poised to play a decisive role in it. With Japan's impending defeat and China's weakness, the question was how the United States and the Soviet Union would in one way or another reshape the region.

In my view Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb was a preemptive act designed to declare American entry into that struggle and put in place a geopolitical structure that went far beyond the immediate objective of defeating Japan. His purpose was undeniably to shorten the war and save lives, but it was also to create the basis for long-term American hegemony in the Pacific, and that required defeating the Soviet bid to win control over northeast Asia.

Truman's Review

Upon assuming the presidency in April 1945, President Truman initiated an exhaustive review of the agreements FDR had made with

¹⁶⁰ Henry L. Stimson, "The Decision to use the Atomic Bomb," *Harper's* (February 1947) and Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy* (New York: Vintage, 1965).

Stalin. The review took place in the context of rapidly deteriorating relations with Moscow, as Soviet forces surged toward Berlin, Prague, and Vienna.

FDR had committed the United States to the establishment of friendly governments around the borders of the Soviet Union. In Europe, according to the 1939 map as redrawn by the Nazi-Soviet Pact, that meant only Finland, Poland, and Romania. But, as part of his general strategy to crush, divide, and occupy Germany, FDR had also agreed to shift Poland's borders some two hundred miles westward to insure a weak postwar Germany. This had had the consequence of not only assuring Soviet domination of Finland, Poland, and Romania, but also opened the door for a Soviet penetration into Central Europe.



The Carpatho-Ukraine

In the spring of 1945, Stalin had persuaded the pro-Soviet Czech President Eduard Benes to transfer the eastern tip of Czechoslovakia, the sub-Carpatho Ukraine, to the Soviet Union (a treaty would be signed in June 1945). The annexation of that small piece of territory

gave the Soviets a direct border on Hungary for the first time and a strong position in Central Europe, indeed, extending all the way to Vienna.¹⁶¹

Suffice it to say, Truman was alarmed that the Soviet Union's "expanding demands" in Europe would find similar expression in the Far East. That is why, in his first meeting with Molotov, on April 23, Truman emphasized repeatedly the need for the "mutual observation of agreements." Good relations, he said, could not be "a one-way street." To Molotov's indignant reply that he had "never been talked to like that in my life," Truman snapped: "Carry out your agreements and you won't get talked to like that."¹⁶²

Truman worried that when Soviet forces entered the war against Japan, they would flout the agreements made for the Far East just as they were doing for Europe. Of particular concern was the secret Yalta agreement.

At Yalta, FDR and Stalin had agreed that: "The Soviet Union shall enter into the war against Japan on the side of the Allies on condition that:"

1. The "status quo" would be preserved in Outer Mongolia.
2. The Manchurian port of Darien would be "internationalized" and Port Arthur "leased" to the Soviet Union.
3. That Russia and China would "jointly operate" the Chinese Eastern and the South Manchurian railroads.
4. The southern part of Sakhalin would be "returned" to the Soviet Union.
5. The Kurile Islands would be "handed over" to the Soviet Union.

¹⁶¹ "Czechoslovak Cession of the Carpatho-Ukraine (Ruthenia) to the U.S.S.R.," *New York Times*, June 29, 1945.

¹⁶² Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, Vol. I. (New York: Doubleday, 1955), 77. Molotov wanted to know whether the secret Yalta agreement still stood. Truman said yes, including the agreement on Poland. See, Robert Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945–1948* (New York: Norton, 1977), 39–41.

Chiang Kai-shek had not been consulted about the agreement despite the clear violations of Chinese sovereignty regarding the ports and railroads in Manchuria. The agreement went on to state that the Soviet Union stood ready to conclude a treaty of friendship and alliance with China to “legalize” these concessions. Finally, FDR had committed himself to obtain Chiang Kai-shek’s “concurrence on advice from Marshal Stalin.”

The secret agreement, in part, reflected an ingenious solution to a fundamental conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union over China. Long-term Soviet strategy had been to establish buffer zones around the borders of the state, as was then occurring in Eastern Europe.

In Asia, the buffer zones were Sinkiang, Outer Mongolia, Manchuria, Korea, Sakhalin, and the Kurile Islands. The Soviets had long established a satellite state in Outer Mongolia, exerted substantial influence in Sinkiang, and were poised to take a page from Japan’s book in seizing Manchuria and Korea.

The United States, on the other hand, for close to half a century had espoused the strategy of the Open Door for China, which meant unreserved support for China’s territorial integrity. American and Russian strategies were thus in direct conflict, particularly over Manchuria, which, at Cairo, FDR had promised to return to China. FDR’s solution to this conflict was to propose that in return for Stalin’s commitment to China’s territorial integrity, he would guarantee that the Soviet Union’s “preeminent interests” would be safeguarded in Manchuria.

Those preeminent interests were to be safeguarded through the instrumentality of the Chinese Communists, who would control Manchuria after the war.¹⁶³ The cement that was supposed to bind

¹⁶³ The problem was that in early 1945 there was no Communist presence in Manchuria. But as the war came to an end the Chinese Communists would rush from their Yen’an redoubt to take control in the southern Manchurian countryside. The Russian invasion force that would enter Manchuria against Japan would be accompanied by a Chinese baggage-train army that would take control of the northern part of Manchuria. See Richard Thornton, *China: A Political History* (Boulder: Westview, 1982), 180–84.

this solution together was the treaty of friendship and alliance between the Soviet Union and China, and Mao Zedong's commitment to enter into a coalition with Chiang Kai-shek's National Government. The United States would encourage and support both negotiations.

It is important to realize that only a handful of men knew about the secret Yalta agreement (it would not be made public for a year), but in retrospect it is clear that it drove policy. It is also clear there was more to FDR's and Stalin's agreement than was put on paper. They had an "understanding" regarding the pursuit of a pincer strategy against Japan just like that pursued against Germany.



Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin at Yalta

Although the joint invasion, division, and occupation of Japan's home islands was never made explicit, FDR's intentions were clear. Through an extension of Lend-Lease, Operation Milepost, the United States provided the Soviet Union with thousands of trucks, railway equipment, and supplies for the invasion of Manchuria, and through Project Hula transferred 149 ships to the Soviet Union in the Far East, including training 12,000 Soviet navy personnel in Alaska. The early end of the war brought the termination of these programs, but, had the war continued, this aid would have continued.

Moreover, a few days after the Yalta meeting, the War Department proposed two options for the Soviet occupation of Japan. One was for the occupation of Hokkaido only, and the other was for the occupation of Hokkaido and northern Honshu, a region called Tohoku.¹⁶⁴ The latter option would have allocated half of Japan to Soviet occupation. These options clearly indicated FDR's intent, but they would only come into play after the war ended and if FDR's strategy was fully carried out.

The position the Russians would have acquired in the Far East as a result of these agreements and understandings combined with control of half of Europe would have made the Soviet Union the dominant power on the Eurasian landmass and a global influence equal to the United States. They would have won the century-long struggle for control over northeast Asia, seizing Manchuria, Korea, and half of Japan. They would have been able to incorporate the impressive industrial plant the Japanese had constructed and acquired ice-free ports that they lacked, making Siberia viable. Moreover, the longer the war continued, the stronger the Soviet position would be at the end.

It is no wonder that Truman concluded that this was a bad bargain. FDR had given away far too much for too little in return, especially as it became increasingly evident that Soviet entry into the war was unnecessary to defeat Japan. The challenge the new president faced was how to wriggle out of FDR's commitments—especially Yalta, but also Milepost and Hula—without violating any of them, and his solution lay in the agreements themselves.

The only specific territorial changes FDR had committed to in the Yalta agreement were for Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands to be turned over to the Soviet Union. The Soviet position in Manchuria was theoretically limited by lease and joint-use agreements, and Soviet

¹⁶⁴ "Occupation and Control of Japan in the Post-Defeat Period," February 15, 1945, ABC 357, records group 165. National Archives.

control over Outer Mongolia was simply reaffirmed. Sinkiang was not mentioned.

But FDR had made no formal, written commitment for the invasion, division, and occupation of Japan's home islands. Nor had he made any formal, written commitment about Korea. At Cairo in November 1943, FDR, Churchill, and Chiang Kai-shek had agreed, "In due course Korea shall become free and independent." By the time of Yalta, independence for Korea had morphed into a three-power trusteeship, which now included the Soviet Union, but not Great Britain, with independence receding into an indeterminate future.¹⁶⁵

My thesis is that unlike the written commitments in the Yalta agreement concerning Outer Mongolia, Manchuria, Sakhalin, and the Kuriles, the *absence* of any formal, written commitments for homeland Japan and Korea were Truman's way out of FDR's bad bargain. Truman would adhere scrupulously to the written commitments, but alter to US advantage the unwritten, informal understandings, and the atomic bomb would be the key to success.

As Truman's review continued, it became clear that Japan was beaten. The Japanese navy and air force had ceased to exist as viable forces. From March, the US Air Force had commenced massive incendiary bombing raids against most cities, leaving them in ruins. The US Navy had commenced a blockade of the country, was mining its harbors, bombarding its coastal cities, and submarines had cut off all access to and from the home islands. Japan was prostrate.

Moreover, word came that the Japanese were seeking to end the war—extending peace feelers to the Vatican, to the US in Zurich, to the Swedes in Stockholm, and to the Russians in Moscow.¹⁶⁶ The sole condition was that the imperial prerogative remain intact.

¹⁶⁵ James Schnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, D.C.: OCMH, 1972), 6-7.

¹⁶⁶ See Gerhard Krebs, "Operation Super Sunrise? Japanese-United States Peace Feelers in Switzerland, 1945," *Journal of Military History* (October 2005), 1091-92; see David Irving, "Release When Ready," (online) for the discussions in Stockholm;

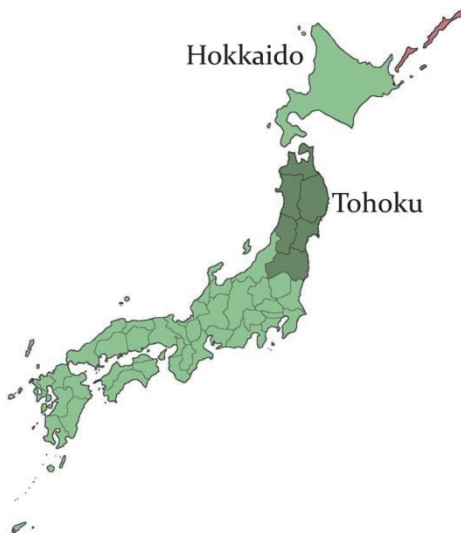
Finally, what was most heartening was information that the atomic bomb would be available for use by early August. There is some confusion about the bomb as many authors argue that Truman had only decided to use the bomb while at Potsdam after he learned of the successful Trinity test, implying that it was a last-minute decision and not part of an integrated strategy. At best, that is only half true.

The Manhattan Project scientists had devised two types of bombs; a uranium version with a gun trigger detonator and a plutonium version detonated by an implosion device. By February 1945, scientists were confident that the uranium bomb, called “little boy,” would work and would not require testing. The more complicated implosion-type plutonium bomb, called “fat man,” would require testing, which was scheduled for early July.

In the meantime, preparations were underway to configure aircraft, train aircrews, set up a forward base on Tinian, and construct laboratories in which to assemble the bomb. By mid-May, some 1800 officers and men of the 509th Composite Group, who had been training in Utah, had arrived in Tinian. They knew nothing except that their mission was to be “special.” The 509th was prepared and in place only weeks after the president had been fully briefed about the bomb.¹⁶⁷

and Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005), 94–95, for the discussions in Moscow.

¹⁶⁷ Robert Batchelder, *The Irreversible Decision: 1939–1950* (New York: MacMillan, 1961), 98.



The Tohoku Region

When, as part of Truman's review, Secretary of War Henry Stimson briefed him on the Manhattan Project, on April 25, the president immediately set up a special committee, named the Interim Committee, chaired by Stimson, to determine whether, when, and where the bomb could be used. By the time the Committee met, the capability to deliver the weapon was already in place.

Committee members included: Stimson, soon-to-be Secretary of State Jimmy Byrnes, Under Secretary of the Navy Ralph Bard; Assistant Secretary of State William Clayton; scientific advisers Vannevar Bush, Karl Compton, and James Conant; and Chief of Staff General Marshall.

Byrnes was very distrustful of the Russians and supported use of the bomb without informing them. Marshall opposed use of the bomb and suggested informing Moscow about it. Stimson also thought information about the bomb should be shared. Scientific opinion was mixed, with a strong segment opposed to its use. Nevertheless, on June 1, 1945, the Interim Committee determined

that two bombs would be available by early August, pending the July test of the plutonium device. (Later, after the war, many opinions changed.)

The committee recommended and Truman agreed that the bombs should be used against Japan without warning and without informing the Soviet Union in advance. From this point, the atomic bomb secretly played a central role in Truman's plans.¹⁶⁸

The decision to use the atomic bomb against Japan had been made while Harry Hopkins, FDR's special adviser, was in Moscow, May 26–June 6. His mission was first and foremost to smooth over growing postwar European disputes, especially over Poland. He was also to obtain Stalin's agreement for a meeting of the big three and confirm arrangements for Soviet entry into the war against Japan.¹⁶⁹

Stalin affirmed his commitment to join the war against Japan, but introduced a new condition that China would have to sign a treaty legalizing the Yalta accords before the Soviets would enter. Stalin evidently thought he held some leverage over the United States here, but he would quickly drop this condition when he found out otherwise.

He also agreed to be a party in a trusteeship for Korea. As to Japan, Stalin affirmed the unconditional surrender formula and informed Hopkins that Soviet forces would be ready to move "by August 8th." He also told him "Russia would expect to share in the actual occupation of Japan and that he wanted an agreement with us and the British as to zones of occupation...."¹⁷⁰ That meant there was, as yet, no agreement on occupation zones.

To restate: Truman would support what FDR had committed the United States to do in writing in the Yalta agreement, but he would not support that which had not been committed to in writing, namely, the joint invasion, division, and occupation of mainland

¹⁶⁸ Arthur H. Compton, *Atomic Quest* (London: Oxford, 1956), 237.

¹⁶⁹ Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1950), 883–916.

¹⁷⁰ Truman, *Memoirs, Vol. I*, 264–65.

Japan, and the trusteeship for Korea. But he and Secretary Byrnes kept that decision to themselves, as the arguments intensified among his advisers.

Truman's Revision

The options, as they evolved through midyear, were for either invasion, or bombing and blockade without invasion. Whether, how, or when to use the atomic bomb was not part of this discussion, because not all of Truman's advisers knew about the bomb and those who did opposed its use. (Again, after the war opinions changed.)

General Marshall argued for continuity with FDR, the grand pincer strategies pursued since Tehran. That meant the joint US-Soviet invasion, division, and occupation of Japan, the Russians coming from the north and the Americans from the south, meeting in Tokyo.¹⁷¹ Of the president's top advisers in Washington, Marshall was the only one to argue for invasion.

Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Grew, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, and Truman's chief of staff, Admiral William Leahy, all argued against invasion. Based on Japanese peace feelers, they urged acceptance of the condition that the emperor's prerogative be preserved to end the war short of invasion.

Admirals Ernest King and Chester Nimitz and Air Force General Hap Arnold also argued against invasion. They believed that Japan could be forced to surrender by an intensification of the naval blockade and aerial bombardment then underway.

The Stimson group's proposal to modify the unconditional surrender formula might have brought a prompt end to the conflict, but at the cost of leaving the Japanese regime intact without removing the prospects for a resurgence of Japanese militarism.

¹⁷¹ *The Entry of the Soviet Union into the War Against Japan: Military Plans, 1941–1945*, (Washington, Department of Defense, 1955), 51–52.

The generals and admirals' arguments for blockade, bombardment, or invasion would have meant the continuation of the war for several more months, with its attendant casualties, and open the door to a strong Soviet role in the endgame and a claim to join in the occupation of Japan, as Stalin was already demanding.

Furthermore, none of these proposals addressed the larger issue of the postwar structure of the Far East and the respective Soviet and American positions in it. Although the president agreed on June 18 to proceed with longstanding plans to invade Japan, he and Byrnes set about crafting a broader solution that centrally included the use of the bomb.

They sought by dropping the atomic bomb to end the war six months to a year sooner than expected. Thus, not only would an American invasion be avoided, and lives saved, but also Soviet participation in the war would be limited. If successful, and it was a big if, the United States would control Japan and Moscow would be excluded.

The bomb was not intended to keep the Russians out of the war; indeed, that would be impossible. This was Moscow's historic opportunity to settle the century-long struggle among Japan, China, and Russia for control over Northeast Asia and Stalin was determined to seize it. Make no mistake about that.

But Truman was equally determined to limit their advance to the Asian mainland and, as we shall see, to Sakhalin and the Kuriles, as stipulated in the Yalta agreement. To limit the Soviet position in Korea, Truman sought its division. And to circumscribe the Soviet position in Manchuria, he supported FDR's plan for a treaty between Russia and China and the creation of a coalition government.

Truman and Byrnes decided on this strategy without input from their top advisers. Final details were worked out aboard the USS *Augusta* on the way to Potsdam, July 7–14. We do not know much

about what went on during the voyage, but we can be certain that it was not a pleasure outing.¹⁷²

Although there was a large entourage aboard the *Augusta*, Truman and Byrnes excluded all of their advisers except for Admiral Leahy and three State Department officials: Chip Bohlen, the department's top Russian specialist, Freeman Matthews, Director of European Affairs, and Ben Cohen, trusted lawyer and expert draftsman. Stimson, Marshall, Grew, Forrestal, King, Arnold, even Harriman, were all excluded and would travel separately to the conference.

Potsdam was going to be a high-stakes poker game and Truman had not one, but two, aces in the hole to play against Stalin. Not only did he have the power to bring the war to an earlier-than-planned end with at least one atomic bomb, but also he had the emperor's provisional willingness to end the war.

US intelligence systems *Ultra* and *Magic* indicated that the Japanese were playing a very risky and dangerous endgame. The Imperial Conference of June 8 had adopted the "basic strategy ... for guiding the war," which was code-named *Ketsugo*. Their plan was to fight a one-front war against the United States, attempt to administer a decisive defeat in repulsing the invasion of Kyushu, and then sue for peace on favorable terms through a Soviet mediation. As Frank notes, the emperor's "instinct remained that a military triumph must precede any diplomatic maneuver."¹⁷³

¹⁷² Gar Alperovitz, "More on Atomic Diplomacy," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (December 1985), 38–39.

¹⁷³ Richard Frank, *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 99.



B-29s of the 509th Bomb Group on Tinian

The Japanese were gambling that they could keep the conflict a one-front war by enlisting the Russians as mediators, even though the Soviets had denounced the Neutrality Treaty on April 5 and were moving troops to the Far East.¹⁷⁴ The Supreme War Council recognized that the Russians “planned to expand their influence in the Far East by striking at the most opportune moment,” but did not expect that moment to arrive until late summer, or early fall.¹⁷⁵

What was looming before the Japanese leadership was the high probability that they would suffer the fate of Germany. The defeat, dismemberment, and occupation of Germany had to have been

¹⁷⁴ There is some controversy over whether the Soviet denunciation of the treaty, the US invasion of Okinawa, or something else, had precipitated the fall of the Koiso government. David James, *The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Empire* (New York: George Allen & Unwin, 1951) 297, offers a different answer. Japan had sent a special envoy to Moscow early in January before Yalta to consult with Stalin about the “general situation.” He returned to Tokyo on April 3. The special cabinet meeting of the fifth led to the resignation of the government. The suggestion is that Stalin had disappointed Koiso’s expectations, prompting his resignation.

¹⁷⁵ Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 95–96.

uppermost in the emperor's mind. The greatest danger Japan faced was not merely destruction and defeat, which were now inevitable, but dismemberment and the end of the *Kokutai*.

The *Kokutai* was a term with layers of meanings centered on the concept of the national polity, but its irreducible meaning was the integrity of the state structure. There could be recovery from destruction and defeat, but not from dismemberment.

Japan's leaders were committed to the *Ketsugo* defense strategy, but everything depended upon keeping the Russians out. Hoping to ensure they adhered strictly to the terms of the Neutrality Pact, which was to remain in force for one year after it was denounced, the Japanese progressively increased the amount they were willing to pay to obtain Soviet agreement to mediate a settlement.

First, they offered extensive fishing rights, and then offered to give up Sakhalin, and then the Kuriles. Then, they offered to relinquish all of their mainland conquests and, ultimately proposed a formal alliance—all in return for mediation of a peace settlement. It is easy now to question the Japanese leadership's grasp of reality, but, nevertheless, that was their approach. Stalin was noncommittal.

Of course, we know now that Stalin had no intention of mediating. He had issued orders to prepare for entry into the war after his very first conversation with Harry Hopkins, on May 26. He ordered his armies to be ready to attack by August 20, but wanted everything prepared by August 1, over three months before the scheduled US invasion of Kyushu.¹⁷⁶ Stalin, it seems, was planning to steal a march on the United States.

If Truman understood that the Japanese leadership's main concern was preservation of the state, then he knew that the status of the emperor was ultimately negotiable, despite the Japanese attempt to identify the emperor with the state. He certainly knew that he could obtain an end to the war at any time if he were willing to compromise on the emperor's status, as Stimson, Forrestal, Grew,

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 116.

and Leahy urged. But that was the worst case, and he would choose it if and only if the Russian invasion of the main islands became unpreventable by other means.

Thus, the president's carefully crafted strategy was to use the atomic bomb as a preemptive strike to bring the war to an early end, which would prod Stalin into prematurely entering the war. The Russians would seize Manchuria, Sakhalin, and the Kuriles, within the terms of the Yalta agreement, but Truman would limit their advance in Korea and exclude them entirely from Japan proper. He would fulfill FDR's Yalta commitments to the letter and demand that Stalin do the same, but he would establish America's dominant position in the Pacific by taking complete control of Japan.

Truman's plan would be complicated to execute, because the Russians would contest their exclusion from Japan. The atomic bomb would be the key to success, enabling the emperor to save "face" and prompting him to save his country from catastrophic defeat by bringing to a quick end a war that was expected to last for at least another half year and ensure Japan's dismemberment.



George Marshall, Harry Truman, and James Byrnes

The Potsdam Conference

At Potsdam, Truman initiated the Pacific aspect of his strategy on a broad canvas. During the two-week-long conference, Truman, Stalin, and Churchill focused most of their deliberations on European issues, much to the discomfiture of Stalin who had come to the conference eager to work out plans for the final joint invasion, division, and occupation of Japan

After an intensive negotiation in which Truman initially contested most of what FDR had agreed to with Stalin regarding Europe—Truman wanted a united Germany, objected to reparations, opposed the Oder-Neisse line for Poland, wouldn't recognize Stalin's regimes in Eastern Europe—he ended up authorizing Byrnes to offer a settlement dividing Germany and Europe on very advantageous terms for Stalin (even while publicly denying he had done so). At the same time, he presented Stalin with a *fait accompli* in the Far East.¹⁷⁷

Both behind the scenes and in discussions with Stalin, Truman carefully positioned the United States for the endgame. During his first meeting with the Soviet leader, on July 17, Truman asked for his assurance that the "open door" policy would apply to all of Manchuria and that Darien be "internationalized," as stipulated in the Yalta agreement.¹⁷⁸ This was a clear test of Stalin's intentions because in treaty negotiations with Chiang, Stalin was demanding that China give the Soviets sole control over Darien in violation of Yalta.

Raising the issue of the "open door" took Stalin aback, for it was a new demand for an American presence in Manchuria, in support of China against the Soviet Union, and a clear deviation from FDR's policy.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ For discussion of Truman's European strategy, see Charles Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam* (New York: Dell, 1975).

¹⁷⁸ "Truman-Stalin meeting, 17 July 1945," Bohlen notes, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Potsdam*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1945), 1586–87.

¹⁷⁹ See the Chiang-FDR exchange at Cairo, in Thornton, *China: A Political History*, 141.

Truman also wanted to know exactly when the Red Army would be ready to invade Manchuria, but Stalin and Chief of Staff Aleksei Antonov were vague, offering different dates from mid-to-late August. This, of course, was two-to-three weeks later than the date Stalin had given to Hopkins. (In fact, as noted above, Stalin had ordered his armies to be prepared to attack by August 1.)

On July 21, Leslie Groves, the Manhattan Project manager, had sent a detailed report on the astonishing power of the atomic bomb to the president. By all accounts, this news bolstered the president's spirits immeasurably and, evidently, strengthened his belief that his plan would work.¹⁸⁰ Now he would have two bombs to use, instead of one. That same day he authorized the Joint Chiefs to alert MacArthur that events were moving far more rapidly than anyone expected. Their message stated that it might "prove necessary to take action within the near future on the basis of Japanese capitulation, possibly before Russian entry."¹⁸¹

As Stalin had conditioned Soviet entry into the war on the signing of a treaty with China, Truman sought to drag out the negotiation. On the 23rd, he sent Chiang a message stating: "I asked that you carry out the Yalta agreement but I had not asked that you make any concession in excess of that agreement."¹⁸²

Truman was clearly playing both sides of this negotiation, indicating to Chiang not to cave in to Soviet demands for control of Darien, and to Stalin that the United States might have to get involved in Manchuria if the Russians tried to steamroll the Chinese. But his purpose was to delay signing of the treaty in hopes of delaying Soviet entry.

The next day, July 24, US and Soviet military staffs met to discuss respective areas of operations. The Joint Chiefs sought to limit Soviet operations to the mainland, while fencing off Japan and dividing

¹⁸⁰ Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 82.

¹⁸¹ Ray Cline, *Washington Command Post* (Washington: GPO, 1951), 348.

¹⁸² "The President to the Ambassador in China (Hurley)," 23 July 1945, *FRUS-Potsdam*, 1241.

Korea. (This last was seventeen days before, on August 10, Colonels Dean Rusk and Charles Bonesteel would reiterate the division of Korea at the thirty-eighth parallel.)¹⁸³

The Air Force was to have virtually unlimited air access over Manchuria, while the Navy would have equally wide-ranging freedom of navigation in the Sea of Japan and Sea of Okhotsk, which they were already exercising. Needless to say, the Russians were not happy with these limitations and sought to revise them.

The same day, July 24, after their plenum meeting, Truman "sauntered casually around to Stalin" without his interpreter and "mentioned" to him that the United States now possessed a "new weapon of unusual destructive force."¹⁸⁴ Stalin displayed no surprise, saying simply that he was "glad to hear it and hoped we would make 'good use of it against the Japanese.'" Truman then went to his quarters and "made the decision" to drop the atomic bombs on Japan. He ordered the first bomb to be dropped as soon as possible "after about 3 August," when the conference would be over.¹⁸⁵

Truman's *fait accompli* came two days later. Without informing or consulting the Russians, the president released the Potsdam Declaration on the evening of July 26. The most striking aspect of the declaration was the absence of Stalin's name from it. Coming out of a conference where the president, Stalin, and Churchill had been conferring for over a week, it strongly suggested that there had been a disagreement among the big three.

Worse, Churchill had left the conference. It was said he left to await the election results in Britain. But other explanations were possible and rumors were rife. The Potsdam Declaration was signed by Truman, Churchill, who had left, and Chiang Kai-shek, who had not attended, but not Stalin. The implication was that Stalin had declined

¹⁸³ "Entry of the Soviet Union..." 92–93.

¹⁸⁴ Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, 191–92.

¹⁸⁵ Truman, *Memoirs, Vol. I*, 416, 420.

to sign the declaration in order to uphold his treaty commitment to Japan.



Truman aboard the *USS Augusta*

Of course, we know now Stalin fully expected to sign the declaration.¹⁸⁶ Signing it would have given him a way around the Neutrality Treaty and strengthened his demand to participate in the occupation. But these were precisely the reasons why Truman did not want his signature on it. Perhaps more importantly, the omission of Stalin's signature fed the Japanese military's hope that the Russians were going to adhere to the Neutrality Treaty, stay out of the war, and mediate Japan's surrender.

Parsing the Potsdam Declaration indicates a number of subtle but different offers to a variety of constituencies. Promising to carry out the terms of the Cairo Declaration, the signers said "Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and such minor islands as we determine." The clear

¹⁸⁶ Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 160–61.

inference was that *if* Japan surrendered to the United States, the nation would not be crushed and dismembered the way Germany had been, but kept intact.

Yet, in this very sentence lay a scrap for Stalin, which was the omission of any mention of the Kurile Islands, or Japan's Northern Territories (Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan, and Habomai). The Northern Territories were not the "minor islands" referred to in the Declaration, but historically distinct Japanese territory, separate from the Kurile Islands. The Treaty of Shimoda between Japan and Russia in 1855 defined the Kurile Islands as the string of islands from Paramuschiev to Urrupu. The islands to the southwest of Urrupu were Japan's Northern Territories. That definition was never contested. Omitting both from the Declaration left their status ambiguous.¹⁸⁷

Finally, there was yet another element missing from the Declaration, and that was the Emperor himself, who was not mentioned. The last sentence of the Declaration called upon the *government* of Japan to proclaim unconditional surrender of all the Japanese *armed forces*. Referring only to the government of Japan implied that the emperor was a distinct entity separate and apart from the government and would receive separate consideration.

There were, in fact, four powerful messages in the Potsdam Declaration. To the Japanese military that counted on Soviet neutrality and mediation in their last-ditch stand strategy, the absence of Stalin's signature reinforced their view. To the so-called Japanese peace faction, the promise of retaining the Kokutai intact conveyed an equally powerful attraction to accept US terms. To the emperor, the omission of his name signaled that he would continue to reign if he could deliver the surrender. Finally, to Stalin, there was

¹⁸⁷ In the Treaty of St. Petersburg, 1875, Russia swapped the Kurile Islands for Sakhalin, but Japanese acquisition of the Kuriles in no way changed the status of the Northern Territories. The outcome of the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, which saw Sakhalin revert to Japanese control, also had no impact on the status of the Kuriles.

the suggestion that the Northern Territories were not considered to be Japanese sovereign territory.

Truman, in my view, was counting on the kind of response he got from Japan. He had already made the decision to drop the bomb, so he was going to interpret whatever the Japanese said as a rejection of the surrender terms. But just in case they caved in completely, that same day of the 26th, the JCS ordered MacArthur and Nimitz to be ready to move “in the event of Japanese governmental surrender.” In such an event, JCS sought the immediate deployment of US Marines to several ports bordering on Manchuria and Korea to limit the Soviet advance.¹⁸⁸

Stalin had counted on his inclusion in the Declaration as the way of overriding his treaty obligation under the Neutrality Pact.¹⁸⁹ But he also faced a second impediment; one of his own making, and that was his demand that Chiang Kai-shek sign a treaty with the Soviet Union before Moscow would join in the war against Japan.

Stalin had added this condition in his meeting with Harry Hopkins in June; it was not stipulated in the Yalta agreement, which said only that the Soviet Union expressed its “readiness to conclude ... a pact of friendship and alliance” with China, not that Soviet entry into the war was contingent upon it.

Stalin was undoubtedly shocked at how easily Truman had outmaneuvered him, but he had a countermove. On July 29, he sent Molotov to the plenary session in his place, explaining that he had a “cold.” Molotov passed on Stalin’s proposal that the Allies “address a formal request to the Soviet government for its entry into the war,” on the grounds that Japan had rejected the Potsdam Declaration.

Truman, taken by surprise, deferred a reply for two days. On July 31, he sent Stalin a message saying that as soon as he received word from him that the treaty with China had been signed, he would send

¹⁸⁸ “Joint Chiefs of Staff to McArthur and Nimitz,” July 26, 1945, Victory out 357, CCS Decimal File 386.2, Japan Sec. 3, RG 218. National Archives.

¹⁸⁹ Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 161.

him a “form letter” requesting Soviet entry. The invitation would be based on articles 103 and 106 of the proposed UN Charter and the Moscow Declaration of 1943.¹⁹⁰ These were terms that Stalin could hardly accept because they took the initiative for entry into the war away from him and placed it in the hands of Chiang Kai-shek and Truman.

Endgame in the Far East

Events now moved rapidly. To guard against the worst case of a surprise Soviet landing on Hokkaido, or even Honshu, Truman sought to redirect American power away from Kyushu to landings in northern Honshu. On August 4, the Joint War Plans Committee issued a report on “Alternates to Olympic.” Due to *Ultra* signal intercepts of a heavy reinforcement of Kyushu “considerably in excess of that previously estimated,” the planners wanted MacArthur and Nimitz to “make alternate plans and submit timely recommendations.”

The report concluded: “Operations against extreme northern Honshu, against the Sendai area, and directly against the Kanto Plain [Tokyo] are now under intensive study here.”¹⁹¹ Hokkaido was omitted as one of the alternates, which suggests that Truman may have thought the Russians might be able to get there before we could prevent it.

The August 6 atomic burst over Hiroshima changed everything, fatally compromising the first part of *Ketsugo*, the decisive battle against the United States, even though some high Japanese military and scientific officials denied the bomb’s significance.¹⁹² The

¹⁹⁰ Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, 403–4.

¹⁹¹ “Alternates to Olympic,” Joint War Plans Committee, August 4, 1945, in MacEachin, *The Final Months of the War With Japan*, Document 17, appendix to enclosure “A.”

¹⁹² Robert J.C. Butow, *Japan’s Decision to Surrender* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954), 153–54.

emperor, however, directed urgently that Japan move to activate the second part of the plan, the request for Soviet mediation.

The Japanese had been attempting to ascertain Moscow's attitude toward mediation for some time, but especially since Potsdam, hoping that the omission of Stalin's name from the Declaration meant that Moscow would remain neutral.

Ambassador Sato arranged a meeting with Molotov for August 8th. As soon as he entered Molotov's office, the Soviet foreign minister cut him off before he could present his request for mediation, and, instead, shocking him, rejected mediation and read the formal Soviet declaration of war against his country.¹⁹³

The Soviet declaration of war compromised *Ketsugo* in its entirety and the dropping of the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki the next day provided an exclamation point. Thus, it was the collapse of Japan's strategy that produced the decision to surrender.

I emphasize the impact of the Soviet declaration of war. It not only destroyed the Japanese assumption of a one-front conflict, but it also portended Japan's dismemberment. Prime Minister Suzuki, in explaining the need for haste, spoke to this very point:

If we miss today, the Soviet Union will take not only Manchuria, Korea, Karafuto, but also Hokkaido. This

¹⁹³ Molotov said: "After the defeat and capitulation of Hitlerite Germany, Japan remained the only great power which still stands for the continuation of the war. The demand of the three powers, the United States, Great Britain and China, of July 26 for the unconditional surrender of the Japanese armed forces was rejected by Japan. Thus the proposal made by the Japanese Government to the Soviet Union for mediation in the Far East has lost all foundation.... True to its obligation as an ally, the Soviet Government has accepted the proposal of the Allies and has joined in the declaration of the Allied powers of July 26.... In view of the above, the Soviet Government declares that from tomorrow, that is from August 9, the Soviet Union will consider herself in a state of war against Japan." For complete text, see *New York Times*, August 9, 1945, 1.

*would destroy the foundation of Japan. We must end the war when we can deal with the United States.*¹⁹⁴

Translating this into plain language, Suzuki was saying that the only way to preserve the *Kokutai* was by surrendering to the United States before the Russians got in. The Japanese accepted the Potsdam terms the next day, August 10, but they continued to haggle over the role of the emperor, unmentioned in the declaration, hoping to preserve Hirohito's "prerogatives as a sovereign ruler," which, of course, would preserve the regime.



Churchill, Truman, and Stalin at the Potsdam Conference

In Washington, after some internal argument about the kind of response to make (Stimson, Leahy, Grew, and Forrestal urging agreement to retain the emperor), Secretary Byrnes drafted the following reply to the Japanese.

¹⁹⁴ Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 237.

*From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor ... shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied powers.... The ultimate form of government of Japan shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.*¹⁹⁵

Byrnes' reply implied acceptance of the imperial prerogative within the terms of unconditional surrender, but promised nothing.¹⁹⁶ The ball, in other words, was back in Japan's court, and the continued refusal of Japan's military high command to acknowledge defeat prompted Truman to increase the pressure, in part because the Russians were moving fast.

From Vladivostok Soviet forces were heading for the ports of Rajin and Chongjin on the northeast coast of Korea. They were engaging the Japanese in the Kuriles and were fighting their way to the southern tip of Sakhalin Island, which was only twenty-seven miles across the La Pérouse Strait from Hokkaido.¹⁹⁷

The next day, August 11, Truman made two decisions. First, he ordered MacArthur and Nimitz to make "advance arrangements ... to occupy the Port of Dairen and a port in Korea [Seoul] immediately following the surrender of Japan if those ports have not at that time been taken over by Soviet forces."¹⁹⁸ Second, he ordered preparations for resumption of air strikes against Japan, but reoriented them away from indiscriminate urban incendiary bombing to precision strikes on petroleum and transportation systems.¹⁹⁹

Then occurred one of the most extraordinary and complicated sequences of the war, which led to Japan's surrender. On the 14th,

¹⁹⁵ Frank, *Downfall*, 301–02.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 256.

¹⁹⁸ "JCS message No. WARX 48004 to MacArthur and Nimitz," August 11, 1945, CCS Decimal File 386.2. Japan sec. 3, RG 218, National Archives.

¹⁹⁹ Frank, *Downfall*, 303–05.

after a four-day stand down, 20th Air Force carried out a one thousand-plane attack on six targets; two were in western Honshu, at Iwakuni and Osaka, to interdict the rail link to Kyushu; and three were against similar targets northwest of Tokyo, at Tokoyama, Kumagaya, and Isesaki.²⁰⁰ But it was the sixth attack, carried out by the 315th Bomb Wing—which has received scant mention in accounts of the war—that triggered what was probably the most bizarre sequence in history.

The 315th's mission was the last and longest bombing mission of the war. Its declared target was Japan's remaining functioning oil refinery at Akita and the adjacent port of Tsuchizaki located on the northwest coast of Honshu, some 280 miles from Tokyo. Akita was the obvious location for Soviet forces to attempt a landing on Honshu.²⁰¹ In short, Akita was the gateway to Tokyo, and Truman was determined to slam it shut.

The 315th's 143 B-29Bs took off from Guam “almost an hour after” *Domei*, the Japanese News Agency, announced Japan's imminent capitulation, strongly implying that although the target was Japanese, the objective was Russian. As Smith and McConnell note, General Carl Spaatz, commander of the Strategic Air Forces, was apparently acting on unwritten instructions from Chief of Staff General George Marshall to end the war as quickly as possible so that the Soviet Union would not gain a foothold in Japan (and capture the Akita oil refinery).²⁰²

As the B-29Bs flew over Tokyo on their way to Akita around midnight on the 14th, Tokyo defense command imposed a blackout on the capital. The blackout occurred just as a few fanatical right-wing officers were attempting a coup d'état to prevent Japan's surrender by finding and destroying the emperor's prerecorded surrender speech.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 313.

²⁰¹ Jim Smith and Malcolm McConnell, *The Last Mission* (New York: Broadway Books, 2002), 186–87.

²⁰² Ibid, 201.

In the dark, however, they were unable to locate it, and by morning of the 15th their plot had been quashed and the surrender announcement played on national radio.²⁰³ The 315th's successful air strike on Akita had demonstrated Truman's willingness to use American power to block any Soviet attempt to enter Japan. But, the mission also *inter alia* facilitated the surrender of Japan, and perhaps even saved the emperor's life.

Although Japan had now surrendered, the Russians continued operations. For Truman, therefore, the problem remained to prevent them from gaining a foothold in Japan proper and limiting their advance in Korea. Issuing General Order No. 1 the day following the surrender announcement, MacArthur declared that all Japanese forces "in the main islands of Japan, minor islands adjacent thereto, Korea south of 38 north latitude, and the Philippines shall surrender to the Commander-in-Chief, US Army Forces in the Pacific."²⁰⁴ Left out of this order were both the Northern Territories and the Kurile Islands.

Stalin did not miss it. In a message to Truman the next day, he offered what he called a few "corrections." While accepting the dividing line for Korea, he insisted, "all the Kurile islands ... have to come into possession of the Soviet Union." He also wanted Japanese troops in "the northern part of the Island Hokkaido" to surrender to Soviet troops. In closing, Stalin hoped his "modest suggestions would not meet with any objections."²⁰⁵ At the same time, Molotov was attempting to obtain Ambassador Harriman's agreement to a "joint

²⁰³ Ibid, 227ff.

²⁰⁴ See Truman, *Memoirs, Vol.1, 439*, for his directive to MacArthur.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 440. The JCS, not privy to the Yalta Agreement, had planned on having Admiral Nimitz accept surrender of all Japanese forces in the Kurile Islands south of Onkotan Island, which would have meant all of the Kuriles, except for Paramuschiv and Shumushu close to Kamchatka. See "Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff," August 14, 1945, *FRUS-VI, The British Commonwealth, The Far East* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1969), 657-58.

Supreme command consisting of General MacArthur and Marshal Vasilevski." Harriman peremptorily rejected the proposal.²⁰⁶

In Truman's reply to Stalin of the 18th, he agreed to modify General Order No. 1 "to include all the Kurile Islands" to be surrendered to Soviet forces, but he rejected Stalin's request regarding Hokkaido. It was his "intention," he said, that Japanese forces on "all the islands of Japan proper" surrender to General MacArthur. Japan was to remain undivided and under American control.

Furthermore, tossing a small monkey wrench into Stalin's plans, the president said, the United States desired "air base rights ... on some one of the Kurile Islands."

Stalin replied on the 22nd, offended. He "did not expect such an answer from you" on the Hokkaido matter, and as for a "permanent" base in the Kuriles, his answer was "no," because "it was not provided for" in either the Yalta or Potsdam agreements.²⁰⁷ Stalin, perhaps unwittingly, made Truman's case about the occupation of Japan by acknowledging that he would be bound only by that which had been "provided for" in writing.

One can almost see the smile in Truman's reply of the 25th. You "misunderstood my message," he said, ignoring the Hokkaido issue. He had not demanded a *permanent* base in the Kuriles, but simply one that would be useful "during the occupation of Japan." But he reminded Stalin the Kurile Islands were after all Japanese territory, "disposition of which must be made at a peace settlement."

Declaring that disposition of the Kurile Islands had to await a "peace settlement" was a clear deviation from the Yalta agreement. Moreover, referring issues to a "peace settlement" for disposition was a tactic Truman had used to great effect during the Potsdam conference precisely to avoid settling issues. There would never be a peace conference.

²⁰⁶ "The Ambassador to the Soviet Union (Harriman) to the Secretary of State," August 22, 1945, *Ibid*, 689.

²⁰⁷ Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, 441.

But if Truman sought to keep the status of the Kuriles unsettled, Stalin did not fall for the trap. Admitting that he had “misunderstood” Truman, he said, “of course” the United States could use an air base on the Kuriles on an “emergency” basis, but the Soviet government expected “reciprocity” for landing rights on one of the Aleutian Islands.

Of all this, Truman observed that Stalin had tried several different ways to “bring to Japan the kind of divided rule which the circumstances and necessities of the military situation had forced upon us in Germany.”²⁰⁸ These were all rejected.

But did Stalin have the last laugh? On September 3, the day following the surrender ceremony aboard the USS *Missouri*, Stalin ordered Soviet forces to take control of Japan’s Northern Territories claiming they were simply the *Southern* Kuriles. As the Kuriles were to be “handed over” to the Russians as part of the Yalta agreement, the Soviets had every right to them.

The definition of the Northern Territories as the Southern Kuriles was a fiction in which both the United States and the Soviet Union thenceforth indulged, but not the Japanese. But perhaps US ambiguity about the definition of the Kuriles was more calculated than uninformed: Soviet possession of Japan’s Northern Territories would become an obstacle to the full normalization of Russo-Japanese ties from that time to the present.

Conclusion

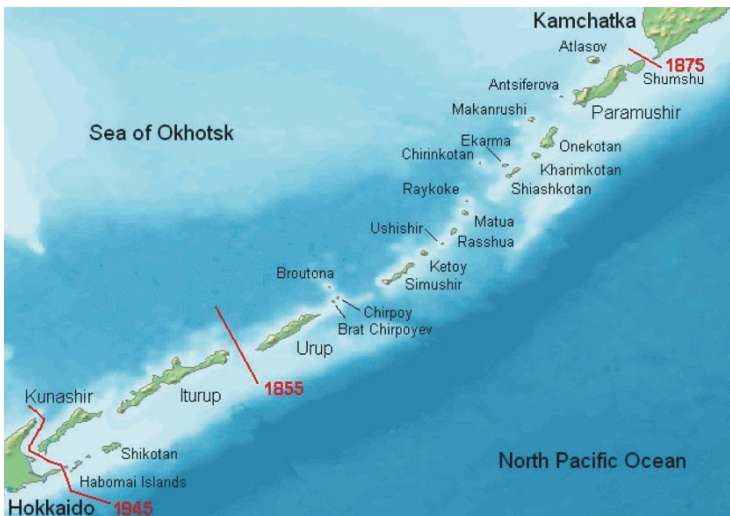
There was no end of irony in the Pacific War endgame. FDR had offered Stalin disguised control over Manchuria, Korea, and half of Japan to come into the war against Japan. The Japanese offered Stalin outright control of all of their mainland conquests and an alliance, to boot, to stay out and mediate an end to it. But Stalin was greedy, calculating that he had a chance to gain control of half of Japan, too. Unfortunately for Stalin, he had failed to reckon with Harry Truman,

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 440–45.

who not only prevented Soviet entry into Japan, but also clawed back half of Korea.

Truman used the atomic bomb to settle the long-term struggle for control of Northeast Asia and put in place a geopolitical structure that insured American dominance of the Pacific. In doing so, he significantly altered FDR's strategy not only to ensure American control over Japan, but also to preserve Japan's territorial integrity, and divided Korea. At the same time, he adhered to FDR's solution for China and the handover of Sakhalin and the Kuriles to the Soviet Union according to the Yalta agreement.

The results, from the strategic point of view, are with us still. Japan remains territorially integrated and a staunch ally of the United States. Korea remains divided, but the Republic of Korea is also a staunch ally. The Northern Territories remain in Russian hands and continue to be an impediment to full Japan-Russian relations. Finally, the United States remains the dominant power in the Pacific, although there are signs that that may be changing.



The Northern Territories and the Kurile Islands



Japan – note the location of Akita on the northwest coast

Speaker Biographies

Richard B. Frank

Richard B. Frank was born in Kansas in 1947. Upon graduation from the University of Missouri in 1969, he was commissioned in the United States Army, in which he served almost four years, including a tour of duty in the Republic of Vietnam as an aerorifle platoon leader with the 101st Airborne Division. In 1976, he completed studies at Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, DC. He is the author of *Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Campaign*, which won the General William Greene Award, and *Downfall: The End of the Japanese Imperial Empire*, which won the Harry S. Truman Book Award. He was a consultant to Dr. Robert Ballard for the documentary and book *The Lost Ships of Guadalcanal* and has frequently appeared on the History Channel. He lives in Annandale, Virginia.

Norman Friedman

Norman Friedman is a strategist known for his ability to meld historical, technical, and strategic factors in analyses of current problems. He has published over forty books, ranging from accounts of recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to histories of the Cold War to accounts of naval strategy and technology. He writes a monthly column on world and naval affairs for the *Proceedings* of the US Naval Institute. His writing has appeared widely in periodicals, including the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Los Angeles Times*. His Cold War history, *The Fifty Year War: Conflict and Strategy in the Cold War*, won the 2001 Westminster Prize as the best military history book of the previous year, from the British Royal United Services Institute. He was the only American to have won this award. His *Seapower as Strategy* won the Samuel Eliot Morrison prize awarded by the Naval Order of

the United States in November 2001. His book *Fighting the Great War at Sea: Strategy, Technology, Tactics* was published in 2014. His most recent work is a study of interwar gaming at the Naval War College, with an emphasis on how it prepared the Navy for the Pacific War. He received his PhD in theoretical solid-state physics from Columbia University, and then spent over a decade at a prominent think tank before serving as personal consultant to the Secretary of the Navy for a decade.

D. M. Giangreco

D. M. Giangreco served as an editor at *Military Review*, US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for twenty years. Giangreco has lectured widely on national security matters. An award-winning author of more than a dozen books on military and sociopolitical subjects, he has also written extensively for various national and international publications and news agencies. He was awarded the Society for Military History's 1998 Moncado Prize for his article, "Casualty Projections for the US Invasions of Japan, 1945–1946: Planning and Policy Implications." Giangreco also won the Gerard Gilbert Award (1988, France and Colonies Philatelic Society) for his book *Roosevelt, de Gaulle, and the Posts* on US Army Civil Affairs operations in World War II France, and his article "The Truth About Kamikazes" was the principal nomination of US Naval Institute for the Association of Naval Aviation's award for Best Article of 1997 on Naval Aviation. His book *Hell to Pay* was the recipient of the New York Military Affairs Symposium's Arthur Goodzeit Award for Best Military History Book of 2009 and will be republished in an expanded edition next year by the US Naval Institute at Annapolis. Giangreco's work has been translated into French, German, Spanish, Russian (pirated), Japanese, and Chinese.

David M. Glantz

A graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the US Army's Command and General Staff College, Defense Language Institute, Institute for Russian and Eastern European Studies, and US Army War College, Colonel David M. Glantz served for over thirty years in the US Army before retiring in December 1993. He began his military career in 1963 as a field artillery officer and served in various assignments in the United States and Vietnam. After teaching history at the United States Military Academy, he completed the Army's Soviet foreign area specialist program and became an analyst in Estimates Section in US Army Europe's Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence. Upon his return to the United States, he became chief of research at the Army's newly-formed Combat Studies Institute (CSI) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and then Director of Soviet Army Operations at the US Army War College. Returning to Fort Leavenworth, he helped found and later directed the US Army's Soviet (later Foreign) Military Studies Office (FMSO), where he remained until his retirement in 1993. He established *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, a scholarly journal for which he still serves as chief editor. He has written or coauthored more than thirty books, over ninety self-published studies and atlases, and more than one hundred articles dealing with Soviet military history and other topics related to World War II. In recognition of his work, he has received several awards, including the Society of Military History's prestigious Samuel Eliot Morrison Prize for his contributions to the study of military history.

John T. Kuehn

John T. Kuehn is the General William Stofft Professor of Military History and has served on the faculty of the US Army Command and General Staff College since July 2000, retiring from the naval service in 2004. He earned a PhD in History from Kansas State University in

2007. He is the author of *Agents of Innovation* and coauthored *Eyewitness Pacific Theater* with D.M. Giangreco, as well as numerous articles and editorials. He was recently awarded a Moncado Prize from the Society for Military History in 2011 for “The US Navy General Board and Naval Arms Limitation: 1922–1937.” He is also an adjunct professor for the Naval War College Fleet Seminar Program and with the MA in Military History Program at Norwich University. A former naval aviator who flew in both EP-3 and ES-3 aircraft, he completed numerous cruises aboard four different aircraft carriers. He flew reconnaissance and combat missions during the last decade of the Cold War, the First Gulf War (Desert Storm), Iraq and the Persian Gulf (Southern Watch), and the Balkans (Deliberate Force over Bosnia).

James D. Perry

James D. Perry has a BA in History from Arizona State University, an MA in Security Policy Studies from George Washington University, and a PhD in History from George Washington University. After obtaining his PhD, he was a Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford University. He then worked for a defense contractor in McLean, Virginia, where he conducted long-range assessments of the political, military, and technological developments that affect national security for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the military services, and other government clients. He developed and conducted numerous workshops and wargames on the problems of anti-access, military innovation, transformation, experimentation, and asymmetric warfare. He is currently a Senior Analyst for a major aerospace corporation, where he conducts research and analysis to support company programs and senior company leadership. He has special expertise in unmanned aircraft and long-range bombers. He is the author of numerous articles on military history and national security issues, and frequently speaks at history conferences.

Richard Thornton

Professor Thornton received his BA from Colgate (1961) in Russian and Far Eastern Affairs and his PhD in history from the University of Washington, with emphasis on the modern histories of the United States, Russia, China, and Japan. He has taught undergraduate and graduate courses at George Washington University since 1967 in American foreign policy, Chinese history and politics, Soviet/Russian history and politics, and Sino-Soviet relations. He is the President of the Institute for the Study of Strategy and Politics, a 501(c)(3) he founded in order to advance the understanding of history, military strategy, and national security policy.

His major works include: *The Reagan Revolution, IV: From Victory to the New World Order* (2013); *The Reagan Revolution, III: Defeating the Soviet Challenge* (2009); *The Reagan Revolution, II: Rebuilding the Western Alliance* (2006); *The Reagan Revolution, I: The Politics of US Foreign Policy* (2003); *Odd Man Out: Truman, Stalin, Mao and the Origins of the Korean War* (2000); *The Falklands Sting: Reagan, Thatcher, and Argentina's Bomb* (1998); *The Carter Years: Toward A New World Order* (1991); *The Nixon-Kissinger Years: Restructuring American Foreign Policy* (1989 and 2001); and *China: A Political History* (1982).

