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Source: *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 109, No. 2 (April 2004), pp. 417-444

Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of the American Historical Association

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/530338>

Accessed: 31-03-2017 18:19 UTC

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# Eurasian Eclipse: Japan's End Game in World War II

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YUKIKO KOSHIRO

WHY DID JAPAN CHOOSE NOT TO SURRENDER to the United States in June 1945 along with Germany but stay in the war until August of that year? When Japan rejected the Potsdam Declaration of July 26, 1945, did it have a blueprint for post-surrender survival? In spite of voluminous works on World War II and the Pacific War as well as the Cold War, the last phase of Japan's war remains murky. Standard studies attribute impediments to Japan's "timely" surrender to such factors as the Imperial Army's determination to fight a homeland battle against the United States and also to the inability of pro-Anglo-American Japanese to influence decisionmakers in Tokyo. Concerning Japan's "abrupt" capitulation, most studies ascribe it to the shock of either the atomic bombs or the "surprise" attack by the Soviet Union, or both, followed by the "sacred" decision by Emperor Hirohito.<sup>1</sup> An orthodox lesson of the Pacific War is that Japan should have surrendered to the United States earlier, to save hundreds of thousands of deaths and casualties.<sup>2</sup> Had Japan done so, however, the United States would have taken over the entire sphere of Japan's continental empire and become a dominant power in the region, perhaps imposing harsh constraints on defeated Japan. That was not what Japan desired. Japanese leaders saw a need to investigate the best way to leave the war, and, as this article

This research project received grants from the Social Science Research Council (1999–2000), the Association for Asian Studies (2001), and the Japan Foundation (2002). It also benefited from comments and generous encouragements from professors Gar Alperoviz, Sam Crane, Bruce Cumings, Gerhart Gelb, Dennis Grafflin, Bob Immerman, Hilmar Jensen, Ray Moore, Vassili Morodiakov, Watanabe Akio, anonymous reviewers for the *American Historical Review*, and the audience at the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 2), held in 2001 in Berlin, where I gave a presentation on this project. Note below, Japanese names are given in traditional form, family name preceding given name.

<sup>1</sup> In the United States, Robert Butow's classic work *Japan's Decision to Surrender* (Stanford, Calif., 1954) set the standard for studies on this topic. Relying heavily on Japanese testimony at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, especially that by Marquis Kido Kōichi, Butow divided Japanese parties into two categories: the villains (mostly in the army) who insisted on fighting until the bitter end, and the pacifists (mostly in the navy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) who sought to achieve peace with the United States. In Butow's paradigm, the Soviet Union existed only as an instrument for the pro-Soviet group within the Japanese army who attempted to manipulate the course of the war. Generations of scholars carried on Butow's interpretation, although they differed in arguing whether the reason for Japan's surrender was the Soviet entry into the war or the atomic bombs, or both. For the most recent study, see J. Samuel Walker, "The Decision to Use the Bomb: A Historical Update," in Michael Hogan, ed., *Hiroshima in History and Memory* (New York, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Akira Iriye, in *Power and Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), criticized Japan's approach to the Soviet Union as a tragic mistake (170) and argued that Japan, at this watershed in the war, should have approached Washington rather than Moscow, abandoned the pan-Asian crusade, and returned to Wilsonianism (220–25).

will show, they calculated an end game for the nation by staking its survival on the future of East Asia after the empire's collapse.

The forceful image of Japan's "unconditional" surrender to the United States, and the subsequent U.S. occupation of Japan, has long emphasized the military campaigns in the Pacific and reduced the important Eurasian significance of Japan's World War II.<sup>3</sup> It was Japan's attack in 1931 at Mukden and the subsequent creation of Manchukuo (the State of Manchuria, Japan's puppet state) that alienated Japan from the League of Nations and eventually led to a full-scale war against China in July 1937. The anti-Comintern pact with Germany and Italy of November 1937 and the Tripartite Pact of September 1940 integrated Japan's Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere into the European political context and expedited Japan's military advance into French Indochina. Then, less than eight months after Japan concluded its Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union in April 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and started a war against the United States. In such a sequence of diverse hostilities and alliances, Japan schemed and fought the Fifteen-Year War largely in a Eurasian context.

It was the Soviet Union that gave Japan strategic versatility in exiting the world war. The Soviet entry into the war during its last phase is portrayed simply as a betrayal to Japan in light of the Neutrality Pact. Conversely, the Imperial Japanese Army and government have been criticized for wasting time in hoping for the Soviets to help broker peace with the United States. Such vilification of the Soviet Union, however, has obfuscated a complex strategy Japan adopted toward the Soviets. A body of little-known and rarely used documents, kept since 1941 by Japanese military leaders, diplomatic officials, and scholars and journalists of international relations, reveals that these Japanese did not adhere to any hopes for Moscow to mediate peace with the United States.<sup>4</sup> Neither did they hold onto a

<sup>3</sup> For a historiographic analysis of Japanese studies of World War II, see Yukiko Koshiro, "Japan's World and World War II," *Diplomatic History*, special issue, "The Future of World War II Studies: A Roundtable," 25, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 425–26.

<sup>4</sup> In reexamining the last phase of the war, it is necessary to realize that the standard archival sources—so-called evidence presented at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial (1946–1948)—merely provide a basis for writing an orthodox history of Japan's war, thus telling only a partial story. Shortly after the Japanese government decided to accept the Potsdam Declaration, the Cabinet members chose to incinerate a great number of official documents in expectation of an impending war crimes trial, in which the United States was expected to play a leading role. They destroyed documents deemed inconvenient to a presumed yardstick of postwar American justice. On August 7, 1945, only one day after Hiroshima and one day before the Soviet entry into the war, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided on the quick destruction of classified documents related to wartime diplomacy, and did so earlier and much more swiftly and extensively than the Imperial Headquarters did to the military-related documents. China-related diplomatic documents were the first to be destroyed. Next were the Soviet-related papers. The last were the papers related to Axis diplomacy. Yoshida Yutaka, *Gendai Rekishi-gaku to sensō sekinin* [Contemporary history studies and Japan's war responsibilities] (Tokyo, 1997), 127–34; Usui Katsumi, Yoshimura Michio, and Hosoya Chihiro, *Gaikō Shiryō-kan no Niji-nen to shōrai* (zadankai), vol. 2 [Roundtable: The past and future (The one hundred years of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, vol. 2)] (Tokyo, 1969), 1295–97. The documents, especially diplomatic ones, that survived destruction were those deemed appropriate to constitute a "correct" narrative of Japan's war after capitulation. In archival research in Japan, I combed surviving (and declassified) diplomatic and military documents long excluded from the standard list of official sources on Japan's war. Mostly, they are marked top secret or confidential but are cataloged under innocuous subjects such as communism, intelligence, the war in Europe, or the Korean army. *Kimitsu sensō nishshi* [Top secret war journal], a handwritten record of day-to-day activities and planning of the Imperial Headquarters, is among the most comprehensive top-secret documents that were preserved, escaping confiscation by

naïve anticipation for a break-up of the Moscow-Washington Grand Alliance, which would supposedly bring Japan its preferred terms for surrender. On the contrary, these Japanese were firmly convinced of eventual Soviet abrogation of the Neutrality Pact and entry into the war. They meticulously studied the possible timing of a Soviet attack and the manner of subsequent collapse of Japan's colonial empire, specifically the Soviet impact on postwar East Asia. In their perceptions, the Soviet Union possessed an ability to achieve a balance of power against the United States in a postwar world. Moreover, the Soviet presence would, they hoped, prevent the United States from establishing hegemony in East Asia and recreating it solely in its image. And ultimately, the Soviet influence in East Asia would restrain harsh U.S. control of post-surrender Japan.

In post-1945 world politics, Japan somewhat vanished in the transition from World War II to the Cold War. A rapid recovery of postwar Japan as an American bastion of capitalism was considered a windfall amid the rise of communism in Asia. Japan's subsequent economic growth, therefore, was treated as a mere footnote to Cold War history. But it is important to note that wartime Japanese planners regarded the Soviet presence in East Asia as a built-in factor for a postwar structure of East Asia, and such blueprints bore much relevance to the course of world history afterwards. Consider how Prime Minister Suzuki Kantarō's "silent dismissal" (*mokusatsu*) of the Potsdam Declaration set in motion colossal geopolitical changes in East Asia. Had he accepted it then, the United States would have been able to dispose of the Japanese Empire without having the Soviets participate in regional management. Merely two weeks after Potsdam, however, Manchukuo, the crown jewel of Japan's colonial empire, collapsed into Soviet control, not American, facilitating the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in taking over Japanese arms and ammunition in their continuing fight against Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang (GMD) government. The northern half of Korea also fell under Soviet occupation, which legitimized Kim Il-Sung's rise to power. The Yalta Agreement stipulated none of these developments, nor did the Potsdam Declaration.<sup>5</sup>

In prolonging the surrender, Japanese leaders never predicted the unprecedented nuclear attacks by the United States that destroyed more than 200,000 lives in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But the two atomic bombs did not demolish Japan's continental empire physically. Japan's postponement in surrender allowed the Soviet Union a chance to create a new geopolitical and ideological landscape beyond U.S. control.

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the United States. It offers a crucial insight into the decision-making process at the Army War Operations Plans Division, covering the period June 1940–July 1945. Now available as Dai Hon'ei Rikugun-bu Sensō Shidō-han [The Army War Operations Plans Division], *Kimitsu sensō nisshi*, 2 vols. (Tokyo, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> The Yalta Agreement, signed on February 11, 1945, did stipulate that the Soviet Union would receive the following spoils if it entered war against Japan in two or three months after German surrender: to restore the southern part of Sakhalin, the Kurile Islands, and also Lushun (Port Arthur) as a Soviet naval base; to secure the preeminent Soviet interest in the port of Dalian; and to obtain the right to operate jointly with China the Chinese Eastern Railway and the South Manchurian Railway. The part of the agreement concerning the Chinese ports and railroads was not an automatic reward, however; the Soviet Union had first to conclude a pact of friendship and alliance with the GMD government and then to obtain the concurrence of Chiang Kai-shek.

WARTIME JAPAN'S NEUTRALITY WITH THE SOVIET UNION is paradoxical because the latter, geographically the closest neighbor to Japan, had posed to the Japanese Empire a twin menace of ideology and military forces. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 was their first military clash over a sphere of influence in Korea and Manchuria. The Bolshevik Revolution challenged the ideological legitimacy of Japan's capitalist and imperialist pursuits under the emperor system. Upon invitation by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, the Japanese government joined the anti-Bolshevik war and fought in Siberia from 1918 to 1920. By the early 1930s, the Japanese government had extirpated the Japan Communist Party at home, but it had to continue to battle against communists across the colonial empire, denouncing the Moscow-based Comintern for giving them aid and instruction. The establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, which set its northern border directly against Soviet territory, further aggravated Soviet-Japanese relations. Only after two large-scale military confrontations at Changkufeng (on the convergence of the Soviet, Korean, and Manchukuo borders) in July 1938 and Nomonhan (on the Manchukuo–Outer Mongolian border) in May 1939, in both of which Japan's Kwantung Army<sup>6</sup> suffered devastating losses, did Japan's government make a radical change in Soviet policy.

Japan did not choose to endorse communism as an acceptable ideology. Rather, it learned to live with the Soviet military presence across its border. Luckily, the two nations shared a mutual pragmatism that facilitated coexistence. Since Japan had established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1925, it declared that its domestic crackdown on communism and friendship with the Soviet Union were two separate matters. The Soviet government concurred, confirming that its amity with Japan stood on the principle of mutual respect for each other's unique socio-political system and non-intervention in the other's domestic politics.<sup>7</sup> After Nomonhan, a basic policy the Japanese government adopted was “keeping peace and status quo” (*seihitsu hoji*) with the Soviet Union. The principle remained intact until the last stage of the world war.<sup>8</sup>

It was Matsuoka Yōsuke, Japan's foreign minister and signer of the Tripartite Pact of September 1940, who promoted a view of the Soviet Union as a potential buffer against the United States and concluded the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact in April 1941. On the eve of signing the Tripartite Pact, Matsuoka had confessed that it was a prelude to shaking hands with the Soviet Union.<sup>9</sup> Matsuoka had

<sup>6</sup> The Kwantung Army was a one-division force originally assigned to guard the South Manchurian Railway and the Liaodong peninsula in 1907. After receiving independent status in 1920, it increasingly assumed a politicized role in determining policy toward Manchuria.

<sup>7</sup> “Gokuhi: Zai-Ro Tanaka Tōkichi Taishi hatsu Shidehara Gaimu Daijin ate” [Top secret: A telegraph from Tanaka Tōkichi, Ambassador to Russia, to Foreign Minister Shidehara], February 1, 1930, in “Nihon Kyōsan-Tō kankei zakken: Kyōsan-Tō to Sorenpō to no kankei” [Miscellaneous documents on the Japan Communist Party: Relationship between the JCP and the Soviet Union], I-4-5-2-3-3, Diplomatic Record Office, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo.

<sup>8</sup> “Tai-Bei Ei-Ran-Shou sensō shūmatsu sokushin ni kansuru fuku-an” [A draft proposal for expediting the end of the war against the U.S., Britain, Netherlands and Chiang's China], November 15, 1941, in Sanbō Honbu [The Imperial Headquarters], ed., *Sugiyama Memo* (Tokyo, 1967), vol. 1, 523–24, quoted in Nakayama Takashi, “Nihon no sensō sakusen shidō ni okeru Soren yōin, 1941–45” [The Soviet factor in Japan's conduct of war and military operations in 1941–45], *Seiji Keizai Shigaku* [Political-economic history], no. 333 (March 1994): 43.

<sup>9</sup> Matsuoka Yōsuke Denki Kankō-Kai [Matsuoka Yōsuke Biography-Editing Committee], ed.,

proposed establishing a Eurasian bloc of Japan, Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union, which would constitute a diplomatic deterrent, a check by the “New Order” nations, against the Anglo-American alliance. Its Asian dimension was expected to prevent U.S. intervention in China.<sup>10</sup> Matsuoka was not the originator of such a vision. Shortly after the Russo-Japanese War, a similar vision for a Eurasian continental alliance was advocated by Itō Hirobumi and Gotō Shimpei, the patriarchs of Japan’s colonialism in Korea, to prevent the United States from interfering with Japan’s pan-Asianism.<sup>11</sup> By July 1939, the idea had already received endorsement from a wider spectrum of Japanese leaders. Prince Konoe Fumimaro, former prime minister, Shiratori Toshio, ambassador to Italy, and Ōshima Hiroshi, ambassador to Germany, all supported a plan for the Japanese-German-Italian-Soviet alliance.<sup>12</sup> Takagi Sōkichi, the Imperial Navy’s leading planner, inspired by the signing of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, examined several options for multilateral diplomacy and recommended the same four-nation alliance as the most beneficial to Japan’s interest.<sup>13</sup> The monthly intellectual journal *Kaizō* (Reconstruction) printed an article in its November 1940 issue that openly predicted that the task of coordinating a Soviet-Japanese non-aggression pact would be a natural sequel to the Tripartite Pact. The May 1941 issue of *Kaizō* featured four articles on the Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union, two of which stressed its linkage to the Tripartite Pact.<sup>14</sup> Matsuoka’s goal, therefore, was not at all a secret to the Japanese public.

The concept of inviting the Soviets to join the “New Order” of the Axis powers emerged from a notion that the Soviets would support, rather than oppose, Japan’s goal of a “revolutionary” challenge to the status quo of Anglo-American dominance in the world. These Japanese planners saw in the Soviet Union a mirror image of Japan, particularly in the two nations switching positions in world politics. For example, in March 1933, Japan announced its withdrawal from the League of Nations to protest the condemnation of Japan’s illegal occupation of Manchuria. A mere eight months later, the Soviet Union received Washington’s diplomatic recognition and, in September 1934, joined the League of Nations. Seeing the

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*Matsuoka Yōsuke—Sono hito to shōgai* [Matsuoka Yōsuke—His personality and life] (Tokyo, 1974), 783, 799; Minowa Kimitada, *Matsuoka Yōsuke—Sono ningen to gaikō* [Matsuoka Yōsuke—His personality and diplomacy] (Tokyo, 1971), 173.

<sup>10</sup> Hosoya Chihiro, “The Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact,” in James Morley, ed., *The Fateful Choice: Japan’s Advance into Southeast Asia, 1939–1941* (New York, 1980), 47, 50; Miyazaki Yoshiyuki, “Saikō Matsuoka gaikō—Sono kokunai seiji-teki yōin” [Matsuoka diplomacy reconsidered: A remedy for national consensus], *Gunji Shigaku* [Journal of military history] 27, nos. 2–3 (December 1991): 34; Minowa Kimitada, *Matsuoka Yōsuke* (Tokyo, 1989), 173.

<sup>11</sup> Saitō Yoshie, *Azamakareta rekishi* [History betrayed] (Tokyo, 1955), 89, quoted in Minowa, *Matsuoka Yōsuke*, 49.

<sup>12</sup> Torii Tami, *Shōwa 20-nen* [1945] (Tokyo, 1985), vol. 1, part 1, 335–39.

<sup>13</sup> Nomura Minoru, “Nichi-Doku-I-So rengō shisō no hōga to hōkai” [Rise and decline of the concept of a Japanese-German-Italian-Soviet alliance], *Gunji Shigaku* [Journal of military history] 11, no. 4 (March 1976): 2–14, esp. 6–9.

<sup>14</sup> Gushima Kenzaburō, “Sangoku Dōmei to NiSso kankei” [The Tripartite Pact and Japanese-Soviet relations], *Kaizō* 22, no. 20 (November 1940): 288–95. The two articles in the May 1941 issue of *Kaizō* (23, no. 9) were Baba Hideo, “NiSso Chūritsu Jōyaku no seiritsu to igi” [Conclusion and significance of the Japanese-Soviet neutrality treaty], 102–04; Ōkubo Tetsuo, “Sangoku Dōmei yori NiSso Chūritsu Jōyaku e” [From the Tripartite Alliance to the Japanese-Soviet neutrality treaty], 105–09.

Soviets rise from complete isolation to prominence, these Japanese nonetheless doubted the authenticity of Soviet “assimilation” into the “family of nations,” as much as they suspected Anglo-American sincerity in accepting the communist state into their circle. They could somewhat identify with the peripheral identity of the Soviet Union in the Anglo-American-centered world. After all, Japan had tried and failed to win Anglo-American recognition for equality in terms of military, political-economic, and racial relations. Their rejection added “moral” legitimacy to Japan’s pan-Asianism, which promised to rid Asia of Anglo-American imperialism and redefine Asian modernity under its leadership. Leaders such as Matsuoka, who experienced American racism as a young immigrant living on the West Coast, detected the Soviet Union’s marginality in the Old Order and solicited its membership in the New Order.

Joseph Stalin seemed to take an interest in the idea of neutrality with Japan when, in late March 1941, Matsuoka visited Moscow on his way to Berlin and Rome to reaffirm the Axis alliance. Historian Gabriel Gorodetsky portrays Stalin as a realist who was amused by Matsuoka’s invitation to join the Tripartite Pact to challenge Anglo-Saxon capitalism and individualism. Besides, it seemed to Stalin a natural step to supplement the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact with a similar pact with Japan and ensure the more pragmatic Soviet aim of staying out of the war on the Soviet Union’s European and Asian frontiers.<sup>15</sup> Stalin first wanted to test Matsuoka as a go-between, and so he asked Matsuoka to tell German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop that “the Anglo-Saxons had never been Russia’s ‘friends.’”<sup>16</sup> After the visits in Germany and Italy, Matsuoka, on his way home via the Trans-Siberian Railway, stopped in Moscow again. He elaborated the overall scheme of integrating Russia into the tripartite arrangements by concluding a Soviet-Japanese pact on non-aggression against territories, including Outer Mongolia (the Mongolian People’s Republic) for the Soviets and Manchukuo for Japan. Stalin decided to sign the pact.<sup>17</sup> Thus the four-nation alliance materialized for a very brief moment, until the outbreak of the German-Russian war in June 1941.

After signing the Neutrality Pact on April 13, 1941, Stalin is said to have embraced Matsuoka in a hug, celebrating their common Asian roots in reference to his Georgian background. Henceforth, the notion of Russians as “Asians” was introduced to the Japanese public. Some Japanese leaders, notably Prince Higashikuni Naruhiko, repeatedly reiterated the notion of Asian unity between Russians and Japanese against the Anglo-American invasion of China.<sup>18</sup> This racial view,

<sup>15</sup> Gabriel Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion: Stalin and the German Invasion of Russia* (New Haven, Conn., 1999), 8. In 1994, Nagoshi Kenrō, a Japanese journalist, introduced a collection of newly declassified documents at the Soviet Foreign Ministry archives, claiming that it was Stalin who first advocated the four-nation alliance in November 1940 in the spirit of collective recognition for each nation’s sphere of influence and non-aggression. Nagoshi Kenrō, *Kuremurin himitsu bunsho wa kataru—Yami no NiSso kankei-shi* [A story of secret Kremlin documents: A dark history of Japanese-Soviet relations] (Tokyo, 1994), 193–95.

<sup>16</sup> Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 193. Nagoshi’s work also argues that when Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov visited Berlin in October 1940, he sounded out Hitler on Stalin’s proposal for the four-nation alliance (195).

<sup>17</sup> Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 8, 197. According to Nagoshi, Stalin’s proposal for the four-nation alliance and approval for the pact with Japan demonstrate his seriousness about securing the territorial status quo. Nagoshi, *Kuremurin*, 194.

<sup>18</sup> Higashikuni Naruhiko, *Ichī Kōzoku no sensō nikki* [A war diary of a member of the Imperial

incidentally, had an ironical twist in Nazi propaganda, which condemned Russians as “Asiatics” and “Mongols” whose “innate barbarism” augmented their fanaticism for communism, just like another group of “subhumans,” the Jews.<sup>19</sup> Regardless, the lesser “whiteness” of the Russians facilitated their inclusion in Japan’s pan-Asianist rhetoric. In Manchukuo, for example, Russian émigrés were chosen to embody the state ideology of racial harmony, along with the Han Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Manchus, and Mongols. Nikolai A. Baikov (1872–1958), a Russian émigré writer living in Manchukuo, participated in the Greater East Asian Conference of Writers held in Tokyo and Osaka in 1942, promoting his theme of human coexistence with nature in Siberia.<sup>20</sup> Given that these Russians living in the Japanese Empire were anti-Bolshevik exiles, it is ironic that Stalin inadvertently gave them the racial label of Asians that allowed their placement in Japan’s pan-Asianism. But such confused juxtapositions of Russian race and Soviet ideology did well in the war. Ultimately, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru argued in the fall of 1944 that Japan’s pan-Asianism was ready to endorse the Soviet principle of liberating the oppressed peoples of East Asia and to join the Soviet endeavor against Anglo-American imperialism.<sup>21</sup>

Russia, the closest agent of Western civilization to Japan, had since the late nineteenth century offered to Japan romantic visions of cultural modernity in quite a different way than the United States. Russian Orthodox missionaries settled and taught villagers in impoverished northern regions of Japan, while American Protestant missionaries focused on urban, educated, upper-class Japanese for proselytizing. After the successful Japanese translation of Ivan Turgenev’s *Hunter’s Sketches* in 1888–1889, Russian literature became perhaps the most loved and revered foreign literary genre for Japanese people of all backgrounds, male and female, urban and rural, intellectual and working-class. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet Union again became a lodestar for Japanese writers, artists, critics, and intellectuals in redefining the meaning of modernity with avant-garde flavor.

Some 3,000 Russians, escaping from the Bolshevik Revolution and settling across the Japanese Empire, gave Japanese people an image of white Westerners different from Americans. Half of them scattered in the Japanese mainland and earned their living as bakers; dressmakers; peddlers of fabrics, clothes, kimonos, blankets, and cosmetics; shopkeepers; tinkers; entertainers; nurses; maids and servants. Their working-class appearance stood out in both urban and rural Japan,

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family] (Tokyo, 1957), has the following entries, in discussions with General Koiso Kuniaki, Hisahara Fusanosuke, and Gotō Ryūnosuke: “Japan has to give the Soviet Union a keen awareness of being a member of Asia so that it will never stand on the side of the whites” (April 14, 1942); “Stalin is aware of and proud of being Asian [*Tōyō-jin*], so it’s necessary to have the Soviet people feel the same way . . . Only in that manner can Japan and the Soviet Union together prevent the United States from invading China” (September 27, 1944); “We have to try to help Soviet people develop an Asian identity so we can stand together against Anglo-America” (May 15, 1945). See 103, 107, 147, 184.

<sup>19</sup> Omer Bartov, “Germany’s Unforgettable War: The Twisted Road from Berlin to Moscow and Back,” *Diplomatic History* 25, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 413.

<sup>20</sup> Nikolai Baikov, “Sayonara Nippon” [See you again, Japan], *Gekkan Roshia* [Russian Monthly] 8, no. 12 (December 1942): 52–53; and “Nihon inshō-ki” [My impression of Japan], *Asahi Shimbun*, morning edition, November 13, 1942.

<sup>21</sup> Hatano Sumio, “Shigemitsu Mamoru to Dai-TōA Kyōdō Sengen” [Shigemitsu Mamoru and the Greater East Asian Joint Declaration], *Kokusai Seiji* [International relations] 109 (May 1995): 48.



providing ordinary Japanese people with an image of being in intimate contact with the West, something that was in direct contrast to the humiliating (and abstract) Japanese self-image of being lorded over by the “arrogant” and “superior” Americans.<sup>22</sup> Russian émigré musicians, ballet dancers, and actors living in Japan helped connect the Japanese public with Western culture, high and low. Among Japan’s early baseball heroes was Viktor Starffin (1918–1957), the son of Russian refugees, who grew up to be in every aspect Japanese, culturally and linguistically, and pitched for the Tokyo Giants until 1944.<sup>23</sup> Some Russian youths, thoroughly assimilated into Japanese culture, went on to study law and medical science at top Japanese universities.<sup>24</sup> Overall, while the image of the United States was tarnished by its anti-Japanese immigration policy, Russia was relatively free from any racist image in the eyes of the Japanese public.

After the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, Japan chose to maintain the Neutrality Pact and declined Germany’s request to attack the Soviet Union. Instead, the Japanese army advanced southward into French Indochina, a choice that led to direct confrontation with the United States. Although Matsuoka is said to have been devastated by the news of Pearl Harbor, the plan for forming the German-Japanese-Soviet alliance remained afloat for some time, supported by both the Imperial Army and the Foreign Ministry. From Japan’s perspective, the Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union at least dampened the spirit of the Grand Alliance against fascism. At a more subtle level, the rapprochement between Japanese fascism and Soviet communism undercut the ideological legitimacy of Asian communist movements against the Japanese Empire. Even when Germany’s collapse was looming, Japan continued pressing Germany to consider a truce with Moscow and form a Eurasian power bloc against the Anglo-American alliance. For example, in November 1944, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu circulated a confidential pamphlet, “Our Diplomacy” (*Waga gaikō*), and reiterated his early support for the proposal of the four-nation alliance—the Axis powers and the Soviet Union.<sup>25</sup> However, the previous September, the subject had never come up at the Supreme War Council.<sup>26</sup>

By the time the Japanese navy suffered its fatal defeat by U.S. forces at Leyte Gulf in the fall of 1944, the Japanese government had lost any hope that its continental empire would survive intact. While the prospect of unconditional surrender to the United States was difficult to accept, the Japanese government had

<sup>22</sup> Sawada Kazuhiko, “Nihon ni okeru hakkei-Roshia-jin no bunka-teki eikyō” [Cultural impact of white (anti-Bolshevik) Russians in Japan], in Naganawa Mitsuo and Sawada Kazuhiko, eds., *Ikyō ni ikiru—Rai-Nichi Roshia-jin no sokuseki* [Living in a foreign land: Traces of Russian residents in Japan] (Yokohama, 2001), 31–46; *Zai Honpō gaikokujin ni kansuru tōkei chōsa zakken* [Miscellaneous statistical data on foreign residents in Japan], vol. 1, K-3-7-0-15, Diplomatic Record Office, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>23</sup> Natasha Starffin, *Roshia kara kita ēsu* [An ace pitcher from Russia] (Tokyo, 1986); Ushijima Hidehiko, *Fūsetsu Nihon yakyū—V. Starffin* [V. Starffin: Stormy years of Japanese baseball] (Tokyo, 1978).

<sup>24</sup> “Zairyū gaikokujin meibo” [A directory of foreigners residing in Japan] (1942–43), in *Zai Honpō gaikokujin ni kansuru tōkei chōsa zakken*, vol. 4, K-3-7-0-15, Diplomatic Record Office, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Matsumura Miyako, “Shinbun ‘Manshū no oka nite’ (no. 1–79), ni keisai saretā Nihon kankei kiji o megutte” [On Japan-related articles printed in the newspaper ‘On the Manchurian Hill’ (nos. 1–79)], in Naganawa and Sawada, *Ikyō ni ikiru*, 162–63.

<sup>25</sup> Torii Tami, *Shōwa 20-nen*, vol. 1, part 2 (Tokyo, 1986), 232–36.

<sup>26</sup> Nakayama, “Nihon no sensō sakusen shidō,” 48.

neither the intention nor the resources to resist a U.S. invasion of the home islands. As far as the decoded Ultra reports were concerned, in which Tokyo's peace negotiations with Moscow were intercepted and deciphered by Washington, the Japanese government, by early to mid-1945, seemed to be desperate for Soviet assistance. In reality, the Japanese leaders did not anticipate Soviet good will. On December 8, 1941, only two weeks after Pearl Harbor, and less than eight months after the conclusion of the Neutrality Pact, General Hata Shunroku reported his conviction that the Soviets would eventually enter the war against Japan, and he added that this was the common understanding among top Japanese military leaders.<sup>27</sup> Even Matsuoka Yōsuke himself had no illusions. While in semi-retirement during the Pacific War, he was once asked privately whether the Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union was a mistake. He rebuked the idea, claiming that he never trusted Stalin anyway; that is, although he knew the Soviet Union was a most untrustworthy nation, he had to conclude the pact because that was the only way to secure Japan's territorial integrity.<sup>28</sup>

When Stalin called Japan an aggressor on November 6, 1944, in his anniversary speech commemorating the Bolshevik Revolution, Tokyo was thus not much surprised. The Supreme Council for the Direction of the War (Saikō Shidōsha Kaigi) met ten days later, and Lieutenant General Hata Hikosaburō, Vice Chief of Staff of the Imperial Headquarters, confirmed to Prime Minister Koiso Kuniaki that, in his view, the Soviet Union would sooner or later nullify the Neutrality Pact.<sup>29</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs shared the same judgment. Japanese diplomats in Europe sent to Tokyo regular intelligence reports on Soviet intentions and timing concerning an attack on Manchuria.<sup>30</sup> Thus when Morishima Gorō, Japanese minister in Moscow, returned to Tokyo in February 1943 with a negative assessment of Soviet intentions of keeping neutrality with Japan for very long, top officials at the Foreign Ministry said that this was already a common assumption in Tokyo. In the fall of 1944 and again in April 1945, when Morishima briefed top Foreign Ministry officials on Soviet readiness to enter the war, he found that his news was considered no news at all. Meanwhile, Satō Naotake, Japanese ambassador to the Soviet Union, was instructed not to try anything new with Moscow.<sup>31</sup>

Caught in the impasse, Japan developed a different plan for the Soviet Union. The Foreign Ministry began making diplomatic efforts to align the Soviet Union (without Germany) into a structure that would prevent unchecked U.S. hegemony in East Asia. In a series of talks with the Soviets between the summer of 1944 and

<sup>27</sup> *Hata Shunroku Nikki* [The diary of Hata Shunroku], in *Zoku gendai-shi shiryō (4) Riku-gun* [Contemporary history documents (4), the army] (Tokyo, 1983), 329, quoted in Nakayama, "Nihon no sensō sakusen shidō," 44.

<sup>28</sup> Matsuoka Yōsuke *Denki Kankō-Kai, Matsuoka Yōsuke—Sono hito to shōgai*, 1097.

<sup>29</sup> See the entry of November 16, 1944, *Kimitsu sensō nisshi*, 2: 608–09.

<sup>30</sup> *Dai-Niji Ōshū Taisen kankei ikken—senjo kei'ei mondai* [The Second European Great War: Postwar management], 1944, esp. vol. 3, A-7-0-0-8-43; *Shōwa 19-nen Dai-Niji Ōshū Taisen kankei ikken—senjo kei'ei mondai Ei Bei Soren kankei* [1944, the Second European Great War: Postwar management—U.S.-UK-Soviet relations], A-7-0-0-8-43-1, Diplomatic Record Office, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>31</sup> Morishima Gorō, *Kunō suru chū-So taishi-kan* [The Japanese embassy in Moscow in a dilemma] (Tokyo, 1952), 26–27, 41, 108–10.

June 1945, the Foreign Ministry proposed a wide range of concessions, including turning Manchuria into a bargaining chip.<sup>32</sup> In September 1944, when Morishima returned from Moscow and briefed Tokyo on the improbability of Soviet-German peace, he added that the Soviet government had not specified what it hoped to gain from China. The Japanese government considered the omission as a sign that the Soviet Union, hoping to obtain a free hand in future Chinese matters, would keep its eye on a possible Anglo-American return to China after the war.<sup>33</sup> With such input, the Imperial Army leaders moved further to suggest the transfers of the southern part of Sakhalin and northern part of Manchukuo to the Soviet Union. The suggestion even included a possibility of the complete demilitarization of Manchuria. In the same month, the Foreign Ministry proposed the transfer of the northern Kurile Islands to the Soviet Union. Then, in May 1945, Foreign Minister Tōgō Shigenori proposed a list of maximum compromises with the Soviets, which added the concession of the North Manchuria Railway (the same as the Chinese Eastern Railway), leases of Lushun and Dalian, and even the opening of Tsugaru Strait (between Honshu and Hokkaido, both part of Japan proper) for Russian passage. (See Map 1.) The list received approval from the Foreign Ministry and the Imperial Army.<sup>34</sup> Finally, in June 1945, during talks with Soviet Ambassador Yakov Malik, former prime minister Hirota Kōki offered a complete neutralization of Manchuria—the biggest wartime concession Japan was willing to make to the Soviets.<sup>35</sup> Having agreed to convey the Japanese proposal to the Soviet government, Malik nonetheless refused to meet with Hirota again, citing health problems. In July, Ambassador Satō in Moscow tried to follow up on the talks with Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov but failed.

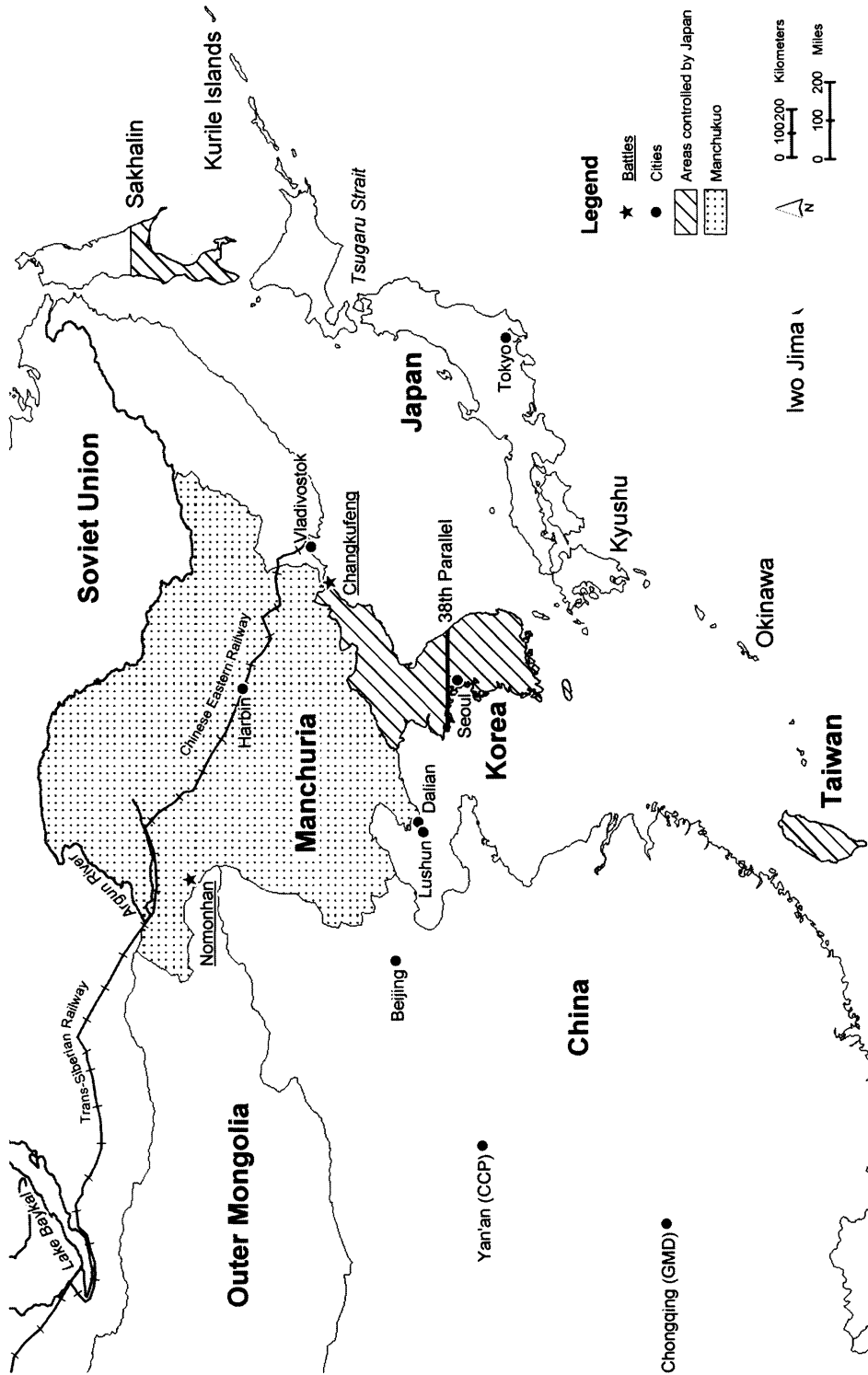
While pursuing these diplomatic guessing games with Moscow, the Japanese policymakers regarded Stalin not as a revolutionary (Lenin II) but rather as a legitimate successor to Alexander III and Nicholas II, the last two tsars of the Romanovs—an imperialist with territorial ambition. They guessed that Stalin would naturally attempt to reestablish a Soviet foothold in Manchuria and also Korea and eventually expand out into the Pacific Ocean, a course that would sooner or later collide with that of the United States. Russian historian Constantine V. Pleshakov argues that the Japanese concessions were similar to what U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt used to try to ensnare Stalin at Yalta and also exactly what Stalin

<sup>32</sup> Manchuria's value was in no way negligible. By the summer of 1945, Japanese investments in Manchuria were estimated at eleven billion yen. The main industrial centers had railways, mines, stockpiles of Japanese weapons and equipment, power-generating equipment, transformers, electrical motors, laboratories and hospitals, and the latest and best machine tools. Manchuria meant lucrative war spoils to the Soviet Union. See Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York, 1990), 494–95.

<sup>33</sup> See the entry of September 21, 1944, in *Kimitsu sensō nisshi*, 2: 586–87.

<sup>34</sup> Nakayama, “Nihon no sensō sakusen shidō,” 49, 52. Also see George Lensen, *The Strange Neutrality: Soviet-Japanese Relations during the Second World War, 1941–1945* (Tallahassee, 1972), 134–35, esp. note (b). Lensen's argument is classic, in that he claimed that Japan was so desperate that the Supreme Council of the Japanese government was ready to purchase Soviet assistance (134).

<sup>35</sup> “NiSso gaikō kōshō kiroku” [Records of Japanese-Soviet diplomatic negotiations], in Gaimushō [Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs], ed., *Nihon no sentaku—Dai-Niji-Sekai-Taisen shūsen shiroku* [Japan's choice: Historical records of the conclusion of World War II] (Tokyo, 1990), vol. 2: 572–75, 579–81.



MAP 1: The Japanese Empire with regard to the Soviet considerations in World War II, based on ESR1 world data. Mapmaker Myongsun Kong, Colgate University.

wanted in order to establish the Soviet sphere of influence in East Asia.<sup>36</sup> Even though Stalin no longer responded to these Japanese offers, Japan's new Soviet policy was not illusory.<sup>37</sup>

PRINCE KONOE FUMIMARO, in his famous Konoe Memorandum of February 1945, alerted Emperor Hirohito to the danger of Japan's reliance on the Soviet Union, saying that Moscow's ultimate aim was to turn Japan toward communism. Prospects of communist revolution were everywhere from Yan'an, Manchuria, and Korea to Taiwan: to prevent such a tragedy, Konoe urged Hirohito to end the war *before* the Soviet entry and make peace with the United States. An aristocrat who once studied socialism in his youth, Konoe became pan-Asianist as he witnessed Japan being denied full access to the Anglo-American-led world order at the Paris Peace Conference and the Washington and London Naval Conferences. For that reason, Konoe had earlier endorsed the four-nation alliance with the Soviet Union. Konoe's turnabout at this late stage of war intrigued the inner political circle.<sup>38</sup>

Konoe was not alone. By late 1944, Japanese advocates for peace began insisting on making a truce with the United States so as to ward off the Soviet and communist menaces and preserve Japan's traditional national polity under the emperor system. These peace advocates believed that post-surrender Japan should redevelop as a capitalist-industrialized liberal power and claimed that only by integrating itself into a U.S.-led world market could Japan achieve that goal. In spite of this pro-American outlook, their peace feelers for an armistice with the United States had no chance for success, because they insisted that post-surrender Japan, a nation with no natural resources, must be allowed to maintain Korea as a colony, or even Taiwan as well, to secure raw materials and foodstuffs.<sup>39</sup> Their demand for colonies as a prerequisite to Japan's surrender was simply unrealistic in light of Washington's refusal to negotiate a conditional peace. Clearly, Japan's

<sup>36</sup> Constantine V. Pleshakov, "Taiheiyō Sensō—Sutārin no ketsudan" [Stalin's decision in the Pacific War], in Hosoya Chihiro, *et al.*, eds., *Taiheiyō Sensō* [The Pacific War] (Tokyo, 1993), 185–89, 191–94; also see Pleshakov, "Yaruta Taisei no keisei to Soren" [Formation of the Yalta system and the Soviet Union], in Hosoya Chihiro, *et al.*, eds., *Taiheiyō Sensō no shūketsu* [The close of the Pacific War] (Tokyo, 1997), 412–18.

<sup>37</sup> The Japanese Foreign Ministry had been criticized for its naïve anticipation of a break-up of the Grand Alliance, a situation that the government hoped to take advantage of for its own peace-making. After the war, the ministry censured itself in this regard when, in 1952, it edited and published *Nihon no sentaku—Dai Niji Sekai Taisen shūsen shiroku* [Japan's choice: Historical records of the conclusion of World War II], an anthology of primary and secondary sources on Japan's decision-making process inside and outside the government that eventually led to the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration. This collection of documents seems to declare that the ministry made a deplorable mistake in underestimating the strong ties of the Grand Alliance. When the ministry printed an updated version in 1990, the basic apologetic stance remained unchanged. But that was not the reality.

<sup>38</sup> Torii, *Shōwa 20-nen*, vol. 1, part 2, chap. 7.

<sup>39</sup> Fujimura Yoshikazu, the navy attaché in Switzerland who contacted Allen Dulles of the Office of Strategic Services in late April 1945 for possible peace negotiations with Washington, insisted that post-surrender Japan should keep Korea and Taiwan. So did Brigadier General Okamoto Kiyotomi, a former army attaché in Switzerland who attempted to contact Dulles in mid-June for the same purpose. Fujimura spoke of Korea's integration into Japan as being as natural as New Mexico having been successfully annexed by the United States. See Hoshina Zenshirō, *Dai-TōA Sensō hishi—Ushinawareta waihei kōsaku* [A secret history of the Greater East Asian War: A failed peace operation] (Tokyo, 1975), 158.

“decision” to “return” to Wilsonianism after the war would not alone ensure Japan’s reconciliation with America.

What, then, would be the best tactic for minimizing the damage of Japan’s defeat and maximizing the chances for recovery of a post-surrender Japan? Setting aside ideological preferences, Japanese planners, both inside and outside the government, believed that post-surrender Japan would do best to realign itself strategically between the United States and the Soviet Union. Such views existed from the onset of the Pacific War. On December 8, 1941, the day of Pearl Harbor (Japan time), scholars of international relations and international law gathered and established the Association of Scholars of International Law (Kokusai-hō Gakkai), a forum to discuss a peace-keeping mechanism for the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and beyond. Ever since, Yokota Kisaburō, one of its influential members, had recommended that postwar Japan should participate in a collective security system under the joint leadership of the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union.<sup>40</sup> Ishibashi Tanzan, a liberal pro-capitalist economist, also recommended that postwar Japan join in such a collective peace-keeping organization. In doing so, he suggested that Japan pay extra attention to the intentions of both the United States and the Soviet Union, try to induce a balance of power between the two, and then promote a new open-door policy in the Far East.<sup>41</sup> Such ideas were similar to the notion of the Soviet Union as a deterrent against the hegemony of the United States. The difference was that Japan now searched for its place halfway in between.

Ever since the outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939, the Japanese Foreign Ministry had conducted comprehensive studies of the Allies’ planning for the postwar world order, based on data and information gathered and dispatched by Japanese diplomats stationed in Germany, the Soviet Union, and other neutral nations or entities such as Sweden, Switzerland, Vatican City, Portugal, and Turkey. These diplomats regularly sent copies of crucial articles printed in major Western (predominantly English-language) newspapers and journals, most of which suggested to Tokyo the complexity of Anglo-American–Soviet rivalries and collaborations in building a postwar world order.<sup>42</sup>

An article in the June 1, 1944, issue of *Foreign Policy Bulletin* (New York), sent to Tokyo as confidential, predicted an experimental international administration of Korea and possibly Manchuria, but it conceded the difficulty of coordinating the separate national interests of the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union,

<sup>40</sup> Takenaka Yoshihiko, “Kokusai-hō-gakusha no ‘sengo kōsō’—‘Dai-TōA kokusai-hō’ kara ‘Kokuren shinkō’ e” [Postwar visions of international lawyers in wartime Japan: From the pursuit of the Greater East Asian international law to idealization of the United Nations], *Kokusai Seiji* [International relations] 109 (May 1995).

<sup>41</sup> Kasuda Hiroshi, “Dai-TōA Kyōei-ken hitei to henkaku no ronri—Ishibashi Tanzan no baai” [Arguments concerning a rejection of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and a radical departure from it: The case of Ishibashi Tanzan], in Nakamura Katsunori, ed., *Kindai Nihon seiji no shosō* [Aspects of modern Japanese politics] (Tokyo, 1988), 194–97.

<sup>42</sup> *Dai-Niji Ōshū Taisen kankei ikken—sengo kei’ei mondai*, vols. 1–4, A-7-0-0-8-43; *Dai-Niji Ōshū Taisen kankei ikken—sengo kei’ei mondai Ei Bei Soren kankei*, A-7-0-0-8-43-1. A list of newspapers and journals included the *New York Times*, *Daily Mail*, *Reader’s Digest*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Observer*, *London Times*, *Sunday Times*, *News Chronicle*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Life*, *New York American*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, *TASS*, *Pravda*, and *Buenos Aires La nación*, among others.

and China, especially the USSR's security interest in greater East Asia.<sup>43</sup> Another article revealed how the United States foresaw problems in achieving such a balance of power in the Far East, because the United States "cannot expect Soviet Russia to underwrite the regime in China which makes war upon Chinese communists." The article cautioned that the defeat of Japan would create a dangerous political vacuum in the rich and vast territory, making the "Pacific peace" an extremely fragile one.<sup>44</sup> Walter Lippmann's pessimistic outlook, as published in *Dagens Nyheter*, was dispatched as confidential from Stockholm to Tokyo in late November 1944. In light of Russia's "expansionist" policy in China, only a continued Russian-American alliance would prevent turbulence in the northern Pacific, mused Lippmann. But if they should compete for "hegemony in Central and Eastern Europe, or in the colonies, in Asia and Africa," Lippmann speculated, "they [will be] unable to resist united regeneration of Germany's and Japan's military power."<sup>45</sup>

The Japanese government also tracked down, via foreign media, U.S. plans for controlling post-surrender Japan. One of the earliest news reports was sent to Tokyo in May 1944 by Okamoto Suemasa, minister to Sweden. The article in *Svenska Dagbladet* suggested an Anglo-American interest in turning defeated Japan into a bastion of anti-communism in Asia.<sup>46</sup> In late 1944, another news article was sent to Japan reporting the possible creation of an Allied Pacific Control Council as a governing mechanism for Japan: the chief members of this council would be the United States, Britain, China, and also the USSR, should the Soviets enter the Pacific conflict at all.<sup>47</sup>

Based on analyses of these sources, the Foreign Ministry published and distributed, to a limited audience outside the government, news summaries and digests on international relations.<sup>48</sup> Subsequently, the Japanese media, including leading national newspapers and intellectual journals such as *Kaizō* (Reconstruction) and *Gaikō Hyōron* (Diplomatic review), updated their readers with relatively accurate information on political dynamics in Europe and Asia. This is contrary to the conventional image of a wartime Japanese public kept in the dark and fed only government propaganda. The level of knowledge available to a wide gamut of Japanese citizens, male and female, with different social, occupational, and

<sup>43</sup> "Disposition of the Japanese Empire," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* [Foreign Policy Association, New York] (June 1, 1944), in "Dai-TōA Sensō kankei ikken—jōhō shūshū kankei" [The Greater East Asian War: Intelligence gatherings], A-7-0-0-99, Diplomatic Record Office, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>44</sup> Demaree Bess, "What Is Our Future in Asia," *Reader's Digest*, July 1944, in "Dai-TōA Sensō kankei ikken—jōhō shūshū kankei."

<sup>45</sup> "Hi: Sutokkuhorumu Okamoto Kōshi yori Honsho" [Secret: From Minister Okamoto, Stockholm, to the Foreign Ministry], November 23–24, 1944, and "Stockholm no. 43 (Hi) [Confidential]," in *Shōwa 19-nen Dai-Niji Ōshū Taisen kankei ikken—sengo kei'ei mondai Ei Bei Soren kankei* [1944, the Second European Great War: Postwar management—U.S.-UK-Soviet relations], A-7-0-0-8-43-1, Diplomatic Record Office, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>46</sup> "Hi: Sutokkuhorumu Okamoto Kōshi yori Honsho" [Secret: From Minister Okamoto, Stockholm, to the Foreign Ministry], March 21–22, 1944, in "Dai-TōA Sensō kankei ikken—jōhō shūshū kankei."

<sup>47</sup> "Plans for a Vanquished Japan," *American Mercury*, January 1944, in "Dai-TōA Sensō kankei ikken—jōhō shūshū kankei."

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Ichikawa Taijirō, Gaimushō Chōsa-kyoku Dai-Ichi Kachō [First Section Chief, Research Department, Foreign Ministry], "Bei-Ei-So sengo taisaku no kenkyū, 1943-nen 7-gatsu yori 1944-nen 2-gatsu ni itaru," February 1944.

geographical backgrounds, explains the kinds of rumors that circulated in towns and villages in the last phase of the war, speculating on Japan's dealings with the United States, the Soviet Union, and also Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>49</sup> Discussion of Japan's fate in the matrix of world politics was not just for the elites: it was a national project.

The Japanese media often expressed skepticism that the continued U.S.-Soviet alliance could maintain a postwar international order. As early as October 1943, after the Moscow Foreign Ministers Conference, Japanese scholars and journalists noted Anglo-American uneasiness with the growing Soviet influence in the Mediterranean Sea, northern Africa, and the Balkans.<sup>50</sup> They also learned about communist successes in Poland and Egypt, and the rise of Charles de Gaulle in France.<sup>51</sup> They were not naïve enough to believe that a break-up of the Grand Alliance would come to defuse its anti-fascist and anti-Japanese pressure. Rather, the Japanese observers considered FDR, Stalin, and Winston Churchill as three Machiavellian actors who would continue to play out their expected roles as allies, at least until the defeat of Germany. What they were not sure about was whether such a partnership would survive in the Asian theater.<sup>52</sup>

The Japanese media also paid special attention to how both Washington and Moscow attempted to take leadership of a new world. At the Moscow Foreign Ministers Conference, for example, the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and also the GMD government of China agreed to establish a security organization for a postwar world based on the principle of equal sovereignty. But the road was rocky from the outset. In December 1944, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov secured the right for his government to send to any international conferences representatives of all sixteen Soviet Republics, with sixteen individual votes. Japanese observers quipped that this was Moscow's new tactic to secure a bloc vote.<sup>53</sup> There was a British precedent. At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Britain successfully invited members of its empire to join the League of Nations Commission to cast bloc votes in support of Britain's cause. Then, in turn, when the San Francisco

<sup>49</sup> Investigative reports regularly compiled by the Special Higher Police (Tokkō) in each prefecture demonstrate that the Japanese public held realistic views concerning the war's direction. A report from the Kansai district on July 30, 1945, told of a male acupuncturist discussing with his client that the presence of Chiang as one of the signers of the Potsdam Declaration meant nothing much, given his parasitical relations with Anglo-Americans. Meanwhile, he interpreted the absence of Stalin as a sign of discord among the Allied nations. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Microfilm Collection, M 5041, "Japanese Army and Navy Archives, 1868-1945," roll 220, frames 90937-38. On August 11, 1945, in Hyogo Prefecture, a farmer stated that, now that the Soviets were coming in, Japan would not last more than a month. A factory worker remarked that Moscow's refusal to renew the Neutrality Pact had convinced him long ago that they would attack Japan at the most crucial moment in the war. Awaya Kentarō and Yoshida Yutaka, eds., *Haisenji zenkoku chian jōhō* [National reports on peace preservation at the time of defeat], vol. 6 (Tokyo, 1994), 275-77.

<sup>50</sup> Matsuda Michikazu, "Mosukuwa Sangoku Gaisō Kaidan" [The Moscow Foreign Ministers Conference], *Gaikō Jihō* [Revue diplomatique], no. 938 (January 1, 1944): 5-12; Yoneda Minoru, "Soren tai-Ei-Bei no ichidai mondai" [The major issue concerning the Soviet Union's relations with Britain and the United States], *Gaikō Jihō*, no. 942 (March 1, 1944): 5-14.

<sup>51</sup> Naomi Zenzō, "Kōsaku suru Bei-Ei-So sangoku no seiryaku" [Clashes of political maneuvers of Britain, the U.S., and the Soviet Union], *Gaikō Jihō*, no. 945 (May 1, 1944): 25-31.

<sup>52</sup> Suzukawa Isao, "Kebekku kara Mosukuwa made" [From Quebec to Moscow], in Asahi Shimbun-Sha Chūō Chōsa-kai, eds., *Asahi TōA Nenpō* [Asahi East Asian annual report] 3 (1944): 191-203.

<sup>53</sup> Inabara Katsuji, "Roshia no gaikō kōsei o miru" [Observations of Soviet diplomatic offensives], *Gaikō Jihō*, no. 941 (February 15, 1944): 7-8; Yoneda Minoru, "Soren tai-Ei-Bei no ichidai mondai" [The Soviet Union's big problem with Anglo-America], *Gaikō Jihō*, no. 942 (March 1, 1944): 12.



Conference was set for April 1945 to discuss a peace-keeping mechanism under the leadership of the United Nations, the United States managed to send to San Francisco representatives from twenty-one small nations in the Western Hemisphere to counter Soviet bloc votes. Other Japanese reviewers derided the folly of the two rival powers already starting a bout while discussing a postwar world peace.<sup>54</sup> Japanese readers were left all the more wary of a choice for their country's postwar course.

Even those Japanese who favored the American system of capitalism over the Soviet system of communism were not sure if Tokyo's unconditional acceptance of U.S. dominance over Japan would ensure Japan's future growth. The Imperial Navy's Rear Admiral Takagi Sōkichi, known to be a pro-Anglo-American pacifist, had since 1943 advocated an end to the unwinnable war and recommended that Japan take note of the rise of Soviet influence in the postwar world. On March 13, 1945, he completed the "Draft Intermediary Report" (*Chūkan hōkoku an*), a study of the best conditions under which Japan might end the war. Even though Takagi predicted that the Big Three would hold together until the end of the war in East Asia, he did not reject the tactic of utilizing the Moscow-Washington power dynamics for achieving the best results for Japan's future. For example, he surmised it would be impossible for the United States to both win the war against Japan and establish monopolistic hegemony stretching over Japan proper, Korea, Manchuria, and northern China. The reason, according to Takagi, was anticipated Soviet interference in the region to thwart such U.S. ambitions, regardless of the way the war ended. As a realist, Takagi insisted that Japan could not possibly omit the Soviet factor from any larger perspective of postwar peace-making, no matter what Japan's chance was for a peace with the United States. As the most satisfactory option, Takagi proposed that Japan consider separate approaches to each of the Big Three nations, by understanding their respective motives, goals, and aspirations in world politics.<sup>55</sup>

Takagi characterized the United States by its ambition to establish a U.S.-centered world organization and capitalist market after the war. With this goal in mind, the United States would very likely aid Japan's reconstruction—both industrial and financial—and incorporate Japan into its own world system. As part of the American system, Japan would quickly recover as a capitalist society and regain credibility in the international community. On the other hand, according to

<sup>54</sup> Komuro Makoto, "Okashii Han-Sūjiku Ren'mei an" [Ludicrous plan for the anti-Axis league], *Gaikō Jihō*, no. 950 (October 1, 1944): 1–4; Nishizawa Ei'ichi, "San Furanshisuko Kaigi no syōtai" [Truth about the San Francisco Conference], *Gaikō Jihō*, no. 955 (March 1, 1945): 12–14; Komuro Makoto, "Bei-Ei sekai seifuku no gensō" [Anglo-American illusion about world conquest], Matsuda Michikazu, "San Furanshisuko Han-Sūjiku Kaigi no hontai" [True nature of the anti-Axis San Francisco Conference], Tamura Kōsaku, "San Furanshisuko Kaigi ni kansuru kōsatsu" [Reflections on the San Francisco Conference], and Yoshizawa Seijirō, "Danbāton Ōkusu an ni tsuite no ni san no dansō" [Several thoughts on the Dumbarton Oaks Plan], all in *Gaikō Jihō*, no. 956 (April 1, 1945).

<sup>55</sup> As Japan's partner, Takagi seemed to prefer Britain to the United States due to the former's capitalist system and international prestige as well as what Takagi believed to be its cultural and intellectual proximity to Japan (reflecting Japan's heavy cultural borrowing from Britain since the late nineteenth century). But he was also realistic in admitting Britain's waning power in sharp contrast to the United States and Soviet Union. He also pointed out the impossibility of Britain providing financial support to postwar Japan. Takagi Sōkichi, "Chūkan hōkoku an" [Draft intermediary report], March 13, 1945 [handwritten draft], in *Takagi Sōkichi Shōshō Shiryō* (Kaigun 9-Takagi 3), 35–36, Military Archival Library of the National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo.

Takagi, an apparent disadvantage of America's postwar hegemony in Asia would be its denial of Japan's traditional stake in China and prohibition of Japan's attempt to return to regional leadership after the war. The only chance for Japan to overcome these disadvantages, speculated Takagi, would be when Washington found it impossible to deal single-handedly with Moscow's objection to America's hegemony in Asia: only then might Japan be able to regain ground in Asia with Washington's support.

Takagi then discussed how a rapprochement with the Soviet Union might also benefit Japan's future in several ways. He admitted that Japan could at least learn from the Soviets' advanced system of socialist organizations. Yet he cautioned that the long-term effects of friendship with the Soviet Union would be more difficult to predict, because the Soviet Union still lacked international credibility, and its revolutionary propaganda always had a destabilizing effect on society. Besides, pondered Takagi, once the Soviet Union lost Stalin's leadership, the nation might slip into chaos. Nevertheless, Takagi pointed out that the Soviet-Japanese mutual desire to check Anglo-American expansion in Asia should not be underestimated. As the minimum conditions for Japan's surrender, Takagi listed the following: the preservation of the emperor system, maintenance of an industrial capacity and a police force, and the continuous possession of Korea and Taiwan under Japan's sovereignty. Interestingly enough, Takagi also proposed to make some concessions to the Soviet Union, such as the southern part of Sakhalin. He even suggested that the northern part of Manchuria might be placed under joint Soviet-Japanese control on condition that its sovereignty would eventually be returned to China.<sup>56</sup> Overall, Takagi seemed to propose the wisdom of risk management in a time of uncertainty, reminiscent of a strategic option among samurai commanders of medieval Japan in choosing one's ally in civil wars: Do not risk all of your fortune by siding with either one of two rivals; side with both.<sup>57</sup>

Most important, the Japanese government had studied Western rumors concerning Japan's surrender tactics, in order to outwit Western war planners, or at least to know what they knew. A report sent from Zurich to the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo quoted the *Washington Evening Post* of May 2, 1945, which argued that Japan had been convinced of a Soviet entry into the war against Japan and its subsequent intervention in the settlement of Asian affairs. Yet, the article surmised, Japan "preferred" to surrender to "Anglo-Americans in Chungking" (Chongqing, GMD headquarters) because Japan desired to salvage its economic power.<sup>58</sup> Tokyo also learned from a Reuters report, dispatched to Tokyo on May 11, 1945, that the United States was speculating that Japan was scheming to use the Soviet card against it: "[M]ight not Japan, surrounded by enemies, prefer to offer unconditional

<sup>56</sup> Takagi, "Chūkan hōkoku an," 25–26, 41–43.

<sup>57</sup> In fourteenth-century Japan, where civil war divided the nation into two camps—the samurai regime and the Imperial court—it was not uncommon for members of the same clan deliberately to take opposite sides. A deliberate division of allegiance within a clan did not have much to do with conflicts of principle; rather, it guaranteed one part of the family would be on the winning side regardless of the outcome. Therefore, beneath seeming family breaches, there was a basic understanding between the two camps, and the familial conflict was superficial. George Sansom, *A History of Japan, 1334–1615* (Stanford, Calif., 1961), 53, 74.

<sup>58</sup> "Peace Rumors Concerning Japan (U.S. collection), Zurich, May 2 (Dōmei)," in "Dai-TōA Sensō kankei ikken—jōhō shūshū kankei."

surrender hoping by shortening the war to secure better terms? The difficulty here is that Russia's Far Eastern Policy is still unpredictable and that the Japanese Government has some reason to hope that profound disagreements between the Allies may create a diplomatic situation in which Japan can maneuver and bargain its way toward conclusions."<sup>59</sup>

Obviously, as the Japanese policymakers read this article in Tokyo, they knew Japan could not "bargain" for its defeat with either the Soviet Union or the United States. A two-front war against both the United States and the Soviet Union was looking like an impossible scenario; the Soviet attack alone would be the end of Japan's war in Asia and the Pacific. However, Japan's surrender tactic was now to have the United States and the Soviet Union compete against each other in their planning for the future of East Asia. Thus Japan's plan for surrender and beyond, both politically and militarily in the Eurasian context, was made assuming a Soviet attack beginning in Manchuria and assessing its impact on the United States. In fact, by mid-April 1945, when the Imperial Headquarters acknowledged the rapid reinforcement of Soviet forces in the Far East, the Army War Operations Plans Division made no recommendations for preparations for counterattack. Instead, it made the following observation: the key to accomplishing the goal of the Greater East Asian War was to predict precisely when the Soviet attack would occur and to complete by then a quick and proper response and measure concerning it. The "quick and proper response and measure" seems, in this context, to mean Japan's surrender. But nowhere in the observation did it hint that Japan should do so *before* the Soviet attack.<sup>60</sup>

THOUGH UNDER THE NEUTRALITY PACT, the Japanese army had kept studying the timing and manner of possible Soviet attacks. In late November 1943, the Imperial Headquarters' Fifth Section (the Russian intelligence section) conducted a comprehensive survey of the Soviets' preparation for war against Japan. Subsequently, the Imperial Headquarters began working on Operation Otsu-gō, a plan for a two-front defense against U.S. and Soviet forces.<sup>61</sup> In the summer of 1944, when Soviet troops provoked the Kwantung Army by repeatedly crossing the Argun River, a Soviet-Manchurian border, neither the Imperial Army nor the Kwantung Army reciprocated. Rather, they heightened their intelligence operations on the timing of a Soviet attack on Manchukuo.<sup>62</sup>

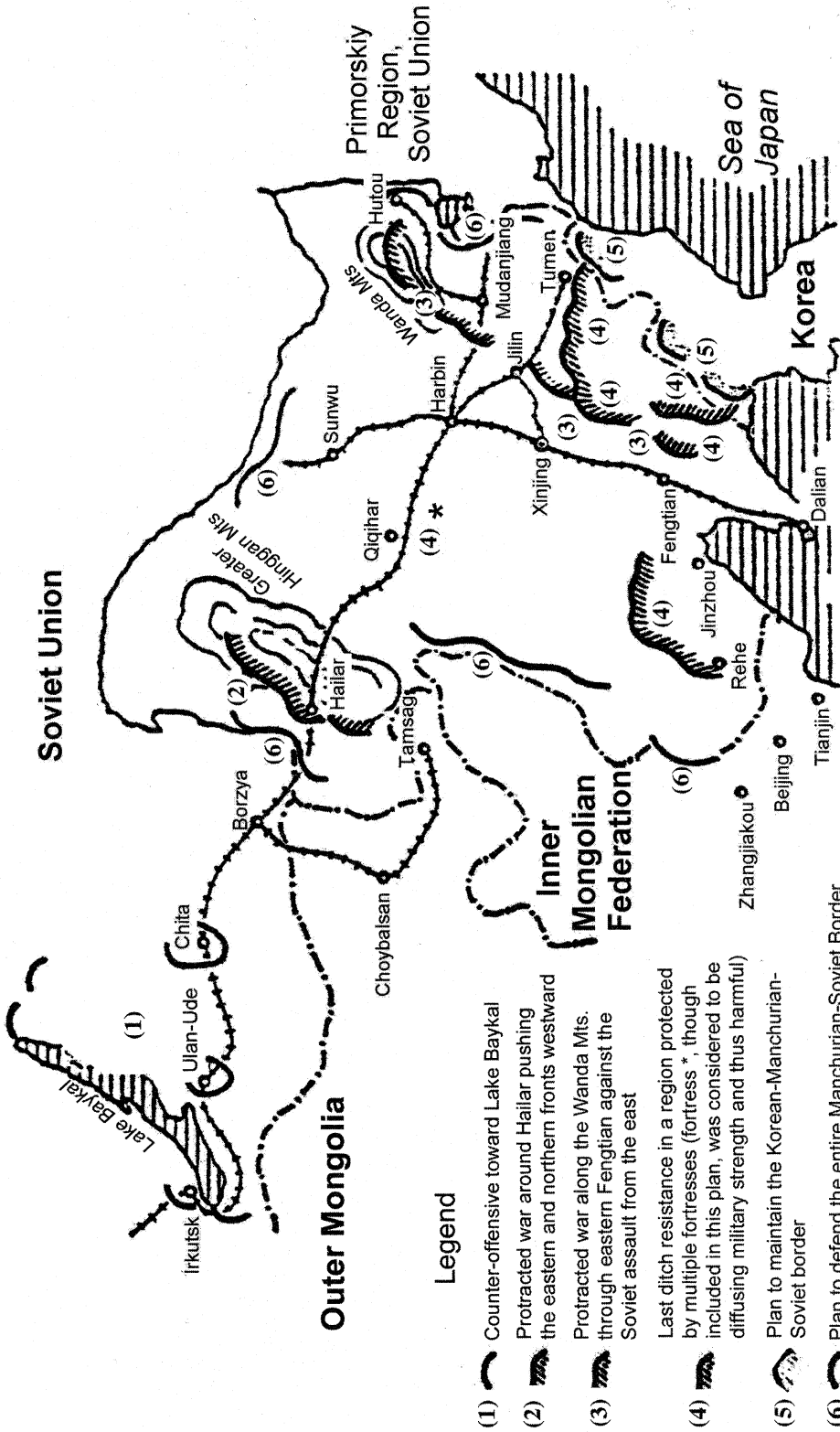
By early August 1944, Lieutenant Colonel Kusachi Teigo, chief of the Kwantung Army Operations Plans Division, presented to the Imperial Headquarters a set of six strategic plans against anticipated Soviet assaults on Manchuria and beyond. (See Map 2.) None was very desirable. Plan 1 proposed a counteroffensive to push the Soviet army back over the Manchurian-Mongolian border toward Lake Baykal,

<sup>59</sup> "Peace Rumors Concerning Japan (U.S. collection)," in "Dai-TōA Sensō kankei ikken—jōhō shūshū kankei."

<sup>60</sup> See the entry of April 16, 1945, in *Kimitsu sensō nisshi*, 2: 702–03.

<sup>61</sup> See the entry of November 26, 1943, in *Kimitsu sensō nisshi*, 2: 453.

<sup>62</sup> Bōei-chō Bōei-Kenshū-jo Senshi-shitsu [Military History Department, the National Institute for Defense Studies], ed., *Senshi sōsho: Kantō-Gun (2)* [War history series: The Kwantung Army (2)] [hereafter, *Kantō-Gun (2)*] (Tokyo, 1974), 282–83, 322–23, 338–39.



MAP 2: The Kwantung Army's Six Strategic Plans against Anticipated Soviet Attack on Manchuria and Beyond (early August 1944). Courtesy of the Military History Department, the National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo. Adapted from *Senshi Sōsho: Kantō-Gun* [War History Series: The Kwantung Army], vol. 2 (Tokyo, 1974), 279. Adapted by Myongsun Kong, Colgate University.

a strategy based on the pre-Nomonhan concept of an aggressive war, and as such it was out of serious consideration. Plan 2 also suggested a westward offensive along the eastern and northern fronts, which was not considered very plausible, either. The remaining four plans all suggested passive defensive actions, although Plan 6 to defend the entire border of Manchuria against Soviet attack was rejected as impossible. Of Plans 3 and 4, both of which suggested withdrawal from the Manchurian plains, Plan 4 was specific about last-ditch resistance in only the Kwantung region and Korea. Plan 5 even suggested withdrawing completely from Manchuria and defending only the Korean-Manchurian-Soviet border. The plan to abandon all of Manchuria posed a serious danger to the million Japanese settlers residing in Manchukuo, not to mention abnegating the self-imposed responsibility for the defense of Manchukuo.<sup>63</sup> But the possible defenders of Manchuria were thinning, and a successful defense became less likely as the elite division was transferred to fight in the Philippines, leaving a serious void behind.

The inertia toward the predicted Soviet attack did *not* mean that the Japanese army was more prepared to fight the final battle against the United States, either. The Imperial Headquarters had drawn up *some* plans to meet a U.S. invasion of Japan proper. On January 20, 1945, it completed “A Grand Proposal for the Imperial Army-Navy Strategic Maneuver” (*Teikoku Riku-Kai-Gun sakusen keikaku taimō*), which set a timeline to complete preparations for Operation Ketsu-gō, the final homeland battle against the United States, by the early fall of 1945. Another report, issued on July 1, 1945, gave more specific estimates of the U.S. mainland invasion, both aerial and coastal, to occur between late fall of 1945 and early spring of 1946, calculations based on the current U.S. navy’s capacity.<sup>64</sup> These Japanese predictions of the U.S. plans for the landing were near perfection in terms of the timing, specific locations of landing points, and also strategic purposes, as laid out in the U.S. army’s “Olympic,” a plan for the Kyushu invasion scheduled in November 1945, and “Coronet,” a plan for the Kanto (greater Tokyo metropolitan region) invasion in the spring of 1946.<sup>65</sup> The Japanese army mobilized an increased number of troops in Kyushu as preparation for the final battles. Notwithstanding, as top military leaders repeatedly and openly pointed out, the preparations in Kyushu were far from satisfactory in terms of equipment, training, and building of fortresses.<sup>66</sup> Most crucially, the prospect of the Soviet invasion of Manchuria was more imminent, estimated to occur *a few months prior* to the estimated U.S.

<sup>63</sup> The critical issue to note is the government’s sheer lack of attention to the defense of civilian settlers in Manchuria and Korea, a topic passionately debated in postwar Japan. The Imperial Headquarters War Operations Plans Division considered the early evacuation of Japanese civilian settlers inappropriate, as it would contradict Japan’s basic policy of preserving the status quo with the Soviet Union and arouse people’s suspicions of an impending crisis. As a result, of 1.5 million civilian settlers in Manchuria, some 180,700 died amid the chaos surrounding Japan’s surrender. *Kantō-Gun* (2), 278–79, 339–40, 353–55.

<sup>64</sup> “Shōwa 21-nen goro o medo to suru jōsei handan” [Analysis of situations as of the spring of 1946], Bōei-chō Bōei-Kenshū-jo Senshi-shitsu, ed., *Senshi sōsho: Hondo kessen junbi* (2) [War history series: Preparation for Mainland Battle (2)] [hereafter, *Hondo kessen junbi* (2)] (Tokyo, 1972), 432–33.

<sup>65</sup> “OLYMPIC and CORONET: G–II Estimate of the Enemy Situation,” April 25, 1945, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Operation Division (RG 165), National Archives II, College Park, Maryland. Also see Alvin Coox, “Needless Fear: The Compromise of U.S. Plans to Invade Japan in 1945,” *Journal of Military History* 64 (April 2000): 411–38; *Hondo kessen junbi* (2), 442–43.

<sup>66</sup> *Hondo kessen junbi* (2), 447–49.

invasion of Japan proper in late fall. Without serious preparation to hold back the decisive Soviet assaults on Japan's holdings on the continent, the mainland battle against the United States was doomed to be pointless by the time of the Soviet military operations. The Soviet entry into the war meant to the Japanese army the end of the war.

From a different perspective, the Japanese also saw that a Soviet thrust into Manchuria would play havoc with Chinese politics, specifically defusing the momentum gained by the CCP, and also preventing an otherwise victorious China from becoming a threat to postwar Japan. The aforementioned Japanese "offer" of its Manchurian interests to the Soviet Union was meant to deter U.S. hegemony in China. Now the anticipated Soviet attack on Manchuria would have two effects: not only hamper such U.S. ambitions but also crush any hope for a GMD-CCP united front. Due to the complex nature and development of China's republican revolution of 1911, the Soviet Union was the official ally of Chiang Kai-shek's GMD government, though Stalin and Chiang were never close to each other. Of course, the Soviet Union was also the ideological motherland of the CCP. But in terms of ideological lineage, Stalin never treated Mao Zedong with respect, either. Therefore, anticipated Soviet military presence in Manchuria would not be particularly good news for the CCP, especially in light of the fact that Korean and Chinese communists fighting in Manchuria identified themselves with Stalin, not Mao, insofar as their leaders were hand-picked by Moscow for their non-Maoist revolutionary goals.<sup>67</sup>

In the earlier phase of the Sino-Japanese War, Japan's top priority was the war against Chiang Kai-shek's army. Then, to root out guerrilla activities under the communist leadership, the Japanese army deployed the atrocious "3-alls" campaigns (*sankō*)—kill, burn, and destroy all.<sup>68</sup> By 1943, however, the Japanese army conceded the impossibility of containing CCP guerrillas in northeast China. During the spring of 1944, the Imperial Headquarters acknowledged that the CCP was establishing a semi-independent regime as a rival to the GMD government. On July 5, 1944, as Operation Ichi-gō devastated wide areas under the GMD's holdings, the Japanese army released a new policy that declared that, from then on, it would recognize the CCP's headquarters as the Yan'an regime (or sovereign [*seiken*]) and avoid blatantly anti-communist propaganda in its fight against the Yan'an regime.<sup>69</sup> Extending this logic, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru even went so far as to suggest the formation of a Tokyo-Yan'an-Moscow alliance as a check on the Anglo-American forces.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Suzuki Masayuki, "Manshū Chōsen no kakumei-teki renkei: Manshū kō-Nichi tōsō to Chōsen kaihō-go no kakumei naisen" [A Manchurian-Korean revolutionary linkage: The anti-Japanese movement in Manchuria and the post-liberation civil war in Korea], in *Iwanami Kōza Kindai Nihon to Shokumin-chi*, vol. 6, "Teikō to Kutsujū" [Iwanami lecture series on modern Japan's colonial history, vol. 6, "Resistance and submission"] (Tokyo, 1993), 29–59.

<sup>68</sup> Bōei-chō Bōei Kenshū-jo Senshi-shitsu, ed., *Senshi sōsho—HokuShi no chian-sen (2)* [Peace preservation war in North China (2)] [hereafter, *HokuShi no chian-sen (2)*] (Tokyo, 1971), 319–34, 504–12, 523–26.

<sup>69</sup> *HokuShi no chian-sen (2)*, 523–25. Akashi Yōji, "Taiheiyō Sensō makki ni okeru Nihon gunbu no En'an seiken to no wahei mosaku—Sono haikai" [In search of peace: The Yan'an alternative and the Imperial Japanese Army], *Gunji Shigaku* 31, nos. 1–2 (September 1995): 176.

<sup>70</sup> Hatano, "Shigemitsu Mamoru to Dai-TōA Kyōdō Sengen," 47–48. Also see Akashi, "Taiheiyō Sensō makki ni okeru," 175–85.

The appeasement policy with the CCP had a further strategic advantage beneath the guise of the Moscow appeasement. Through intelligence activities in China, the Japanese government had learned about growing tensions between Moscow and Yan'an, and concluded that communist movements in East Asia were not monolithic under the Soviet Union's leadership. In August 1944, Lieutenant General Hata Hikosaburō, Vice Chief of Staff of the Imperial Headquarters, stated that the CCP's ideological foundation had "outgrown" communism and rapidly "transformed [or, progressed]" into nationalism, distancing itself from Moscow.<sup>71</sup> One November 1944 intelligence report told the Imperial Headquarters about the CCP struggle to secure military assistance, especially in the air war against Japan, from the United States, not the Soviet Union. Only after that attempt, the report said, did the Soviet Union step in, agreeing to provide the CCP with aircraft, ammunition, and technological support. The Imperial Headquarters interpreted this episode as an example of how the United States and the Soviet Union checked each other, vying for future control of the CCP. Moreover, this episode showed a predicament the CCP had with its "ideological motherland" in obtaining as much aid as it wanted.<sup>72</sup>

Indeed, serious discord soon erupted between Yan'an and Moscow. In April 1945, in a meeting with Patrick Hurley, FDR's special envoy to Yan'an, Stalin called the Chinese communists, including Mao, "margarine communists," disparaging them as simply agrarian reformers and not real communists. In a secret meeting with White House adviser Harry Hopkins on June 25, 1945, Stalin reaffirmed his belief that Chiang Kai-shek was a more desirable leader than Mao for unified China. Stalin even promised Hopkins that, should the CCP's army enter Manchuria and other areas of China, he would still support Chiang, not Mao, for administering regional civil politics. Stalin pledged the same thing to Japan: in early 1945, he denied his support for the CCP because of the latter's lack of ideological authenticity.<sup>73</sup>

Nor did the Japanese government anticipate that the Moscow-Yan'an tension would either push Chiang and Mao toward coalition or push the CCP closer to Washington. In the spring of 1944, the Japanese army had learned about a possible

<sup>71</sup> See the entry on March 17, 1944, in *Kimitsu sensō nissshi*, 2: 505–06. Also see Hata Shunroku, "Tai-En'an seiken senden bōryaku jissai yōryō" [Memorandum on conducting propaganda and intelligence campaigns toward the Yan'an regime], cited in Torii, *Shōwa 20-nen*, vol. 1, part 3, 40.

<sup>72</sup> Imperial Headquarters, "Saikin Bei-En gunjiteki torikime seiritsu to So-En gunji dōmei teiketsu setsu ni tsuite" [Observations on the recent U.S.-Yan'an military deals and alleged Soviet-Yan'an military alliance], November 29, 1944, in Usui Masami and Inaba Masao, eds., *Gendaishi Shiryō*, 38, *Taiheiyō Sensō 4* (Tokyo, 1972), 328–31.

<sup>73</sup> Katō Kōichi, "Chūgoku Kyōsantō no tai-Bei ninshiki to Soren no tai-Nichi sansen mondai, 1944–1945" [CCP's views of the United States and the Soviet entry into the war against Japan, 1944–1945], *Rekishigaku Kenkyū* [Journal of Historical Studies], no. 751 (July 2001): 38. In *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria: Chinese Communism and Soviet Interest, 1922–1945* (Berkeley, Calif., 1983), Chong-Sik Lee argued that, even before Pearl Harbor, the Soviet Union was not willing to assist the anti-Japanese Chinese guerrillas in Manchuria because such assistance could aggravate sensitive diplomatic relations with Japan (320–21). Also see Sergei Tikhvinskii's comment in Hosoya, *et al.*, *Taiheiyō Sensō*, 644–45. For Stalin's comment on "margarine communists," see Gordon Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948–1972* (Stanford, Calif., 1990), 10; Dieter Heintzig, *The Soviet Union and Communist China, 1945–1950: The Arduous Road to the Alliance* (New York, 2004), 22–23.

rapprochement between the CCP and the United States.<sup>74</sup> When U.S. observer groups headed for Yan'an in July and November 1944, however, the Imperial Headquarters did not consider that a signal of their cross-ideological honeymoon period. Instead, they discovered some uneasiness among the CCP leaders toward the United States. In fact, as the CCP expanded its control across China, its leaders grew frustrated with Washington's continuing aid to the GMD government. The Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo obtained information that Zhu De and Peng Dehuai, two top CCP leaders, discussed via telegram that the United States aiding the GMD was part of a covert operation by the former: by helping Chiang Kai-shek build military industry in areas rich in natural resources, the United States hoped to prepare him to attack the CCP and eventually the Soviet Union.<sup>75</sup> Japan's final strategy for China, therefore, consisted of two incongruous principles: support for Soviet interests in Manchuria and acquiescence in the rise of the CCP. One clear objective of this scheme is that, either way, it allowed the United States less room for intervention in China. But the synergistic effect of such incompatible principles would also be a Soviet-CCP discomfort with each other's presence in the vacuum left by Japan's defeat, which would theoretically neutralize each other's influence.<sup>76</sup>

Japan's surrender tactics for Korea also reflected its observations of international intrigues, especially regarding the severely polarized Korean independence movement.<sup>77</sup> Since July 1942, Korean communists had incorporated themselves into the CCP and fought against Japan in Manchuria and northern Korea. As the war dragged on, they became increasingly divided into two factions—one under Soviet and the other under CCP leadership. Furthermore, exiled Korean nationalists formed the Korean Provisional Government at Chongqing, headquarters of the GMD government. Syngman Rhee, another exile, founded the Korean National Association in the United States, where he received only tepid support for his leadership.<sup>78</sup> In the summer of 1944, the governor general of Korea reported to the

<sup>74</sup> Imperial Headquarters, "Jyūkei no haisen ni tomonau En'an gawa no seijiteki kōsei" [Political rise of Yan'an and decline of Chungking], February 22, 1944, in Usui and Inaba, *Gendaishi Shiryō*, 38, *Taiheiyō Sensō* 4, 326–27.

<sup>75</sup> Imperial Headquarters, "Saikin Bei-Ei gunjiteki torikime seiritsu to So-En gunji dōmei teiketsu setsu ni tsuite," 330.

<sup>76</sup> As Michael Hunt argues in *The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (New York, 1996), Mao anticipated Japan's defeat in the Pacific War but also feared that it would be followed by the rise of American and Soviet powers in the Far East. Moreover, Mao worried that his collision with Soviet ideology as well as Soviet military strategy in East Asia would harm his party's survival and growth. Subsequently, while he noticed the gradual collapse of the Grand Alliance, Mao hoped to utilize U.S. power to his advantage. Yet Mao was careful *not* to allow the United States any chance for imperialistic expansion, not to mention obtaining complete command of the Pacific (see 145–50 and 155–57). In this regard, there emerged a stunning parallel between Mao and Tokyo's planners in sensing the need to control the U.S. and Soviet rises in power in East Asia.

<sup>77</sup> Between 1936 and 1940, the Imperial Headquarters of the Korean army (Chōsen-Gun Sanbō-bu) submitted to Tokyo semi-annual reports on Korean attitudes and thought trends concerning Japan and Korean independence against the background of their knowledge of world affairs. See Miyata Setsuko, ed., *Chōsen shisō undō gaikyō* (Jūgo-nen Sensō gokuhī shiryō shū, vol. 28) [Survey of Korean thought movements (Anthology of top secret documents concerning the Fifteen-Year War, vol. 28)] (Tokyo, 1991). Also see Morita Yoshio, "Chōsen ni okeru Nihon tōchi no shūen" [The end of Japanese rule in Korea], *Kokusai Seiji* [International relations], no. 2 (1962): 83.

<sup>78</sup> The Japanese Foreign Ministry's knowledge of Washington's stale relations with Rhee was recorded in a series of entries in the August–December 1944 file "DōmeiTsūshin Sha-nai Jōhō-kyoku, Tekisei jōhō" [Domei News Agency, Information Bureau—Enemy Information], in "Dai-TōA Sensō kankei ikken—jōhō shūshū kankei."



Eighty-fifth Imperial Diet held in Tokyo on ever-intensifying international intelligence activities in Korea. The Soviet Union, the CCP, the United States, Britain, and the GMD government all conducted covert operations with the same goal of “assisting” Korea’s “independence” movement strictly under their respective influence.<sup>79</sup> In August of that year, the Japanese authority in Seoul discovered that Korean communists had high hopes for a Soviet attack on Japan so that their revolutionary movement would gain momentum toward liberation.<sup>80</sup>

Washington and Moscow had not made any overt commitment to the peninsula’s future, but it was clear they increasingly feared each other’s growing interest in Korea. The concept of a divided Korea was nothing radical: it had historical precedents. Before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, a British official proposed to the Japanese government that Japan should occupy southern Korea and China occupy northern Korea, with Seoul being a neutral zone. In 1896 and again in 1903, the Japanese and Russian governments, in an effort to avert a military confrontation, discussed dividing Korea along the Thirty-eighth Parallel.<sup>81</sup> In fact, at Yalta, the United States and the Soviet Union seemed to endorse the idea of “balance of power” in postwar Korea. They vaguely agreed on FDR’s proposal for a joint trusteeship of the peninsula. But at Potsdam, they avoided the issue of stationing forces during the trusteeship and exchanged only sketchy information on each other’s military planning to “liberate” Korea, leaving the postwar status of the peninsula largely undecided.<sup>82</sup>

In early 1945, the Imperial Headquarters began studying respective U.S. and Soviet military plans for the peninsula. On February 6, 1945, the Imperial Headquarters disbanded the headquarters of the Korean army and established the new Seventeenth Area Army to take charge of Korean defense. The commander of the Seventeenth was instructed to resist any U.S. landing and also, in cooperation with the Kwantung Army in Manchuria, to “prepare” for any Soviet operation. By May, the Imperial Headquarters had become convinced that the Soviet army, once it attacked Manchuria, would quickly advance into northern Korea as well. It also predicted a case in which such an attack might occur simultaneously with a U.S. advance into southern Korea as part of the invasion of mainland Japan even prior

<sup>79</sup> See Chōsen Sōtoku-fu, *Dai-85-kai Teikoku Gikai setsumeishi shiryō* [The Governor-General of Korea, documents submitted to the 85th Imperial Diet session], August 1944, rpt. in Kondō Kin’ichi, ed., *Taiheiyō Sensō shūmatsu-ki Chōsen no chisei* (Chōsen kindai shiryō-Chōsen Sōtoku-fu kankei jūyō bunsho senshū [2]) [Politics of Korea in the last period of the Pacific War (Modern Korean documents—Selected documents of the Governor-General of Korea (2))] (Tokyo, 1961), 73–81.

<sup>80</sup> Kondō, *Taiheiyō Sensō shūmatsu-ki Chōsen no chisei*, 2: 67, 69–70. Also see Miyata, *Chōsen shisō undō gaikyō*, vol. 28: 9, 73, 171.

<sup>81</sup> See Morita Yoshio, *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku: Bei-So ryōgun no shinchū to Nihonjin no hikiage* [A record of the war’s end in Korea: Advances of the U.S. and Soviet armies and the Japanese reparation] (Tokyo, 1964), 157. See Nagaoka Shinjirō, “Nan-Sen to Hoku-Sen—Sono shiteki kōsatsu” [Examining the historical backgrounds to southern and northern Korea], *Nihon Rekishi* 64 (September 1953). Also see Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–1947* (Princeton, N.J., 1981), 121.

<sup>82</sup> Kathryn Weathersby, “Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945–1950: New Evidence from Russian Archives,” Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (Washington, D.C., 1993), 8. Also see *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, 1945, vol. 2 (Washington, 1945), S 1.1/3:P 84/v.2: 345–53, 408.

to autumn 1945.<sup>83</sup> Concurrently, Takagi Sōkichi, in his aforementioned “Draft Intermediary Report” of May 13, 1945, predicted that the United States, once it was winning the war decisively, would try to establish hegemony over northern China, Manchuria, and Korea, and that the Soviet Union would then intervene to thwart such attempts.<sup>84</sup>

Although Japan’s new military planning for Korea ostensibly aimed to coordinate a two-front attack, the Japanese army had no resources or objectives for fighting the United States in southern Korea and the Soviet Union in northern Korea. By late February 1945, based on intelligence reports from Europe and the Soviet border, the Japanese army confirmed that the Soviet army had already sped up procurement of troops and ammunition for the Soviet Far East, but added that the Kwantung Army could in no way stop the Soviets.<sup>85</sup> It was shortly after Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov’s announcement on April 5, 1945, concerning Moscow’s intention not to renew the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact in the following year that the Imperial Headquarters estimated the Soviet entry into the war would take place in the fall of 1945 or after.<sup>86</sup> By May 30, 1945, the Imperial Headquarters ordered the Seventeenth Area Army and the Kwantung Army to further divide responsibility for *resisting* the U.S. army in southern Korea and the Soviet army in northern Korea.<sup>87</sup> But the report issued on July 1 bluntly repeated the prediction that the Soviet army would quickly capture all the strategic locations in Manchukuo and secure routes toward northern China and Korea.<sup>88</sup>

The Soviet government was intrigued by the diminishment of Japanese defenses in Manchuria. According to a TASS news agency report on July 3, 1945 (which was intercepted by the Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo), Soviet leaders questioned why the Japanese army did not transfer a million Japanese soldiers currently stationed in China to prepare the Manchurian defense for a Soviet attack.<sup>89</sup> Ryū Shintarō, European correspondent for the *Asahi* newspaper, wrote to Shimomura Hiroshi, director of the Cabinet’s Information Bureau, in early July 1945, saying that the Soviet Union would demand Sakhalin, Manchuria, and Korea anyway, whether as a result of the victory against Japan or a condition for keeping neutrality with Japan. Rather than giving them up to the Soviets, urged Ryū, just surrender to the United States immediately and let them all fall under the U.S. sphere of influence.

<sup>83</sup> The Imperial Headquarters estimated that the Soviet army would deploy its forces should the U.S. army adopt one of the following moves: land in central and northern China and spread over the continent; land in southern Manchuria and quickly advance northward; or penetrate into the Sea of Japan, from which to land on Japan proper. Morita, *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku*, 13–15, 20–22; Nakayama, “Nihon no sensō sakusen shidō ni okeru Soren yōin, 1941–1945,” 51–53. For the reproduction of the military planning made by the Imperial Headquarters, see Dai-17-Hōmen-Dan [The Seventeenth Area Army], *Hondo Sakusen Kiroku* [Records of plans for the mainland], vol. 5, in Miyata Setsuko, ed., *Chōsen-Gun gaiyō-shi—15-nen Sensō gokuhi shiryō-shū* [A survey history of the Korean Army—Top-secret documents on the Fifteen-Year War], vol. 15 (Tokyo, 1989), 214–16, 223, 231–44.

<sup>84</sup> Takagi, “Chūkan hōkoku an,” 25, 42–43.

<sup>85</sup> *Kantō-Gun* (2), 325.

<sup>86</sup> Nakayama, “Nihon no sensō sakusen shidō,” 52.

<sup>87</sup> Morita, *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku*, 20–21.

<sup>88</sup> *Kantō-Gun* (2), 325–27.

<sup>89</sup> See the confidential telegram, dispatched on July 2 from Shanghai and received on July 3, in Dai 17-Hōmen-Gun Sanbō-bu Sakusen-han [The Seventeenth Area Army Staff Operations Plans Division], *Kimitsu sakusen nishi* (*Otsu tsuzuri*) [Top secret war planning journal (2)], July 1945, Military Archival Library of the National Institute for Defense Studies.

Ryū hoped that such readiness would move the United States to grant Japan a conditional surrender.<sup>90</sup> Obviously, that was not the final option.

ON AUGUST 7, 1945, ONE DAY AFTER the first atomic bomb was detonated over Hiroshima, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) of the U.S. government intercepted a Japanese message and learned that the bomb had not precipitated Japan's decision to surrender. Indeed, that day, the Japanese Foreign Ministry was still making a diplomatic attempt, sincere or not, to forestall war with the Soviet Union. On August 8, the Soviet army began a massive attack on Manchukuo. On the morning of August 10, one day after the second atomic bomb was dropped, on Nagasaki, Yakov Malik, the Soviet ambassador to Japan, delivered to Foreign Minister Tōgō a declaration of war, only to find out that Japan was now accepting the Potsdam Declaration.<sup>91</sup>

The focus of the final stage of World War II was the U.S.-Soviet confrontation in Asia. The Soviet Union continued its massive attack, moving quickly to Korea, Sakhalin, and the Kurile Islands, and the United States deterred further Soviet advance in Korea within a month, making the Thirty-eighth Parallel a dividing line for U.S. and Soviet occupation. Immediately after the Soviet advance into Manchuria, CCP soldiers marched into Manchuria far ahead of the GMD army. The United States rejected Stalin's demand for Soviet joint occupation of Japan and even positioned itself to "defend" Japan proper from any Soviet ambitions.<sup>92</sup> By the time the U.S. occupation force was on its way to establishing a military government in Tokyo, the Japanese government had requested that the U.S. government halt the Soviet advance in Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands, which continued until August 30.<sup>93</sup>

After August 15, a long silence began on the part of Japanese officials concerning their view of the American use of atomic bombs and the Soviet entry into the war. Emperor Hirohito made two separate statements on two different reasons for his decision to surrender—one on August 14 mentioned the atomic

<sup>90</sup> The copy of Ryū's letter was transmitted top-secret to Tokyo by Kase Shun'ichi, minister to Switzerland. See "Kase Kōshi yori Tōgō Gaimu Daijin" [A memo from Minister Kase to Foreign Minister Tōgō], July 9, 1945, in "Dai-TōA Sensō kankei ikken—Suwēden, Suisu, Bachikan nado ni okeru shūsen kōsaku" [Reports on the Greater East Asian War—Peace operations in Sweden, Switzerland, the Vatican, etc.], A-7-0-0-9-66, Diplomatic Record Office, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>91</sup> Ōmori Minoru, *Sengo hishi—Ten'nō to genshi bakudan* [A secret history of the postwar years: The emperor and the atomic bombs] (Tokyo, 1975), 167–68.

<sup>92</sup> For the Moscow-Washington talks on the Soviet occupation of Japan, see Averell Harriman Papers: Moscow files, 1945, Manuscript Division, the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. For Soviet plans to occupy Hokkaido, see David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939–1956* (New Haven, Conn., 1994); David Glantz, "The Soviet Invasion of Japan," *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* 7, no. 3 (Spring 1995). Holloway argues that Stalin decided not to clash with the United States over Hokkaido and hence withdrew the proposal (131).

<sup>93</sup> A growing body of recent Japanese works on Japan's final military battle against the Soviet Union include Nakayama Takashi, *Manshū—1945.8.9: Soren-Gun shinkō to Nihon-Gun* [Manchuria, August 9, 1945: Advance of the Soviet army and the Japanese army] (Tokyo, 1990); *1945-nen natsu saigo no NiSso sen* [Summer 1945: The final Soviet-Japanese War] (Tokyo, 1995); Handō Kazutoshi, *Soren ga Manshū ni shinkō shita natsu* [The summer when the Soviets invaded Manchuria] (Tokyo, 1999).

bombs and another on August 17 mentioned the Soviet entry into the war.<sup>94</sup> Back in June 1945, Ashida Hitoshi, foreign minister in the pre-war period and prime minister in 1948, had expressed his sense of confusion in his journal: “I have no clue as to who [which political bloc] will carry on Japan’s future, a few years from now.”<sup>95</sup> When the Potsdam Declaration was issued, the Japanese Foreign Ministry debated the implications of the Soviet absence among the signers. But Shigemitsu Mamoru, who was reappointed as foreign minister in August–September 1945, defined his mission as accepting the Potsdam Declaration as a document of U.S.-Soviet accord, and carrying out its terms as such, not as an exclusive commitment to the United States. He remained cautious on Japan’s future direction in the wake of growing rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>96</sup>

Only a month after the war’s end, the Japanese Foreign Ministry issued a report stating that the Japanese were currently divided into two groups: those who hoped they could depend on the United States and Britain for reconstruction of Japan, and those who wanted to check U.S. power and influence in Asia by an alliance with CCP-led China and the Soviet Union. There was no knowing at that time which group of people—pro-U.S. or pro-Soviet—would become influential in postwar Japanese politics.<sup>97</sup> Yet even under the U.S. Occupation, the Japanese people did not turn abruptly and completely pro-American and anti-Soviet. Indeed, socialists and communists regained influence and popularity for their wartime opposition to the war of imperialism. In May 1947, Katayama Tetsu, the chief secretary of the Japan Socialist Party, became the first socialist prime minister in Japanese history. A brief decade or so later, Japan, under the leadership of the Liberal Democratic Party, began experiencing unprecedented prosperity. That did not mean disappearance of the Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China, or even the two Koreas from postwar Japan’s world, ensconced as it was in the U.S. defense perimeters. But the Foreign Ministry mapped a new diplomatic course for a new Japan along the principles of the United Nations, where there was no approved prerogative of a hegemonic power. Thus, even at the height of the Cold War, so-called “all-around equi-diplomacy” (of economy and culture) with the Soviet Union and other communist nations became Japan’s signature style, in spite of the constraint of the U.S.-Japan security alliance. Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru began the “two-Chinas” diplomacy (one China, one Taiwan) as a pragmatic measure to deal with both regimes.<sup>98</sup> Yoshida himself once commented that Japan did better as a loser after World War II than as a victor after World War I.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, in light of Japan’s rapid growth into a leading industrial power, Japanese people questioned with

<sup>94</sup> For the English texts of “Shūsen no Shōsho” [The Imperial Rescript of the Termination of the War, also known as “Emperor Hirohito’s broadcast to the Japanese people on surrender”], August 14, 1945, and “Riku-Kai gunjin ni tamawaritaru chokugo” [The Imperial Rescript to the Japanese troops], August 17, 1945, see <http://www.bun.kyoto-u.ac.jp/~knagai/GHQFILM/links.html>.

<sup>95</sup> Hatano Sumio, “Sengo gaikō to sengo kōsō,” in Hosoya, *et al.*, *Taiheiyō Sensō no shūketsu*, 30.

<sup>96</sup> Ōmori, *Sengo hishi—Ten’nō to genshi bakudan*, 138; Hatano, “Sengo gaikō to sengo kōsō,” 24.

<sup>97</sup> Hatano, “Sengo gaikō to sengo kōsō,” 24.

<sup>98</sup> For the latest work on Japan’s “pragmatic” two-Chinas policy, see Chen Zhao-bin, *Sengo Nihon no Chūgoku seisaku—1950-nen-dai Higashi Ajia kokusai seiji no bun’myaku* [Postwar Japan’s China policy: A contextual analysis of East Asian international politics in the 1950s] (Tokyo, 2000).

<sup>99</sup> Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (New York, 1999), 44.

bewilderment what the nation's total loss of the empire and subsequent unconditional surrender meant to them at all.

In the last phase of World War II, Japan was investigating the best way for the empire to collapse in a new configuration of power and searching for the best strategy toward the Soviets while observing the spatial and temporal origins of the Cold War in Asia. Once the war was over, defeated Japan quietly withdrew into a niche, away from the new rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, and devoted its resources to the nation's reconstruction. It seems that Japan survived and recovered in the way these Japanese wartime strategists hoped. In this regard, however, it is also crucial to remember that Japan was not held responsible for the aftermath of its abandonment of Manchuria and Korea, not to mention the nature and level of Japan's commitment to pan-Asianism. The search has just begun as to whether Japan's end game in World War II proved right or tragic, brought long-term benefits or damage, and to whom, in the larger historical framework of the twentieth century and beyond.

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