# The War Ends: Unconditional Surrender and the A-Bomb

From the perspective of early 1942, Japan's eleven-year-long gamble on the successful conquest of Asia looked like an immense success. The Kwantung Army, often described as a state within a state, had provoked an incident at the railroad station at Mukden (now Shenyang) in north China in 1931. This was used as a pretext to seize Manchuria in northeast China and populate it with millions of Japanese civilians in a bid for annexation. In July 1937, Japan's Imperial Army staged another confrontation at the Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing. The incident drew a sharp reaction from Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese army, but also enabled Japan to extend its occupation to the capital and the eastern coast of the country. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese invaded the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia); the territory formerly called Indochina, a French colony; Singapore, Malaysia, and Burma, British possessions; and of course the Philippines, which the U.S. took from Spain after the war of 1898.

This hardly exhausted the Japanese high command's appetite for conquest. Analysts of the war have often noted the hopeless megalomania besetting senior Japanese leadership even after the attack on Pearl Harbor and the seizure of western colonies in the Far East. "The enormous and quick victories," writes Gerhard Weinberg, in his history of the war, "exhilarated the home front, silenced the doubters, and made the leaders dizzy with success. Nothing seemed impossible...whatever Japan might want she could get." Weinberg goes on to elaborate the territorial objectives the high command set for itself, which extended from the Pacific and Southeast Asia "to Alaska, the western provinces of Canada, the northwestern U.S., and even substantial portions of Central and South America."

Economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. during the late 1930s were intended to punish Japan for its aggression in China. The measures failed to check the militarists in Tokyo. Roosevelt's final step in the summer of 1941, which included freezing Japanese assets in the U.S. and suspending oil exports, had the unintended effect of stimulating the attack at Honolulu. This was quickly followed by the takeover of Dutch, French and British colonies in Asia. France and Holland were occupied by Germany, and Britain was threatened with invasion. The Japanese high command exploited this condition to create by fiat the Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, a program that enslaved the peoples of East and Southeast Asia. "Japan in December 1941," writes the historian Max Hastings, "decided that the old colonial powers' difficulties in Europe exposed their remoter properties to rapine." Presented by the Japanese as a means of throwing off the burden of western imperialism, their expansionism drew initial acceptance in the Far East but was quickly seen by the occupied countries as a far harsher form of control and exploitation.

Reliable numbers have not been established, but as many as 15 million Chinese, mostly noncombatants, may have died in the occupation. Another five million inhabitants lost their lives in the rest of Asia. Famine overtook Viet Nam in 1945—as many as a million people may have died as a result--after the Japanese seized the peasants' harvest and obliged them to plant fiber-bearing crops, such as jute, which deprived the population of its rice. Prisoner-of-war camps holding Dutch, British, Australian and American soldiers were used as a source of slave labor. Recounting Japan's atrocities throughout the region, the historian John Dower remarks that "this stain on the nation's reputation is indelible."

Japan and Germany, nominal allies during the war, were bound by similar characteristics that shaped their policies and determined the lives of millions, according to the historian Michael

Howard. Both powers, he writes, were "fueled by a militarist ideology that rejected the bourgeois liberalism of the capitalist West and glorified war as the inevitable and necessary destiny of mankind." Both countries embarked on spectacular wars of aggression, both grossly underestimated the ability and the willingness of the U.S. to defend itself and fight, especially in Asia. Both saw the U.S. as a nation of shop-keepers and property owners devoted to their personal welfare at the expense of national honor, "mongrel" countries comprising innumerable nationalities that could never defeat homogenous and racially superior nations that were fully committed to war.

By 1945, these assumptions had brought catastrophe to both countries.

The turning point in the Pacific campaign was reached in the spring and summer of 1944, when Guam, Tinian, Saipan and a number of smaller islands in the Marianas were wrested from the Japanese. Airfields built on the Marianas put Grumman's new B-29s, the first bombers that flew at a height requiring a pressurized cabin, within striking distance of Japan's Home Islands. Defeat in the island chain drove Hideki Tojo from the premiership, but his successor, Koiso Kuniaki, proved no more successful than his predecessor in resisting the tide of destruction. He was replaced by Japan's last war-time premier, Kantaro Suzuki, after MacArthur recaptured most of the Philippines in the fall of 1944. Two remaining island campaigns, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, had ended by June 1945, and left American planners to confront a complex set of decisions regarding the final stage of the war.

The struggle for Okinawa, the last major island campaign before the planned invasion of Japan, was especially sobering for the War Department, whose principal figures included George C. Marshall, chief of staff; Admiral Nimitz, commander-in-chief of the Pacific; Henry Stimson,

secretary of war; and of course Douglas MacArthur, who had overall command of the army in the Southwest Pacific.  In July 1945, James Byrnes, a New Dealer and a Roosevelt appointee to the Supreme Court, came out of retirement and replaced Edward Stettinus as secretary of state. These principals, along with President Truman, would interpret and respond to the shifting strategic fundamentals at work in the June-July interval, including the decision to use the atomic bomb in August.

Formally declared over on June 22, the intense struggle for Okinawa had a powerful impact on the military and political leadership of the U.S.  The last major initiative undertaken before the planned invasion of Japan, army and Marine divisions landed on the southern end of the island on April 1, 1945, the second-largest amphibian operation of the war after Normandy. The 170,000 men who landed encountered almost no resistance.  Shortly thereafter, however, the Japanese fought the invaders with their characteristic fierceness even though neither side doubted the outcome of the struggle.  The horror of the campaign was worsened by the caves, tunnels and bunkers that made Japanese positions almost impregnable.  Almost 100,000 Japanese soldiers gathered in a small perimeter around the Naha, the capital in the southern end of the island, obliging American soldiers to "pay with flesh for nearly every yard they claimed," writes Hastings.  "The struggle proved more intense than any U.S. forces had encountered in the Pacific."  Hastings claims that the campaign more fully resembled the combat of northern France in the First World War, where soldiers made minimal progress on a daily basis and paid heavily for every yard they gained.  "Shellfire," in Hastings's words, "churned human body parts, debris and excrement into a ghastly compound from which the stench drifted far to the rear."  The island had been seized from native Okinawans in 1879 in an early stage of Japanese imperialism, and indigenous people and Japanese women and children were mixed among the defenders.

Many civilians were eager to survive, but others were determined to add to the cost paid by American soldiers.  In the chapter devoted to Iwo Jima, Hastings presents the methods Marines used to destroy Japanese defenders who had burrowed deep in tunnels and caves and who shunned opportunities to surrender.  The approach had to be replicated on Okinawa.  Into an underground complex "proof against shells and bombs," American soldiers pumped salt water, gas and oil into the complex and ignited the mixture with a flame thrower.  The incendiary technique, according to Hastings, set off "a string of ammunition fires, incinerating many Japanese and causing others to kill themselves amid the chocking, clogging smoke."

Even more disturbing was the full-scale eruption of kamikaze attacks.  Introduced in the defense of the Philippines in the fall of 1944, the Japanese kamikaze pilots were minimally trained; many were pressed into service and used in much greater numbers at Okinawa.  They mounted 1900 strikes in the spring of 1945, and though most planes were easily shot down by American fighters, many others inevitably reached their targets; military analysts estimated that perhaps 20 percent of the strikes were successful.  In Hastings's words, "Tens of thousands of America seamen who badly wanted to live were stunned by the onslaught of hundreds of Japanese pilots who were happy to die."  During and after the island struggle ended, a nearly three-month effort, 120 U.S. ships were struck and 29 were sunk, figures that shocked the War Department.  Nearly 5,000 sailors died, with fatalities overwhelmingly attributable to kamikaze attacks.  Hastings offers this account of one seaman's experience:

> Cmdr. Bill Widhelm, operations officer of a carrier task force group, described how radar detected one Japanese bomber a hundred miles out, at 22,000 feet, and tracked it to forty-three miles.  The plane then vanished from every screen in the fleet, was briefly picked up again sixteen miles , and thereafter only when it appeared "about fifteen feet off the stern of the ship."

The suicidal frenzy of the Japanese on Okinawa was not limited to the island and the airspace surrounding it. A week after the landing, the Imperial Navy made the extraordinary decision to send the largest battleship in its stock on a suicide mission to Okinawa. The goal was to maximize damage inflicted on the invasion force. The Yamato, an 800-foot-long battleship displacing 72,000 tons, was perhaps the biggest ship of its kind built by any country in the war. Crewed by about 3,000 men, it sailed from Formosa (now Taiwan) in the first week of the invasion, with the goal of beaching itself on the Marines landing site. The Yamato's mission was to attack the U.S. fleet at anchorage and have the surviving crew descend scrambling nets to the beach itself. But shortly after leaving port at Formosa and far from its destination, the Yamato was spotted on April 7 by a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft that radioed the sighting to the nearest carrier task force. As the Yamato was tracked over the next several hours, 280 carrier-based planes went into the air, including fighters, bombers and torpedo-bearing Avengers. The American pilots communicated "in plain language," i.e., in English and not in code, which indicates how confident they were of completing their mission. Over a period of some hours, the Japanese vessel was strafed, bombed, and torpedoed, and as it sank it blew up into pieces. Even before the ship went down four destroyer escorts and a cruiser had also been sunk. American losses were slight.

The six weeks that passed between late June and July, 1945, therefore, were decisive for shaping a strategy for ending the war. The British had retaken Burma and were drafting plans for an assault on Singapore. A Russian commitment to participate in the allied coalition against Japan had been secured at Yalta in January 1945. But the effectiveness of the atomic bomb would not be established until mid-July. Whether it would preclude the need for an invasion of

Japan was quite unclear, and so was the scale of warfare required to persuade the enemy to surrender.

But the intended use of the Yamato indicated the strategy Japan would employ in the balance of the war--to make the price of victory so high that the U.S. would agree to peace terms falling short of unconditional surrender. These were the conditions Truman and Churchill set at the Potsdam Conference in Berlin in July 1945. Hastings emphasizes that at Okinawa, nearly every level of the War Department, "from high command to fighting soldiers," was "shocked by the ferocity of the resistance they had encountered." Long before the island was officially declared secure on June 22, planning had begun for a pair of landings on Japan, on the southern-most island of Kyushu and on the Kanto plain, the center of which was Tokyo. Hastings writes: "The prospect of invading Kyushu and Honshu in the face of Japanese forces many times greater than those on Okinawa, and presumably imbued with the same fighting spirit, filled those responsible with dismay." "Dismay" sounds like an understatement. The hand-to-hand combat, the subterranean complexes, the danger and difficulty of clearing caves and tunnels of resistance, the death toll among the civilian Japanese and native Okinawans, distinguishing between those eager to kill and innocents hoping to live, the threat of kamikaze attacks, the entrenched machine gun emplacements and deadly mortar fire—all of which would induce far more than dismay among most of us. Horror would be more to the point. "All the elements used to such effect on Okinawa," notes Hastings, "would be deployed in manifold on Kyushu—fixed defenses, kamikaze aircraft, suicide boats, rocket-propelled suicide bombs, suicide anti-tank units." A field manual specifically prepared by the Imperial Army for the defense of the Home Islands instructed soldiers to employ "absolute ruthlessness in slaughtering any Japanese, old or young, male or female, who impeded the defense or were used as a shield by the invaders."

The Imperial Army correctly assumed that Kyushu would be the starting point for the initial invasion. Plans for invading the territory focused on beaches at the southern end of the island. Kyushu offered few points of access, and the probable landing zones were as obvious to the Japanese as they were to planners at the War Department. Various casualty estimates were prepared for Truman, all of them deeply disturbing. One projection prepared for Gen. Marshall called for 31,000 casualties during the first month of combat operations, a figure that excluded casualties at sea. Admiral Nimitz brought forth another number, nearly 50,000, for the first month of combat. And those numbers failed to include the added cost of Operation Coronet, the possible invasion of Tokyo. Operation Olympic—the invasion of Kyushu--had been tentatively scheduled for November 1, 1945, Coronet for the following March. Operation Zipper, the British plan to drive the Japanese from Singapore, was slated for September 1. Secretary Stimson commissioned his own projection of casualties from a War Department planner named Shockley, who placed American fatalities for the conquest of Japan at between 400,000 to 800,000, and total casualties at perhaps four million. Projections of Japanese dead entered the multimillions. Well into the spring and summer, Selective Service and the War Department inducted soldiers and scheduled retraining programs on a scale that reflected very high casualty projections. Truman received preliminary estimates within weeks of assuming office on April 12, but they were soon overturned by fresh information that reached the government in the middle of the summer. American cryptanalysts gathering intelligence in Honolulu reported a massive buildup in the defense of Kyushu, which profoundly alarmed senior planners. Richard B. Frank, in *Downfall*, claims that by the end of July, about 450,000 soldiers had been sent to Kyushu, along with 10,000 planes, while the garrison there was preparing an extensive network of fortifications and tunnels.

But how much did all of this matter? Hastings concedes the accuracy of Frank's numbers, but suggests they might be irrelevant. The U.S. Army Air Force initiated a heightened phase of destructiveness with the fire bombing of Tokyo in March, a method that degraded Japan's manufacturing plant. The incendiary attack, which claimed the lives of 100,000 and deprived many others of shelter, was extended to other urban centers. The ever-tightening blockade, enforced by Allied submarines and carrier-based aircraft, had sharply reduced the enemy's imports. But U.S. air and naval strikes against Japan had also affected the transport of food and other vital materials among the four Home Islands. The Japanese high command (to repeat) sought to make the invasion costly enough to compel the Allies to renegotiate surrender terms. But the U.S. campaign of attrition had seriously challenged their ability to resist an invasion. Richard Frank notes that in the final stages of the war, "Individual Japanese watched their food rations dwindle to alarming levels. . . . By the end of the war, about 20 to 25 percent of the urban population suffered from serious nutritional deficiencies." The volume of vitamin-related disorders, including tuberculosis, beriberi and other afflictions, "soared." The frightening number of planes the Japanese sent to Kyushu would have meant little if amateur pilots lacked fuel to fly them. As evidence of Japan's diminished resources, the Russians encountered limited resistance in the invasion of Manchuria. Hastings takes note of all this (and more) but concedes that American war planners could only estimate the effects of the blockade and the aerial campaign; the impact of both on the defense of Kyushu could only be guessed. He adds that "experience in the Philippines and on Okinawa had shown that even raw Japanese units could achieve remarkable results, if their men were committed to death and entrenched in fixed positions."

The casualty estimates mattered not only because Truman and the War Department wanted to minimize the human cost of the invasion. Of equal concern was the willingness of the public and enlisted men to support Allied goals in the face of sharply rising fatalities, especially because the war in Europe had ended in May. Demobilization had already begun. Few conscripts were eager for retraining and redeployment to the Pacific. But the goal of unconditional surrender presented to Japan served the same purpose as it had in Germany—to extirpate by root and branch all elements of brutality and aggression, to occupy the countries that had inflicted this on others, and to achieve a sense of justice with war-crimes trials. The ultimate goal was to rebuild and to reintegrate the defeated nations into a stable world order. The Allies—which essentially meant the U.K. and the U.S.—believed that the enormity of Japan's crimes called for no other form of surrender, and the dismantling of the system that practiced aggression on a continental, oceanic scale.

The secretary of state, James Byrnes, wrote in his memoirs that use of atomic weapons could have been avoided had Japan accepted the terms of surrender earlier in the summer of 1945. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, a Japanese historian, notes with some sourness that "Perhaps this statement can be read in reverse: 'If we insisted on unconditional terms, we could justify the dropping of the atomic bomb.'" But why should the U.S. *not* have insisted on unconditional surrender? This is the question Hastings asks in *Retribution*. The same terms had been imposed by the Allies on Germany, and for the same reasons. In a recent essay in *The New York Review of Books*, Hastings presented the following analogy to justify the decision:

> One of Woodrow Wilson's biggest mistakes was to insist that Germany should be granted an armistice in November 1918, rather than being obliged to surrender. This, together with the fact that the Kaiser's country emerged from the conflict structurally intact, created the basis for later Nazi claims of the "stab in the back," the pretense that Germany had not really been defeated. At the end of World War II, amid the absolute ruin of the Reich, there could be no such delusion.

Japanese leadership had little sense of the gravity of the situation, and many of the principals had been living in a fantasy world for years. They undertook a campaign of expansion without essential resources while grossly underestimating British and American strength. Hastings devotes an entire chapter to the poverty of the country, the poor condition of the Imperial Army, disabling inter-service rivalries that easily matched anything observable in the War Department, Japan's indifference to science and modern techniques of warfare, the propensity for junior officers to leave unchallenged self-defeating policies that perpetuated the direction of the war. The military's central conviction was that racial superiority and the samurai spirit would lead to inevitable victory. The indispensable ingredient was will. Other elements of war and war making considered indispensable to western powers occupied a distant position on Japan's hierarchy of planning and need. Even as late as the winter of 1944, dovish civilians in the government insisted on maintaining Japanese control of Manchuria and Korea while avoiding an American occupation--terms the Allies would never even consider discussing. Hirohito himself is said to have believed in May 1945 that victory was still attainable on Okinawa. About 165,000 Allied soldiers, often used for slave labor and and exposed to mass executions, remained in Japanese camps. Thousands continued to die in active combat operations on both sides as Japan's "peace party" wasted months asserting untenable diplomatic demands.

The Russians had signed a Neutrality Pact with Japan much earlier in the war, in April 1941. They had nevertheless prudently kept about half a million troops on the Manchurian border throughout the German campaign. The two countries had fought a major engagement in the summer of 1939 at the Khalkin Gol River in the southeast corner of Manchuria. The action delayed the Soviet occupation of Poland after the Germans took their half of the country in

September. The Neutrality Pact was in the interests of the U.S. and Great Britain because it left the Russians free to destroy the Wehrmacht in the west. After that was accomplished, war between the two Far Eastern rivals was seen as a means of weakening Japan's defense of the Home Islands. At the Yalta conference in January 1945, the three major powers agreed on a shift in Soviet strategy once the war in Europe ended. The Russians would invade Manchuria, drive down to the $38^{th}$ parallel that still divides North and South Korea, and recover territory lost to Japan (such as the Sakhalin Island) in the war of 1904-05.

On July 12, 1945, the Japanese ambassador to the Soviet Union communicated a message from Hirohito to the Soviet foreign minister, Vycheslov Molotov: "So long as England and the United States insist on unconditional surrender the Japanese Empire has no alternative but to fight on with all its strength for the honor and safety of the Motherland." So detached from reality was Japanese leadership that an appeal for diplomatic support was made to the party least eager to see the war ended—Stalin. His decision to suspend the Neutrality Pact three months before, in April, does not seem to have affected Japan's awareness of its position at all. Stalin was fully apprised of Japan's deteriorating state. The network of Soviet spies in the U.S. kept the Russians informed of the Manhattan Project. The incipient atomic test in Alamogordo, New Mexico was only days away. As recently as May 28, Stalin had assured Harry Hopkins, a top Roosevelt aid now serving Truman, that the Soviets would be in a position to attack Manchuria by the beginning of August. Stalin was therefore more than willing to play the role of the disinterested mediator; prolonging the war would simply grant him more time to wheel his massive armies from Europe to the Pacific in order to claim as much territory as possible. The Soviet invasion force would consist of battle-tested troops and generals who had just defeated Germany. Shortly after the German surrender in May, according to Hastings, 3,000 locomotives

were brought into service to haul one million soldiers across the entire length of Russia to invade Manchuria. On August 8, that is what the Russians did, tearing across the frontier, easily rolling up Japanese positions and crossing the arduous defiles of the Hing Gang Mountains. The Japanese are said to have been shocked by the invasion, even though they had been watching their shared border with Russia with rising concern as Germany's fortunes waned. (Long before the German surrender, and eager to appease the Russians, Japan had disregarded appeals from Germany to attack the American shipments of aid destined for Russia that passed through East Asian waters to the Soviet port at Vladivostok.) But as Hastings comments, "As so often in Japan's high command, evasion of unpalatable reality prevailed over rational analysis of probabilities."

After two weeks of fighting, Soviet troops took control of Manchuria, occupied Korea down to the 38th parallel, recovered all of Sakhalin Island, and gained possession of the Kuriles, a chain of islands north of Japan. Japanese officers fleeing Manchuria took care to dismantle the notorious Unit 731, a research center devoted to biological warfare; surviving Chinese inmates and site laborers were given lethal injections. Russia's campaign lasted a full week after the Japan surrendered on August 15. It would have been extended to the northern half of Hokkaido, the northern-most of the Home Islands, but for the strenuous objections of Truman and Averill Harriman, the American ambassador to Russia. For this the Japanese should be grateful. The Russians could have stayed for years had they captured all or part of Hokkaido, perhaps employing the Japanese Communist Party as a puppet government. They would have stripped the island of industrial plant and everything else of material value, as they had after pulling out of Manchuria in 1946. This was justified as a legitimate claim of reparations. The experience of

extensive rape--familiar to the Chinese, who initially saw the Russians as liberators—would have become part of Hokkaido's experience as well.

As it was, the experience of the Japanese soldiers and civilians unable to flee Manchuria was dire enough. This is Richard Frank's description of the consequences of the Soviet intervention in early August, and more than a tacit justification for the use of nuclear weapons the same week:

> The Soviets captured about 2.7 million Japanese nationals. The dead and permanently missing among this group, only about one third of whom were members of the armed forces, numbered at least 347,000, and perhaps as many as 376,000. This exceeds all but the most exaggerated tolls attributed to the atomic bombs. Moreover, Soviet seizure of Hokkaido would have jeopardized another three million Japanese noncombatants.

"Only on August 9," writes Frank, "after withstanding months of blockade and bombardment, obvious preparations for invasion, two atomic bombs, and Soviet intervention, did the Big Six formulate terms for ending the war." He notes that the fanatics' goal of resisting until the very end "implicitly anticipated the sacrifice of huge numbers of Japanese civilians." The Supreme War Council, as the body was called, consisted of Kantaro Suzuki, the prime minister, Shigenori Togo, the foreign minister, and Mitsumasa Yonai, the naval minister who aligned himself with the civilians pressing for peace. The most fanatical figure in the Council, and arguably its most powerful, was Korechika Anami, the Army Minister who was backed by the navy operations chief, Toyoda, and Umezu, the chief of staff. The War Council and the cabinet had been deadlocked for weeks, and it was only the intervention of the Emperor that settled the matter. Even the civilians on the War Council were deathly afraid of assassination, which had been the Imperial Army's chief method of maintaining control over a nominally civilian government since the early 1930s.

By the end of the war, the chief object of debate was the status of the emperor. The salient points of the Potsdam Declaration assured the Japanese that they would "not be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation," that "a peacefully inclined and responsible government" would be established "in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people." This was a declaration with echoes of Woodrow Wilson, a proclamation of popular self-determination that had been a tenet of American foreign policy since the conference at Versailles in 1919. But Hirohito and elements of the Japanese leadership were concerned not simply to preserve the Emperor's position for its own sake. According to Richard Frank, there was serious alarm that unseating Hirohito and eliminating the monarchy would open the door to anarchy in Tokyo and expose the entire power structure to sharp public retribution. Some feared this might happen even if the Emperor's position were kept intact, so vast was the country's devastation. Notes were exchanged between the Japanese and James Byrnes, the secretary of state, as Japan appealed for the preservation of the monarchy. The request undermined the demand of unconditional surrender, and the U.S. responded by restating the terms put forth at Potsdam. Byrnes prepared a final note that "implied much but firmly promised nothing," writes Frank, and "the careful phrases allowed for the continuance of the Imperial institution if the Japanese people so chose." Herbert Bix, one of Hirohito's biographers, says that the translation of the American response was fudged a bit by translators in Tokyo to make it more palatable not only to the Emperor but to the fanatics as well. In this they were not entirely successful.

On August 14, the Emperor made the formal decision to surrender, breaking the deadlock in the War Council. Despite the cataclysm that had overtaken Japan, leading figures in the Army, including Anami himself, considered maintaining the war by a seizure of power that would have reduced Hirohito to figurehead status. On August 13, Anami met with junior

military plotters but chose to neither endorse nor explicitly repudiate their proposals. A senior officer, Takeshi Mori, was murdered for putting up resistance, and the conspirators entered the grounds of the Imperial Palace and briefly took control of it. Declaring obedience to the Emperor, Gen. Tanaka rushed to the grounds, re-established control over the Imperial Guards, and thwarted the attempted coup. At noon on August 15, a recording of the Emperor's statement of surrender, which the plotters had hoped to find and destroy, was broadcast across the country. Anami, far too late to affect the destiny of millions already destroyed, committed ritual suicide the day of the broadcast. As Hastings remarks, the war had been needlessly extended for several months because Japan's senior military command believed that defeat would prove their entire strategy was wrong. Vanity and the demands of their ego precluded taking the step that would have saved scores of thousands of lives. High-ranking civilians, such as Premier Suzuki, the lord privy seal, Marquis Kido, and perhaps Hirohito as well, feared assassination by the fanatics. Others fought on from a misplaced sense of necessity; they imagined the Americans would enslave, torture and brutalize them as they had done to countless millions throughout the Far East. None would have predicted MacArthur's words at the surrender ceremony on the U.S.S. Missouri:

> The issues, concerning divergent ideals and ideologies, have been determined on the battlefield of the world and hence are not for our discussion or debate. Nor is it for us here to meet, representing as we do a majority of the people of the earth, in a spirit of distrust, malice, or hatred. But rather it is for us, both victors and vanquished, to rise to that higher dignity that alone befits the sacred purposes we are about to serve, committing all of our people unreservedly to faithful compliance.

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