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**THE SOVIET FACTOR IN ENDING THE PACIFIC WAR:**  
**From the Hirota-Malik Negotiations to Soviet Entry into the War**

Tsuyoshi Hasegawa  
University of California – Santa Barbara



The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research  
910 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20006

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**Contractor:** University of California – Santa Barbara

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## **Abstract**

The drama of ending the Pacific War was a race between Stalin and Truman and a race between Soviet entry into the war against Japan and the atomic bombs in forcing Japan to surrender in the Pacific War. The atomic bomb test in New Mexico led Truman to issue the Potsdam Proclamation that insisted on unconditional surrender by Japan without consultation with Stalin. In response, Stalin hastened the date of attack by two weeks. The atomic bomb on Hiroshima at first convinced Stalin that he had been beaten in the race, but Japan's approach to Moscow for mediation prompted Stalin to move up the date of attack further by forty-eight hours. He succeeded in joining the war in the nick of time. The Soviet entry into the war played a more important role in Japan's decision to surrender than the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

## **Executive Summary**

The Soviet Union played a central role in the drama of the ending the Pacific War. Stalin was determined to enter the war against Japan in order to obtain geopolitical gains promised at Yalta. He had to balance Japan and the United States for this purpose. While he was transporting troops and equipment to the Far East with frantic speed in preparations for the war against Japan, he deceived the Japanese government into believing that the Neutrality Pact would last until it expired in April 1946. He fully exploited Japan's clumsy diplomatic faux pas of sending Hirota to Malik to keep the Soviet Union out of the war. He let Hirota pursue Malik, but instructed Malik not to refuse to meet him, in order to "lull the Japanese to sleep," while he was frantically putting the last touch on the preparations for the war against Japan. In fact, the Politburo and the State Defense Committee made the final decision to wage war against Japan on June 26 and 27. It was only after this decision that the Japanese government decided to request Moscow's mediation by sending Prince Konoé as the Emperor's special envoy. This move merely served Stalin's purpose. It was exploited to prolong the war, while it provided Stalin with a bargaining chip in his dealing with Truman.

Stalin came to Potsdam to accomplish two purposes. First, he wanted to mobilize Truman's support to put pressure on the recalcitrant Chinese to conclude a treaty endorsing the Yalta Agreement. Second, he wanted to join the Allies' joint ultimatum to Japan. Such an ultimatum would justify Soviet entry into the war against Japan in violation of the Neutrality Pact. It will also serve as the declaration of war against Japan.

To accomplish these goals, Stalin carefully planned each move. On the first meeting with Truman Stalin declared that the Soviet Union intended to enter the war after the middle of August. At the second meeting, he revealed that Japan had made peace overtures to Moscow in the Emperor's name. Truman was not impressed. He was not about to help Stalin on his negotiations with the Chinese, and he had serious misgivings about Soviet expansion in the Far East.

The successful detonation of the atomic bomb in New Mexico spoiled Stalin's plans. Truman did not share the secret of the atomic bomb with Stalin, while completely excluding Stalin from the

deliberations of the Potsdam Proclamation, which was issued on July 26 without Stalin's knowledge and without Stalin's signature. Stalin made a desperate attempt to request Truman's invitation to join the Potsdam Proclamation, but Truman coldly refused.

This fiasco finally convinced Stalin that the United States was determined to force Japan's surrender unilaterally without Soviet help. If this were allowed to happen, Stalin would be deprived of the fruits promised at Yalta. Stalin ordered Vasilevskii to hasten all the preparations of attack by August 5, and change the date of attack to August 10. The race between the atomic bomb and Soviet entry into the war was on. Stalin returned to Moscow on August 5, and resumed frantic activities to prepare for the war against Japan. The Americans moved first. They dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Truman was ecstatic, knowing that he had finally managed to drop the bomb before the Soviets joined the war. Stalin, in contrast, was crushed. On August 6, he was in seclusion refusing to see anyone.

But the game was not played out. The Hiroshima bomb failed to deal a knockout blow to the Japanese. The Japanese government continued to cling to the hope that they could end the war through Moscow's mediation. Togo dispatched an urgent telegram to Sato, urging him to make an appointment with Molotov to obtain Moscow's answer with regard to the Konoe mission. On August 7 Ambassador Sato called the Foreign Commissariat, requesting an appointment with Molotov. This was the first clear reaction of the Japanese government to the Hiroshima bombing.

Stalin realized that he had not lost. He leapt to action. He ordered Vasilevskii to change the date of attack by twenty-four hours to August 9. He had Molotov tell Sato to see him in his office at 5 PM on August 8. He hastily arranged the meeting with T. V. Soong and the Chinese delegation at 10 PM in the Kremlin.

Soong was as adamant as before, and the negotiations with the Chinese did not yield a treaty with the Chinese. But Stalin was in a hurry. He decided to go ahead to plunge into the war without a treaty with the Chinese, thereby, violating a provision of the Yalta Treaty. He gambled. Once the Soviets entered the war, neither the Americans nor the Chinese would condemn the Soviet government for violating the Yalta Agreement.

At 5 PM on August 8 Molotov handed the Soviet declaration of the war to unsuspecting Sato on the grounds that the Allies had invited the Soviet government to join the Potsdam Proclamation. It was a blatant lie, but as Stalin suspected, no one protested. Within one hour after Sato left Molotov's office, Soviet tanks rolled into Manchuria. Stalin managed to enter the war in the nick of time. Nine hours later, the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

Soviet entry into the war provided the most crucial factor for Japan's decision to surrender. During the war that lasted from August 9 through September 5, the Soviets occupied all the territories that were promised by the Yalta Agreement.

## **Introduction**

The Soviet factor in ending the Pacific War has been a neglected subject. Although in the voluminous books and articles on the atomic bomb in American historiography the Soviet factor has been touched on, the discussion has almost exclusively centered on how the Truman administration factored the Soviet Union in its decision to drop the bomb. Left unexplored are the questions of how the Soviets were involved in Japan's surrender, what significance the Japanese government attached to the Soviet Union in its foreign and military policy, and how Stalin took the American atomic bomb into consideration in his decision to enter the war against Japan, and how Stalin balanced his military operations against Japan without provoking American reactions.

This working paper aims to bring the Soviet factor to center stage of the drama of the Pacific War's ending by examining the crucial period from the Hirota-Malik negotiations in June, 1945, to Soviet entry into the war against Japan on August 9. Although the process of ending the Pacific War must be examined in the complicated interplays of various actors involving the Soviets, Americans, Japanese, and Chinese, this paper focuses on the Soviet side of the story. The drama of the ending of the Pacific War was a race between Stalin and Truman to force Japan to surrender. Specifically, this paper argues:

- (1) that Stalin successfully deceived Japan into believing that the Soviet Union would maintain neutrality, while furiously preparing for the war against Japan;
- (2) that Stalin expected Truman to ask him to join the joint ultimatum against Japan at the Potsdam Conference;
- (3) that, met with Truman's rejection to invite Stalin to join the Potsdam Proclamation, Stalin advanced the date of the initiation of the war against Japan by two weeks,
- (4) that Stalin was crushed by the news that the United States had dropped the bomb on Hiroshima,
- (5) that, after learning that even after the Hiroshima bomb, the Japanese government continued to rely on Moscow's mediation, Stalin hastened to move up the date of attack by forty-eight hours, and entered the war against Japan; and
- (6) that Stalin carefully coordinated his diplomatic and military moves to ensure his strategic goals of securing the territories and privileges promised at the Yalta Agreement.

## **Background**

Even during his dark hours of December 1941, when the fate of Moscow hung in the air in the face of the invading Nazi forces 1941, Stalin already harbored the thought of attacking Japan. Preoccupied in the deadly struggle for survival in the war with Germany, however, Stalin did not have time to make concrete plans for the war against Japan until the fall of 1943. At the Teheran Conference, he promised to enter the war in the Pacific after the German defeat in Europe in return for the Allies' promise to open the Second Front.

In February 1945, Stalin concluded the Yalta Secret Agreement with Roosevelt and Churchill, obtaining the consent of the Allied heads to receive rights and concessions in the railways and ports in Manchuria and the territories from Japan. The Yalta Agreement became the foundation of Stalin's policy in the Far East, but in order to obtain these war trophies, he had to enter the war.<sup>1</sup>

In April 1945, President Roosevelt died, and Harry Truman succeeded him. By the time Truman took office, U.S.-Soviet relations had experienced tension over Poland, while the American military fortunes developed favorably to such an extent that they no longer needed Soviet entry into the war as the essential precondition for success in their invasion of Japan's homeland.

Stalin was tormented by two possibilities. First, he suspected that Truman might renege on the Yalta Agreement. Second, he feared that the war in the Pacific might be over before the Soviets entered the war.<sup>2</sup>

To signal to the United States his intention to keep the commitment to the Yalta Agreement, Stalin informed the Japanese government in April that the Soviet Union intended to abrogate the Neutrality Pact. And yet, lest the Japanese should launch a preemptive attack on Soviet forces, he "lulled the Japanese to sleep" by assuring the Japanese government that the Neutrality Pact was in force until it expired its term in April 1946. At the same time, he sped up the transport of Soviet troops and equipment to the Far East for the preparations for the war against Japan.<sup>3</sup>

Japan's foreign and military policy in the waning months of the Pacific War was predicated upon the maintenance of Soviet neutrality. For the military, Soviet neutrality was an essential prerequisite for the preparation of the last-ditch defense of Japan's homeland against the expected American invasion. For the civilians in the Japanese government, Moscow appeared to be the only chance to end the war *and* to preserve a monarchical system. For different reasons both the civilian peace party and the military looked to Moscow for hope.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the Japanese government initiated unofficial negotiations by sending former Prime Minister Hirota Koki to Ambassador Malik.

### **Hirota-Malik Negotiations**

On May 8, Germany surrendered, leaving Japan as the only Axis power at war. By the end of May it became clear that the fall of Okinawa was a matter of time. The ferocious American air raids intensified, burning the Emperor's residence in the Imperial Palace. These factors prompted some members of the Japanese ruling elite to seek concrete steps to terminate the war. But the problem was



how to get the Army on board in support of this process. This dilemma explains the clumsy manner in which the Japanese government approached the Soviet Union by sending unofficially former Prime Minister Hirota Koki to Ambassador Iakov Malik in June.

Hirota's mission was never clearly specified. Hirota was to sound out Soviet intentions with regard to Japan's wish not only to keep the Soviet Union out of the war but also to develop closer friendly relations by settling outstanding bilateral issues and making major concessions with regard to rights and territories in East Asia. But because of the fear of alienating the Army, he was enjoined from requesting Moscow's mediation to terminate the war.<sup>5</sup>

Thus began strange negotiations between Hirota and Malik, in which Hirota pursued the elusive Soviet ambassador in Hakone and the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo with persistence, and yet when they met four times in June, Hirota did not reveal anything concrete. While Malik kept insisting he would not be able to do anything without specific proposals from Japan, Hirota dwelled on generalities, repeating that Japan would consider any specific requests from the Soviet side.<sup>6</sup>

Details of these fruitless negotiations do not concern us here. What is important here is to place the negotiations in the context of Stalin's overall policy toward Japan. Having closely monitoring Malik's detailed reports about the first two meetings, Molotov sent his instructions to the ambassador on June 15. Molotov enjoined Malik from taking the initiative to seek meetings with Hirota. "If he again requests a meeting," Molotov ordered, "then you may receive him and listen to him. If he again talks about general matters, you must limit yourself to stating that you will inform Moscow of the talks at the first possibility (but through diplomatic pouch). You should not go beyond that."<sup>7</sup>

In other words, Molotov ordered Malik not to take the initiative in seeking out Hirota, but not to reject his request to meet, either. Molotov also suggested that Malik should send Japan's proposal via diplomatic pouch, the slowest possible method of communication, rather than coded telegram. Molotov's intention was unmistakable. The Soviet government had to be circumspect about its approach to Japan lest it should arouse American suspicion that the Soviets were engaged in secret negotiations with Japan, and yet it wanted to exploit the Hirota-Malik negotiations as a tool to prolong the war. Stalin was directly

involved in this policy. A photocopy of Molotov's message included his handwritten remarks: "To Stalin, Request approval, V. Molotov," and Stalin's signature indicating his approval.

### **Stalin Decides to Attack and Japan Requests for Moscow's Mediation**

On June 22, the Emperor summoned the Big Six [officially the Supreme War Council of the Composing Members to Lead the War—hereafter, Supreme War Council] to the Imperial Palace.<sup>8</sup> At the outset of this meeting, Hirohito asked the views of the Big Six about the possibility of terminating the war. Although the Emperor's opinion was masked in the form of a question, such direct intervention from the Emperor was unprecedented. At the end of the meeting, Hirohito urged the Big Six to proceed with negotiations with the Soviet Union. Hirohito had finally abandoned the policy to launch a major strike against the enemy before terminating the war [*ichigeki heiwa ron*]. Nevertheless, Hirota's two subsequent meetings with Malik failed to produce any results.<sup>9</sup>

On June 26 and 27, the combined conference of the Politburo, the government, and the military made the final decision to launch an all-out offensive against Japanese forces in Manchuria in August. On June 28, three directives were issued by Stalin, the first to the commander of the Far Eastern Front to complete all the preparations for the attack by August 1, the second and the third orders to the commander of troops of the Maritime groups and the commander of the Transbaikal Front respectively to complete the preparations for attack by July 25.<sup>10</sup> These directives did not set the precise date of attack, presumably leaving it for decision at a later date in consultation with Marshal Alexandr Vasilevskii, who had secretly been sent to the Far East to coordinate the preparations for the attack.

Only after the Soviets made the final decision, the Japanese government belatedly decided to send Prince Konoe as the Emperor's special envoy formally to request the Soviet government's mediation to terminate the war.<sup>11</sup> The war party in the Big Six (Anami, Umezu, and Toyoda) gave their tacit approval for this secret mission without informing their subordinates, but in view of their expected opposition, the cabinet could not come up with specific conditions for the termination of the war. This suited Konoe,

since the absence of specific instructions gave him a wide leeway. He assembled a handful of trusted advisers and drafted the negotiating position.

This draft narrowed down the minimum demand as the maintenance of the *kokutai* [national polity centering around the Emperor] as the sole condition. It recommended territorial concessions except for the homeland, acceptance of a democratic form of government headed by the emperor, acceptance of the occupation government and occupation force for a limited period, acceptance of punishment of war criminals by the occupation powers, and complete disarmament for a definite period of time. As for the maintenance of the *kokutai*, it was defined as securing the imperial rule, but it conceded that in the worst case the abdication of Hirohito should be taken into consideration.<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that these conditions were largely compatible with Stimson's draft proposal for the Potsdam Proclamation that he had submitted to Truman on July 2.<sup>13</sup>

On July 11, Togo sent an "extremely urgent" and "strictly secret" telegram to Ambassador Sato Naotake in Moscow, informing Sato for the first time of Japan's intention to seek termination of the war. On the following day, he sent another telegram instructing Sato to see Molotov immediately. Togo wrote in this telegram: "We think it would be appropriate to go a step further on this occasion and, before the opening of the Three Power Conference, inform the Russians of the imperial will concerning the ending of the war." Togo also told Sato to present the message, informing Molotov that it was the Emperor's desire to terminate the war, but that so long as the Allies demanded unconditional surrender, Japan would have "no alternative to fight on with all its strength for the honor and existence of the Motherland."<sup>14</sup>

Togo's telegrams and Sato's replies were intercepted by the American code-breaker known as Magic. The Magic decrypts with regard to Sato-Togo exchanges were immediately delivered to the highest American policy makers including Truman, Chief of Staff William Leahy, Secretary of State James Byrnes, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Deputy Secretary of State John McCloy, and Secretary of Navy James Forrestal. Finding it significant that the Japanese government in the Emperor's name indicated its willingness to terminate the war, Stimson, Forrestal, and McCloy attempted to persuade the

President to allow the Japanese to retain a constitutional monarchy to speed up Japan's surrender.

Truman and Byrnes, who were wedded to unconditional surrender, rejected their recommendation.<sup>15</sup>

Stalin closely watched these events that were moving with breathtaking speed, and carefully planned his move. He had made the final decision to attack Japan. The Japanese, however, were still requesting Moscow's mediation to terminate the war. Stalin exploited this request to further prolong the war, but he was keenly aware that Japan's surrender was imminent. He was also keeping abreast of intelligence reports from NKVD Chief Lavrentii Beria concerning the progress of the American atomic bomb project. The Americans were close to possessing a nuclear weapon. Stalin was consumed by the fear that the war might end before the Soviet Union joined the fray.

Two obstacles still stood in the way of the Soviet attack plan. The first was the Soviet Union's commitment to the Neutrality Pact. Stalin had to come up with an excuse that would override this commitment. It should be remembered that at the end of May in Moscow Harry Hopkins, Truman's special envoy, had suggested the possibility of issuing a joint ultimatum at the forthcoming Big Three meeting. Just as the United States had carefully prepared a draft ultimatum under Stimson's leadership, Stalin also ordered the Foreign Commissariat to work on a draft of its own. In Stalin's mind this joint ultimatum would have cardinal importance. Not only would it justify his violation of the Neutrality Pact, but it would also serve as a declaration of war against Japan.

The second obstacle was the provision in the Yalta Agreement that made an agreement with Chiang Kai-shek a precondition for Soviet entry into the war. The provisions of the Yalta Agreement grossly violated the sovereign rights of the Chinese government. Although Chiang Kai-shek was informed about the Yalta Agreement weeks after the conference, he was not formally told of the specific contents of the Yalta Agreement until June 15.<sup>16</sup> The Chinese Foreign Minister, T. V. Soong arrived in Moscow on June 30, and the Stalin-Soong negotiations began two days later. Stalin needed an agreement with the Chinese to fulfill the obligations of the Yalta Agreement, and he was eager to close the deal before he left Moscow for Potsdam. But T. V. Soong was adamant about China's right over Outer

Mongolia, railways, and ports in Manchuria. Finally, the first round of negotiations were broken off, and Stalin and Molotov left for Moscow to meet Truman and Churchill at Potsdam.

### **The Potsdam Conference as the Crucial Turning Point**

#### **(1) Truman-Stalin Meeting on July 17**

Stalin arrived at Berlin on the morning of July 17, and immediately met Truman at noon at Truman's "Little White House" in Babelsberg. At this meeting, Stalin told Truman that the Soviet Union was ready to enter the war against Japan by the middle of August, but said that prior to acting they would need to complete their negotiations and reach an agreement with the Chinese.<sup>17</sup>

Then Stalin talked about the state of negotiations with the Chinese. He assured Truman that the Soviet Union would stand firm on the positions that "Manchuria was a part of China and subject to its sovereignty, and that the Soviet government would support only the authority of the Nationalist government in Manchuria."<sup>18</sup> Stalin expected Truman to support the Soviet demands that, as far as he was concerned, were etched in stone in the Yalta Agreement and put pressure on the Chinese in return for the firm commitment he made to enter the war. He was immediately disappointed, because although Byrnes committed himself to the Yalta Agreement, he warned that the United States would not support any provisions that would go beyond the Yalta Agreement.

According to the Soviet version, Stalin said: "the Chinese do not understand what constitutes Soviet preeminent interests in the railways and ports in Manchuria," or according to the Bohlen notes, "Chungking did not understand horse trading; they were very slow and tried to wrangle every little thing. They did not seem to be aware of the big picture." The Soviet version had Truman express the desire that the Soviets and the Chinese would soon come to an agreement, but according to the Bohlen notes: "The President and Secretary Byrnes both indicated that the main interest of the United States were in a free port."<sup>19</sup>

Differences in the two versions speak volumes about the different expectations each leader had from the other. Stalin felt that Truman should feel grateful to his commitment to enter the war “by the middle of August” exactly the same way that FDR had felt grateful to his commitment by rewarding the rights and concessions to Stalin at China’s expense. He felt Truman should reward him for putting pressure on the Chinese to come to an agreement with the Soviets.

But as far as Truman was concerned, Stalin’s assurance to enter the war was his obligation to the Yalta Agreement. Not only did he not feel grateful to his assurance to enter the war, but also he had doubts about the consequence of Soviet entry into the war in the Far East. Therefore, he was in no mood to help Stalin to reach an agreement with the Chinese.

Truman had no intention to help the Soviets on this matter, and he made a point of disagreeing with Stalin’s attempt to establish Soviet “preeminence” in Dairen.<sup>20</sup> He wrote in his diary: “[H]e had some more questions to present. I told him to fire away. He did and it is dynamite—but I have some dynamite too which I’m not exploding now.”<sup>21</sup>

In his memoirs, Truman wrote: “[W]e might know more about two matters of significance for our future effort: the participation of the Soviet Union and the atomic bomb. We knew that the bomb would receive its first test in mid-July. If the test of the bomb was successful, I wanted to afford Japan a clear chance to end the fighting before we made use of this newly gained power.”<sup>22</sup> Truman did not come to Potsdam to actively seek Soviet entry into the war, which to him remained an insurance policy. He had profound misgivings about Soviet entry into the war and wanted to avoid it, if at all possible, and the way to avoid it hinged on the atomic bomb test.

## **(2) Truman-Stalin Meeting, July 18**

After the meeting with Truman, Stalin had a separate meeting with Churchill. As it turned out, Stalin had revealed to the Prime Minister a piece of confidential information about Japan’s peace overtures to Moscow. Churchill asked Stalin why he had not brought this news directly to Truman, to

which Stalin answered that he had feared that Truman might think “that the Russians were trying to influence him towards peace” or “that Russia was reluctant to go to war.”<sup>23</sup>

On the following day, when Truman paid a return visit to Stalin’s villa, Stalin revealed exactly what he had told Churchill on the previous day, showing the President a copy of Sato’s note explaining the Emperor’s desire to terminate the war. Stalin asked Truman if it was worthwhile to answer this communication. Truman answered that he had no respect for the good faith of the Japanese. “Stalin pointed out that the Soviet Union was not at war with Japan and that it might be desirable to lull the Japanese to sleep, and possibly a general and unspecific answer might be returned, pointing out that the exact character of the proposed Konoye [sic] mission was not clear. Alternatives would be that they might ignore it completely and not answer, or send back a definite refusal.” Truman said that the first course of action would be satisfactory.<sup>24</sup>

This was a cat and mouse game. Truman had already learned from the Magic intercepts about Japan’s peace overtures to Moscow. Stalin most likely knew that Truman knew. Thus, he was trying to pretend that he was sharing the most confidential information with Truman to impress upon the President his goodwill. In the end, it was Truman who suggested the course he had all along intended to take: not to reject, not to ignore, but to reply to the Japanese that the purpose of the Konoe mission was not clear in order “to lull the Japanese to sleep.”

### **(3) The Atomic Bomb Test in New Mexico**

Stimson received the first news of the successful detonation of the Trinity bomb on July 16, but the first reports were so sketchy that it was not until General Groves’ full report arrived on July 21 that the atomic bomb factor began to influence American decisions.

The news of the successful atomic bomb test in New Mexico solved the fundamental dilemmas that had confronted Truman. With the atomic bomb the President became confident that the United States could unilaterally force Japan to surrender without the Soviet Union. In fact, it became important to exclude the Soviet Union from the joint ultimatum, and drop the bomb before the Soviets joined the war.

Furthermore, he could now impose unconditional surrender on Japan. In fact, the unconditional surrender demand would surely prompt the Japanese government to reject the joint ultimatum, providing justification for the use of the atomic bomb. It is important to remember that the order to drop the atomic *bombs* [note the plural] was issued by General Handy, with the prior approval of Stimson and Marshall, to General Carl Spaatz, Commander of Army Strategic Air Force, on July 25, one day before the Potsdam Proclamation was issued.

If one takes into consideration the following five crucial facts—(1) that Truman knew that Japan would reject unconditional surrender; (2) that the order to drop the atomic bombs was issued on July 25; (3) that the Potsdam Proclamation was issued on July 26; (4) that the atomic bombs were ready to be dropped in the first week of August; and (5) that Truman knew that the Soviets would enter the war on or after August 15—two conclusions are inescapable: (1) that the purpose of the Potsdam Proclamation was to justify the dropping of the atomic bombs, and (2) Truman wanted to drop the bombs before the Soviets entered the war.<sup>25</sup>

On July 24, after he gave his approval to drop the atomic bomb, Truman went to the eighth session of the Big Three meeting. During the recess, he nonchalantly approached Stalin and told him: “We have a new weapon of unusual destructive force.” Stalin showed no interest; at least so he looked to the President. Truman recalled later: “All he said was that he was glad to hear it and hoped we would make ‘good use’ of it against the Japanese.” Everyone, including Truman, thought that Stalin did not understand the significance of the information.<sup>26</sup>

Stalin fully understood. In the middle of June Soviet NKVD agent Leonid Kvasikov had already sent information to Beria that the American atomic bomb test would take place on July 4. This information had been sent to Stalin. The test did not take place due to bad weather, and it was postponed until July 16. Although he did not know that the test had taken place on July 16, Stalin immediately knew that Truman was talking about the atomic bomb. After he returned to his residence, Stalin immediately called Beria, and berated him for the grave intelligence failure and for having given Truman a good chance to conduct negotiations from a position of strength.<sup>27</sup>



To Stalin the most important fact was that Truman was less than candid about the atomic bomb. Despite his commitment to enter the war, and despite his generous sharing of the secret information about Japan's peace overtures, for which he expected to be rewarded, Truman was hiding important information from him. Stalin must have concluded from this that Truman was planning to take advantage of the atomic weapon and force Japan's surrender without the Soviet Union.

#### **(4) Truman Issues the Potsdam Proclamation**

Even a greater shock awaited Stalin. Stalin had wished and expected to be asked to affix his signature to the joint ultimatum, which would serve as the Soviet declaration of war against Japan and justify the violation of the Neutrality Pact. He fully expected to be consulted on the joint ultimatum, as Harry Hopkins had promised in May. In anticipation of the discussion on the joint ultimatum, Stalin had come to Potsdam with a Soviet draft for the ultimatum. This draft began: "The time has come when the Governments of the Allied democratic countries—the United States, China, Great Britain and the Soviet Union—have recognized that it is essential to make a joint declaration about our relations with Japan." It then listed Japan's transgressions beginning from its attack on China in 1937 to its "treacherous" attack on Pearl Harbor, "in the same perfidious surprise attack by which it had attacked Russia forty years ago." The aggressive plans of the Japanese militarists, however, were thwarted only by "unyielding resistance of the Chinese people and the courageous struggle of the American and British armed forces." The draft then stated: "The United States, China, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union consider it their duty to take joint, decisive measures immediately to bring the war to an end." It then called Japan to "lay down arms and surrender without any conditions."<sup>28</sup>

The document was filled with effusive praise of the Allies, linking ever closely Soviet interests with those of the Allies. This draft indicates how badly Stalin wished to be invited to sign the joint ultimatum. There remains one question, however. If Japan's last hope was to end the war through Moscow's mediation, didn't Stalin fear that the issuance of the joint ultimatum might bring Japan to surrender prematurely before the Soviets joined the war by shattering Japan's last hope?

In order to prevent this, Stalin had two answers. First, Stalin must have hoped that the issuance of the ultimatum might be postponed to coincide with the Soviet attack. This expectation was by no means far-fetched, since even the Americans [more precisely the War Department] had originally envisaged that the optimal timing of issuance of the ultimatum was at the moment of Soviet entry into the war.<sup>29</sup> Secondly, the draft itself contained a provision that would likely prevent Japan's premature surrender. It called for Japan's unconditional surrender, and Stalin knew from Sato's telegrams that if the Allies insisted on unconditional surrender, Japan would fight the war to the bitter end. He would definitely insist on elimination of the Emperor and the Emperor system, as he had argued at his meeting with Harry Hopkins in May, to make it more difficult for Japan to accept surrender.<sup>30</sup>

All this careful planning came to naught, because Truman completely excluded Stalin from the deliberation of the joint ultimatum, although he consulted Churchill and the British delegation behind Stalin's back. Finally, the Potsdam Proclamation, without Stalin's signature and with the unconditional surrender demand but without a provision promising the Japanese to preserve a constitutional monarchy, was issued on July 26. The text of the proclamation was released to the press even before Byrnes sent it to Molotov. Molotov immediately telephoned Byrnes and requested that the release of the proclamation be postponed. Byrnes told Molotov that it was too late, since the text had been released to the press. Stalin was completely outmaneuvered by Truman.

On July 28, Stalin made the last attempt to invite himself to the joint ultimatum. He showed Truman the Japanese government's official request for Moscow's mediation that the Soviet government had received on July 25, remarking that although the Soviet delegation had not been consulted by the Allies about the Potsdam Proclamation, he wished to keep the Allies informed of Japan's further approach to Moscow. After Stalin had his interpreter read the English translation of Japan's latest message, he dismissed it as nothing new, and declared that he would give the Japanese a more definite negative answer.<sup>31</sup>

On the following day, Stalin did not attend the conference, since he allegedly caught a cold. At the end of the conference, Molotov told Truman that Stalin had instructed him to tell the President that “the best method would be for the United States, England, and the other allies in the Far Eastern war to address a formal request to the Soviet Government for its entry into the war.” This request could be made on the basis of Japan’s rejection of the Potsdam Proclamation, and for the purpose of “shortening the war and saving of lives.”<sup>32</sup>

This request put Truman and Byrnes in an awkward situation. Under no circumstances were they willing to comply with this request, since the exclusion of the Soviet Union from the Potsdam ultimatum was their major purpose since the successful atomic bomb test. And yet, since it had been a consistent U.S. declaratory policy, and as Truman had publicly stated, that the United States desired Soviet participation in the war, and since Soviet entry into the war might still serve as an insurance policy to assure Japan’s surrender if the atomic bombs failed, they could not flatly reject this request. In order to get out of this dilemma, Truman and Byrnes concocted tortured legal arguments that the Soviet Union could justify entering the war against Japan on the basis of the Moscow Declaration of October 30, 1943 and Articles 103 and 106 of the still unratified United Nations Charter.<sup>33</sup>

In his memoirs, Truman states: “I did not like this [Stalin’s] proposal for one important reason. I saw in it a cynical diplomatic move to make Russia’s entry at this time appear to be the decisive factor to bring about victory.” As far as Truman was concerned, Soviet participation in the war was a treaty obligation, but “none obliging the United States and the Allies to provide Russia with a reason for breaking with Japan.” The only reason for his reluctant acceptance of Soviet entry into the war was: “Our military advisers had strongly urged that Russia should be brought into the war.... But I was not willing to let Russia reap the fruits of a long and bitter and gallant effort in which she had had no part.”<sup>34</sup>

Byrnes also writes in his memoirs that he did not believe that “the United States should be placed in the position of asking another government to violate its agreement without good and sufficient reasons.” At Yalta Roosevelt had solicited Stalin’s pledge to enter the war without bothering about the Soviet obligation to the Neutrality Pact “with good and sufficient reasons.”<sup>35</sup> If “good and sufficient

reasons” had disappeared in July, the atomic bomb played a major part. Byrnes continues: “I must frankly admit that in view of what we knew of Soviet actions in eastern Germany and the violations of the Yalta agreements in Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria, I would have been satisfied had the Russians determined not to enter the war. Notwithstanding Japan’s persistent refusal to surrender unconditionally, I believed the atomic bomb would be successful and would force Japan to accept surrender on our terms.”<sup>36</sup> Truman and Byrnes knew that these legal explanations were not sufficient to justify the Soviet violation of the Neutrality Pact, but they were not about to help Stalin on this issue.

#### **(5) Japan’s Reaction to the Potsdam Proclamation**

Stalin was a master strategist, but he did not always get what he wanted. On the Potsdam joint ultimatum, he was completely outmaneuvered by Truman. He was also lucky, because his failure was unexpectedly turned into a windfall for him. When the Potsdam Proclamation was relayed to the Japanese through short-wave radio—it was never presented to the government through official diplomatic channels—their immediate attention was drawn to two facts: first, the Potsdam Proclamation demanded unconditional surrender, but kept silent about the fate of the Emperor and the monarchical system; and second, Stalin did not sign it.

The Japanese Foreign Ministry took note of the ambiguous formulation of the Potsdam terms that might leave the possibility of retention of the monarchical system, and argued for the eventual acceptance of the terms. But as long as the promise to retain a monarchical system was not clearly spelled out and until the Soviet government responded to Japan’s request to receive the Konoe Mission, it was quite reasonable, given the delicate balance between the peace party and the war party in the government, for the Japanese government to continue the policy of seeking Moscow’s mediation to end the war. It is doubtful that Prime Minister Suzuki actually used the term, “mokusatsu [silently kill]” at his news conference. The Japanese government was suspending its judgment on the Potsdam terms rather than rejecting it, pending Moscow’s reply to the Konoe Mission.<sup>37</sup>

To Truman, it was sufficient to learn that the Japanese government did not accept the ultimatum. It is a myth he himself helped to create that he ordered the use of the atomic bomb only after the Japanese government promptly rejected the ultimatum.<sup>38</sup> The Japanese government never rejected the Potsdam Proclamation. Truman never issued an order to use the atomic bombs. He did not have to, since the order had been given before the Potsdam Proclamation was issued. It was more accurate to say that the Japanese government's inaction did not give Truman sufficient grounds to intercede to reverse the order to use the atomic bomb.

## **The Atomic Bomb and Soviet Entry into the War**

### **(1) Stalin Changes the Date of Attack**

The fiasco of the Potsdam Proclamation once and for all convinced Stalin that Truman had determined to force Japan to surrender unilaterally without any Soviet help. He was alarmed, and he acted quickly already while he was in Berlin. On July 30, Stalin appointed Marshal Vailsevskii as Supreme Commander of the Soviet Troops in the Far East as of August 1, thus removing all secrecy with which it had prepared for the attack on Japan.<sup>39</sup> On August 2, the Stavka [Supreme Headquarters] made official the reorganization of the Far Eastern Front into three separate fronts: the First Far Eastern Front from the Maritime group of troops, commanded by Marshal K. A. Meretskov, the Second Far Eastern Front from the former Far Eastern Front, commanded by General M. A. Purkaev, and the Transbaikal Front, commanded by Marshal Rodion Malinovskii.<sup>40</sup>

The Potsdam Conference was over on August 2, and on that day, the Soviet delegation left Berlin, and arrived in Moscow on August 5. On August 3, Chief of Staff Colonel-General S. P. Ivanov and Colonel General Vasiliev [pseudonym of Vasilevskii] sent an important report on the situation in the front to Stalin and Antonov, responding to their order.

“In the Transbaikal Front, the 39 A Liudnikov Army [Voiska] and the 53A Managarov Army are completing the advancement to the designated district of concentration so that by the morning of August 5, 1945, with the rest of the troops of the front they will be ready, in accordance with your instructions, in the areas about fifty to sixty kilometers from the border, to take the command for the initiation of the action.

From the moment of receiving the command to cross the border, and then to the actual beginning of action, for the supply of troops and their final preparations a minimum of three and a maximum of five full days [sutok] will be required.

Taking into consideration all the problems of securing and stockpiling the equipment and provisions for the troops, the optimal time for the initiation of action of front troops (I have in mind crossing the border) will be August 9-10, 1945.

In addition, the armies of the First and the Second Far Eastern Front should be able to initiate action on the same day and at the same time after the troops of the Transbaikal Front take action. Military preparedness of all these fronts should be completed by August 5.”<sup>41</sup>

This report shows two important facts. First, the report was clearly in response to Stalin’s earlier instructions to change the date of attack to one week earlier than the previously agreed upon date in the latter half of August, most likely on August 15. Since this report was sent on August 3, Stalin’s order must have been sent earlier than that date. It is most likely, although it cannot be determined by documentary evidence, that the order was issued from Potsdam at the same time, when Vasilevskii was officially and openly appointed as the Commander of the Soviet Army in the Far East on July 30, after Stalin’s last attempt to obtain the Allies’ invitation to join the Potsdam Proclamation was rejected by Truman. There is little doubt that Stalin hastened the date of attack in response to what he perceived as the American maneuver to achieve Japan’s surrender before the Soviet entry into the war.

The second important point of this report is that the date of attack was set on August 9-10. By August 5, the troops were to be assembled at the point of concentration fifty to sixty kilometers from the border, presumably to avoid detection by the Japanese. But how soon would it take to move 1.5 million men fifty to sixty kilometers all across 4,000 kilometers of border, undetected by the enemy, and cross the border simultaneously in a sweeping, coordinated move? Vasilievskii estimated that it would require three to five days to move the troops and equipment to the border. It is reasonable to assume that the earliest day of attack would be August 10. But sometime between August 3 and August 7, the Stavka must have decided that the precise timing of attack was to be at midnight (00 hour of Transbaikal time) of August 11 (6 PM Moscow time on August 10).<sup>42</sup>

The race was on in earnest: the race between Truman and Stalin and the race between the atomic bomb and Soviet entry into the war.

## **(2) The Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima**

Stalin returned to Moscow on the evening of August 5. His appointment log for August 5 shows that immediately after his arrival at the Kremlin, he frantically resumed activities. He met Molotov, Mikoian, Beria, and Malenkov from 19:45 to 23:00. Kaganovich joined the meeting at 20:40, Voznesenskii came at 20:55 and left at 21:40; Vyshinskii came at 21:40 and left at 22:00, and finally Kuznetsov joined the meeting between 21:55 and 22:10.<sup>43</sup> Considering the participation of Molotov (Foreign Commissar), Vyshinskii (Deputy Foreign Commissar), Beria (NKVD Chief), Kuznetsov (Navy Commissar), and Mikoian (in charge of Lend Lease), it is almost certain that at least part of this meeting was devoted to the war in the Far East, and the possibility of the Americans using the atomic bomb. It is also safe to assume that he was constantly in touch with General Antonov of the General Staff, most likely through direct military telephone lines.

The Kwantung Army noticed an increase in Soviet reconnaissance activities from the end of July all along the borders from Manchuria to Korea. The most daring actions took place on the night of August 5 on the Eastern border along the Ussuri. An observation post manned by thirty Japanese

soldiers near Hulin was attacked by a group of 100 Soviet soldiers who had crossed the river. The fight continued until August 6, but eventually the Soviet forces withdrew.<sup>44</sup> Whether it was an intentional diversionary action or an unintended breach of discipline, it reinforced the Kwantung Army's conviction that Soviet military actions would likely be border incursions.

Then the shocking news reached Moscow. The Americans dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima at 8:15 AM (Hiroshima Time: 0.15 Moscow Time) on August 6. Truman received the news on the U.S.S. *Augusta* on the way back to the United States. He could not hide his excitement, and exclaimed, jumping to his feet: "This is the greatest thing in history." He then released a statement that had been previously prepared by Stimson: "It was to spare the Japanese people from utter destruction that the ultimatum of July 26 was issued at Potsdam. Their leaders promptly rejected that ultimatum. If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on earth."<sup>45</sup>

In contrast to Truman, the news of the atomic bomb crushed Stalin. *Pravda* did not report anything about the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 7, and only on August 8, did it report Truman's statement on the atomic bomb in lower column on page 4 without comments.<sup>46</sup> Stalin's appointment log shows that he refused to see anyone on August 6, reminiscent of his behavior immediately after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941.<sup>47</sup> Stalin was completely devastated by the news, believing that the game was over and that the Americans had won the race.

The Chinese delegation headed by T. V. Soong arrived in Moscow on the afternoon on August 7. Molotov and Harriman came to the airport to greet them. While waiting for the arrival of the Chinese, Harriman asked Molotov what he thought about the Japanese reaction to the atomic bomb. Molotov elliptically replied: "Well, I have not heard yet," and commented, "You Americans can keep a secret when you want to."<sup>48</sup> When the Chinese delegation arrived, Molotov told the Chinese that Japan was on the verge of collapse. Considering Molotov's dejected mood, it is likely that the Foreign Commissariat did not know at this time the Kremlin had received new information about Japan's reaction to the atomic bomb.



The atomic bomb on Hiroshima did not have an immediate impact on Japan's decision to surrender. It did not change Japan's policy to seek Moscow's mediation, and it did not immediately lead to the government's acceptance of the Potsdam Proclamation. On August 7, one day after the Hiroshima bomb, Foreign Minister Togo sent an urgent telegram to Ambassador Sato in Moscow, instructing him to seek an appointment with Molotov immediately to find out Moscow's answer to the Konoe Mission.<sup>49</sup> On August 6, having learned that Molotov had returned to Moscow, Sato had contacted Deputy Foreign Commissar Solomon Lozovskii, requesting a meeting with Molotov. Sato received no reply, but on August 7, he again contacted Lozovskii with the request to make an appointment with Molotov. Sato's request on August 7 had special meaning: it was an unmistakable sign that Tokyo had not surrendered despite the atomic bomb.

Having received this news, Stalin leapt to action. At 4:30 PM he ordered Vasilevskii to begin the Manchurian operation at midnight on August 9, thus moving up the date of attack by forty-eight hours. Accordingly, Vasilevskii issued four directives between 10:35 and 11:10 Transbaikal time (4:35 to 5:10 Moscow time), each ordering all forces on the Transbaikal Front, the First and Second Far Eastern Fronts, and the Pacific Fleet to begin operations at 6 PM Moscow time on August 8 (12 midnight Transbaikal time and 1 AM Khabarovsk time on August 9).<sup>50</sup> The die was cast. The Soviets were about to cross the Manchurian border at midnight of August 9.

In the meantime, Sato received the news that he had been looking for. He was told to come to see Molotov at 6 PM on August 8 at the Foreign Commissariat. Later, the appointment time was changed to 5 PM, giving the Soviets one hour to hand down the declaration of war to the Japanese government before the Soviet attack began. At 7:50 PM on August 7, Sato dispatched a telegram to Togo, informing the Foreign Minister that Molotov was to meet with him at 5 PM on the following day.<sup>51</sup> In addition, Stalin decided to begin negotiations with the Chinese at 10 PM, giving the Chinese only a few hours of rest.

### **(3) Sino-Soviet Negotiations, August 7**

The Sino-Soviet negotiations began at 10 PM in the Kremlin. Stalin was impatient. He wanted to conclude an agreement on that night so that he could adhere to the provision of the Yalta Agreement for the Soviet entry into the war, but he was not ready to sacrifice any rights and territories promised at Yalta. As soon as Soong entered the room, he was greeted by Stalin's impetuous question: "What news have you brought?" Soong only referred to Chiang Kai-shek's meeting with Soviet Ambassador Petrov on July 16. That was not what Stalin wanted to hear, and at the first encounter, Stalin must have realized that he would have to enter the war without an agreement with the Chinese, thus violating the provision of the Yalta Agreement.

### **(4) Moscow Declares War against Japan**

Sato came to the Foreign Commissariat at 5 PM on August 8. Ushered into Molotov's office, the ambassador began to express his usual greetings. Molotov interrupted him, asked him to sit down, and began to read the Soviet declaration of war against Japan. The declaration asserted that since Japan had refused the Potsdam Proclamation, "the proposal of the Japanese Government to the Soviet Union concerning mediation in the war in the Far East thereby loses all basis." This was a tortured logic, since Japan suspended judgment on the Potsdam Proclamation precisely because its request for mediation by the Soviet government was still pending. The declaration further explained: "The Allies approached the Soviet Government with a proposal to join in the war against Japanese aggression and thereby shorten the length of the war, reduce the number of victims, and assist in the prompt reestablishment of general peace."

The Soviet Government did not use either the Moscow Declaration or the United Nations Charter as the justification to violate the Neutrality Pact, as suggested by Truman and Byrnes, and opted to concoct a lie that the Allies had requested their joining the Potsdam Proclamation. The declaration finally served notice: "The Soviet Government declares that as of tomorrow, that is, as of August 9, the Soviet Union will consider itself in a state of war with Japan."<sup>52</sup>

Sato had had no illusion about the Soviet reply to Japan's request to receive the Konoe Mission, but the declaration of war was the last thing he had expected. Sato asked Molotov if he still had the possibility of sending a coded telegram to the home government before midnight. Molotov raised no objection. Sato did not catch the important ambiguity that was intentionally left in the text of the Soviet declaration of war. It merely stated that the state of war would begin "as of tomorrow that is, as of August 9," without specifying which time zone the Soviet Union would use to enter this state of war. Sato must have taken it for granted that the Soviets were using Moscow time without thinking that Transbaikal time was six hours and Khabarovsk time seven hours ahead of Moscow time. Sato's telegram, however, never reached Tokyo; most likely it never even left Moscow. Presumably, the Soviet government halted all the telegraph service going to Japan as a precaution to assure that the Soviet attack on Japan would remain a complete surprise.<sup>53</sup> Less than one hour after Sato left Molotov's office, the Soviet tanks, troops, and airplanes crossed the Manchurian border from all directions.

#### **(5) Truman's Reactions to Soviet Entry into the War**

A few minutes after 3 PM in Washington, Truman had a news conference at the White House. The President read a statement to the reporters: "I have only a simple announcement to make. I can't hold a regular press conference today, but this announcement is so important I thought I would call you in. Russia has declared war on Japan. That's all."<sup>54</sup> In contrast to the news of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the news of Soviet declaration of war against Japan did not bring joy and excitement to Truman. Truman was disappointed. He let the Soviets slip by.

After Truman's short announcement, a statement by the Secretary of State was released to the press. Byrnes welcomed the Soviet declaration of war against Japan, which he believed would "shorten the war and save... many lives." He further stated that at the Potsdam Conference, the President had conveyed to Stalin that Soviet participation in the war would be justified on the basis of the Moscow Declaration of 1943 and the United Nations Charter.<sup>55</sup> Clearly Byrnes' statement was directed at the Soviet claim that the Soviet government had been asked by the Allies to join the Potsdam Proclamation.

Byrnes implied that this was not true, hinting at the illegitimacy of the Soviet government associating itself with the Potsdam Proclamation. Nevertheless, Byrnes' statement went far short of condemning the Soviet declaration of war as a deception. Stalin's gamble worked.

#### **(6) Soviet-Japanese War and U.S.-Soviet Relations**

It is also important to note that the Pacific War did not end with Japan's acceptance of unconditional surrender as specified by the Potsdam ultimatum on August 14 and the Emperor's broadcast of the Imperial Rescript on August 15. In contrast to Truman, who ordered the cessation of hostilities, Stalin ordered his troops to fight on to capture the promised territories. In fact, the Emperor's acceptance of the Potsdam terms prompted Stalin to initiate the Kuril and Hokkaido operations. Truman and Stalin engaged in a push and shove over the possession of the Kurils. But in the end, the United States did not think it worthy of any American lives to fight for these remote islands, while Stalin was determined to take possession of all the Kurils. The tense parleys between Truman and Stalin indicated that the United States and the Soviet Union had a serious conflict of interest in the interests in the Far East, but they did not represent the onset of the Cold War.<sup>56</sup> At least not yet.

#### **Conclusion**

The Soviet Union played a central role in the drama of the ending the Pacific War. Stalin was determined to enter the war against Japan in order to obtain geopolitical gains promised at Yalta. Japan's clumsy diplomatic moves helped him to prolong the war. But he wished to obtain Truman's help on two issues: to put pressure on the recalcitrant Chinese to conclude a treaty endorsing the Yalta Agreement, and more importantly, to join the Allies' joint ultimatum to Japan to justify the violation of the Neutrality Pact.

The successful detonation of the atomic bomb in New Mexico spoiled Stalin's plans. Truman did not share the secret of the atomic bomb with Stalin, and he issued the Potsdam Proclamation on July 26 without Stalin's knowledge and without Stalin's signature. Stalin made the desperate attempt to request

Truman's invitation to join the Potsdam Proclamation, but this request was met with Truman's refusal. This fiasco finally convinced Stalin that the United States was determined to force Japan's surrender unilaterally without Soviet help.

In response, Stalin ordered Vasilevskii to hasten all the preparations of attack by August 5, and change the date of attack to August 11 (6 PM August 10, Moscow time). The race between the atomic bomb and Soviet entry into the war was on. Stalin returned to Moscow on August 5, and resumed frantic activities to prepare for the war against Japan.

The Americans moved first. They dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Stalin was crushed. On August 6, he was in seclusion refusing to see anyone. But the game was not played out. Despite the Hiroshima bomb, the Japanese government continued to seek Moscow's mediation. On August 7 Ambassador Sato called the Foreign Commissariat, requesting an appointment with Molotov.

Realizing that he had not yet lost, Stalin leapt to action. He ordered Vasilevskii to change the date of attack by twenty-four hours to August 9 (6 PM August 8, Moscow time). He had Molotov tell Sato to see him in his office at 5 PM on August 8. He hastily arranged the meeting with T. V. Soong and the Chinese delegation at 10 PM in the Kremlin.

Met with Soong's refusal to yield to his demand on that night, Stalin decided to plunge into the war without a treaty with the Chinese. He gambled. Once the Soviets entered the war, neither the Americans nor the Chinese would condemn the Soviet government for violating the Yalta Agreement.

At 5 PM on August 8 Molotov handed the Soviet declaration of the war to the unsuspecting Sato on the grounds that the Allies had invited the Soviet government to join the Potsdam Proclamation. It was a blatant lie, but as Stalin suspected, no one protested. Within one hour after Sato left Molotov's office, Soviet tanks rolled into Manchuria. Stalin managed to enter the war in the nick of time. Nine hours later, the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

Soviet entry into the war provided the most crucial factor for Japan's decision to surrender. During the war that lasted from August 9 through September 5, the Soviets occupied all the territories that were promised by the Yalta Agreement.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Race to the Finish: Stalin, Truman, and Japan's Surrender in the Pacific War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, forthcoming); Boris Slavinskii, *SSSR i Iaponia na puti k voine: diplomaticheskaia istoriia, 1937-1945 gg.* (Moscow: ZAO Iaponiia segodnia, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> For more detail, see Hasegawa, *Race to the Finish*, Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>3</sup> For more detail, see Hasegawa, *Race to the Finish*, Chapters 2 and 3. When he abrogated the Neutrality Pact, Stalin placed the Far Eastern Front on the alert status, but his intelligence report as well as Ambassador Iakov Malik's report from Tokyo assured him that Japan would unlikely launch a preemptive attack on the Soviet Union. See *Dnevnik Malika*, AVP RF, f. Molotova, op. 7, pap. 54, d. 891, ll. 234-35, 267; Institute voennoi istorii, *Velikaia otechestvennaia*, vol. 2, Book 1: Sovetsko-iaponskaia voina 1945 goda: istoriia voenno-politicheskogo protovoborstva dvukh derzhav v 30-40-e gody: Dokumenty i materialy (Moscow: Terra-Tera, 1997), pp. 208, 302.

<sup>4</sup> For more details see Hasegawa, *Race to the Finish*, chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Hirota Koki*, (Tokyo: Hirota Koki denki kankokai, 1966), p. 359.

<sup>6</sup> For the Hirota-Malik negotiations, see Hasegawa, *Race to the Finish*, Chapter 4, *Dnevnik Malika*, Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii [AVP RF], fond [f]. 0146, opis' [op]. 29, papka [pap] 269, delo [d]. 4, listy [ll], 261-93, 463-69; "Za kulisami Tokhookenaskoi bitvy," *Vestnik MIDA SSSR*, October 15, 1990, pp. 46-52; Hakone Kaidai, Nihon gaimusho kiroku [Japanese version from the Gaimusho archives, obtained from Professor Hatano Sumio], and the translated version of the Malik Diary in Japanese [obtained from Professor Hatano].

<sup>7</sup> "Za kulisami Tikhookeanskoi bitvy," p. 49.

<sup>8</sup> The member of the Big Six were: Prime Minister Suzuki Kantaro, Foreign Minister Togo Shigenori, Navy Minister Yonai Mitsumasa, Army Minister Anami Korechika, Army Chief of Staff Umezu Yoshijiro, and Navy Chief of Staff Toyouda Soemu. The first three were considered to belong to the peace party and the last two to the war party, although on details each group had disagreements.

<sup>9</sup> *Gaimusho, Shusen shiroku*, 6 vols (Tokyo: Hokuyosha, 1977), vol. 3, pp. 109-17.

<sup>10</sup> Documents No. 314, 315, 316, *Velikaia otechestvennaia*, 7 (1): 332-336; Directives Nos. 11112, 11113, 11114 in the Volkogonov Papers, Reel 4, Library of Congress.

<sup>11</sup> *Shusen shiroku*, vol. 3, pp. 138-42, 147-49; *Kido Koichi nikki* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku shuppankai, 1966), vol. 2, p. 1215; *Takagi Sokich Nikki to Joho*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Misuzu shobo, 2000); 909, Kurihara Ken and Hatano Sumio, *Shusen kosaku no kiroku* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1986), vol. 2, 225-26; Togo Shigenori, *Jidai no ichimen* (Tokyo: Hara shobo, 1988), pp. 342-43.

<sup>12</sup> *Takagi Sokich nikki to joho*, vol. 2: 921-22.

<sup>13</sup> Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers: The Conference of Berlin 1945* (Washington D. C.: US GPO, 1971) [hereafter, *FRUS: Potsda*], vol. 2, pp. 891-92; also see National Archives [NA], Record Group [RG] 165, ABC, Historical Draft Documents—JAP Surrender, 1945.

<sup>14</sup> Magic Diplomatic Summary, #1205, 13 July 45, #1207, 15 July 45; SRH-084, pp. 9-10, NA, RG 457, Records of National Security Agency/Central Security Service, Studies in Cryptology, 1917-1977; SRH-085, pp. 708; *Shusen shiroku*, 3: 167, 169-70; AVP RF, f. Molotova, op. 7, por. No. 889, papka 54, l. 19, 20.

<sup>15</sup> For more detailed discussion on this issue, see Hasegawa, *Race to the Finish*, Chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>16</sup> See Odd Arne Westad, *Cold War & Revolution: Soviet-American Rivalry and the Origins of the Chinese Civil War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 32, 35.

<sup>17</sup> "Bohlen Notes," *FRUS: Potsdam*, vol. 2: 1584. According to the Soviet version of the meeting, it was Truman who requested Soviet entry into the war. See *Berlinskaia (Potsdamskaia) konferentsiia rukovoditelei trekh soiuzykh derzhav—SSSR, SshA i Velibritanii, 17 iulia-2 avgusta 1945 g.: Shornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Izd-vo puliticheskoi literatury, 1980) [hereafter *Potsdamskaia konferentsiia*], p. 43.

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<sup>18</sup> “Bohlen Notes,” *FRUS, Potsdam*, vol. 2: 1582-87. This part is omitted from *Potsdamskaia konferentsiia*, which depicts Truman as asking Stalin about the progress of the Soviet-Chinese negotiations.

<sup>19</sup> “Bohlen Notes,” *FRUS: Potsdam*, vol. 2, 1584; *Potsdamaskaia konferentsiia*, p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> Truman noted in the Potsdam diary: “He’ll be in the Jap War on August 15<sup>th</sup>. Fini Japs when that comes about.” HST Diary, July 17, 1945, Robert H. Ferrell, *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Penguin, 1980), p. 53. He also wrote in his memoirs: “There were many reasons for my going to Potsdam, but the most urgent, to my mind, was to get from Stalin a personal affirmation of Russia’s entry into the war against Japan, a matter which our military chiefs were most anxious to clinch. This I was able to get from Stalin in the very first days of the conference.” Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, *Year of Decisions* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1955), p. 411. Orthodox historians take these passages to indicate that Truman did not harbor any hostility toward the Soviet Union. It is possible to argue that his diary entry can be read as a statement of fact, not the endorsement. His memoirs imply his *reluctant* endorsement for Soviet entry into the war. He had to do it because he was urged by the military leaders.

<sup>21</sup> *Off the Record*, p. 53.

<sup>22</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, I: 350.

<sup>23</sup> *FRUS, Potsdam*, vol. 2, 81.

<sup>24</sup> “Bohlen Memorandum, March 28, 1960,” *FRUS, Potsdam*, vol. 2: 1587-88.

<sup>25</sup> For more details, see Hasegawa, *Race to the Finish*, Chapter 4.

<sup>26</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 1: 416. The impressions of Byrnes, Leahy, and Churchill are recorded in “Truman-Stalin Conversation, Tuesday, July 24, 1945, 7:30 PM,” *FRUS, Potsdam*, vol. 2: 378-79.

<sup>27</sup> Vladimir Chikov and Harry Kern, *Okhota za atomnoi bomboi: Dos’ ”e KGB No. 13676* (Moscow: Veche ARIA-AiF, 2001), pp. 251-52.

<sup>28</sup> AVP RF, f. 0639, op. 1, d. 77, l. 9. Also see Viacheslav P. Safronov, *SSSR, SshA i Iapontia agresia na Dal ’nem vostoke i Tikhom Okeane, 1931-1945 gg* (Moscow, 2001), 331-32.

<sup>29</sup> G. A. L[incoln], “Memorandum for General Hull, Subject: Timing of Proposed Demand for Japanese Surrender,” 29 June 1945, NA, RG165, ABC, Historical Draft Documents—JAP Surrender, 1945.

<sup>30</sup> According to the Hopkins’ report, “Stalin made it quite clear that the Soviet Union wants to go through with unconditional surrender and all that is implied in it. However, he feels that if we stick to unconditional surrender the Japs will not give up and we will have to destroy them as we did in Germany.” Hopkins to Truman, Paraphrase of Navy Cable, 30 May 45, Hopkins-Stalin Conference. Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53, Harry S. Truman Library.

<sup>31</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 1: 396.

<sup>32</sup> “Truman-Molotov meeting, Sunday, July 29, 1945, Noon,” *FRUS, Potsdam*, vol. 2: 476; James Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. 207. The entire portion of Molotov’s request for the Allied invitation to the Soviet government to join the war is excluded from the Soviet version of the minutes of the Potsdam Conference. See *Potsdamskaia konferentsiia*, pp. 234-43.

<sup>33</sup> Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, p. 208.

<sup>34</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, pp. 402-403.

<sup>35</sup> Byrnes, *Frankly Speaking*, p. 208.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>37</sup> For detailed argument on this, see Hasegawa, *Race to the Finish*, Chapter 4; Naka Akira, *Mokusatsu* (Tokyo: NHK Books, 2000), vol. 2, pp. 111-144.

<sup>38</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 1: 422. In two places, his memoirs state that the Japanese government did not reply to the Potsdam

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Proclamation, thus contradicting himself with this passage. See *ibid.*, pp. 396-97, 421.

<sup>39</sup> *Velikaia otechestvannaia*, 7 (1): 336; Stalin/Antonov's Order No. 11120, Volkogonov Papers, Microfilm, Reel 5, Library of Congress.

<sup>40</sup> Reel 4, Volkogonov Papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>41</sup> Document 321, *Velikaia otechestvannaia*, 7(1), 337-38.

<sup>42</sup> *Velikaia otechestvannaia*, 7(1): 322; Document 325, *Velikaia otechestvannaia*, 7 (1): 341.

<sup>43</sup> Rossiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sovremennoi Politicheskoi Istorii [RGASPI], f. 558, op. 1, d. 416, ll. 66ob-67. This is the Stalin fond that became open only recently.

<sup>44</sup> *Showashi no tenno*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Yomiuri shinbunsha, 1968), pp. 180-81.

<sup>45</sup> Statement read by President Truman aboard U.S.S. Augusta, Aug 6, 1945, Papers of Harry S. Truman, President's Secretary's File, General File A-Ato, PSF-General File, Atomic Bomb, HSTL.

<sup>46</sup> *Pravda*, August 7, 8, 1945.

<sup>47</sup> RGASPI, f. 558, op. 1, d. 416, l. 65ob.

<sup>48</sup> Memorandum of Conversation between Harriman and Molotov, August 7, 1945, Harriman Papers, Moscow Files, 5-9 August 45, Library of Congress.

<sup>49</sup> For more detailed argument, see Hasegawa, *Race to the Finish*, Chapter 5.

<sup>50</sup> Documents 325, 326, 327, 328, *Velikaia otechestvannaia*, 7 (1): 341-43.

<sup>51</sup> Sato to Togo, Telegram 1530, *Shusen shiroku*, vol. 4: 77-78; *Magic Diplomatic Summary*, SRS 1753, 8 Aug 45.

<sup>52</sup> This translation is taken from Telegram from Harriman to the President and Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, Declaration of War 8 Aug 45, Harriman Papers, Moscow Files, 5-9 Aug 45, Library of Congress. For the Russian original see *Izvestiia*, 9 Aug 45, Document 694, *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia*, 4 (2), 161-62 "Ob ob"iavlenii voina Iaponii SSSR," *Iz dnevnika Molotova*, AVP RF, fond Molotova, op. 7, por., No. 904, pap 55, l. 2, l. 7.. For the Japanese translation, see *Shusen shiroku*, vol. 4: 83.

<sup>53</sup> *Iz dnevnika Molotova*, ll. 5-6.

<sup>54</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2: 425; "Declaration of War on Japan by the Soviet Union," Harriman Papers, Moscow Files, 5-9 Aug 45, Library of Congress.

<sup>55</sup> "Declaration of War on Japan by the Soviet Union," Harriman Papers, Moscow Files, 5-9 Aug 45, Moscow Files, Library of Congress.

<sup>56</sup> For more detailed discussion, see Hasegawa, *Race to the Finish*, Chapter 7.